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The Role of the Centurion in Luke-Acts

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Abstract

The Role of the Centurion in Luke-Acts

By

Oleksandr Kyrychenko

Although Roman centurions appear at crucial stages in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, the significance of the centurion's office for the development of Luke's story has not been adequately researched. To fill in that void, this study examines the role of the Roman centurion in the narrative of Luke-Acts. A discussion of the treatment of the Roman army in general and Roman centurions in particular in the relevant Greco-Roman and Jewish sources of the period provides insight for the following analysis of the function of the centurion in Luke's story. This study argues that 1) contemporary evidence reveals a common perception of the Roman centurion as a principal representative of the Roman imperial power, and that 2) based on that perception, Luke-Acts employs centurions in the role of prototypical Gentile believers in anticipation of the Christian mission to the Empire.

The introductory chapter surveys the current state of the question and provides the plan of the study. Chapter one surveys the background data, including the place and role of the centurion in the Roman military organization and structure, the phenomenon of the Roman army as the basis of the ruling power in the period of the late first century B.C.E.—first century C.E., the role of the Roman army in the life of the civilian community, the Roman military regiments in Palestine, Luke's military terminology, and Roman military units in Luke-Acts. Chapter two reviews Greco-Roman witnesses that reflect on the image of the Roman military, including the historical treatises of Polybius, Julius Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, and Appian; the biographical writings of Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch, and Suetonius; the works of Plautus, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Petronius, Quintilian, Epictetus, Juvenal, Fronto, and Apuleius; and non-literary evidence. Chapter three engages the relevant Jewish witnesses, including 1 Maccabees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jewish pseudepigrapha, the historical works of Philo, Talmudic literature, and non-literary evidence. The examination of the works of Josephus occupies the second part of chapter. Chapter four examines the relevant accounts in Luke's two-volume work. The accounts of Luke 7:1-10 and Acts 10:1–11:18, central for explicating the role of the centurion in Luke-Acts, are the focus of the second half of the chapter. The conclusion reviews the findings of the study and summarizes the results.

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Introduction

I. The Prominence of Centurions in Luke-Acts and the Current State of the Study

Centurions appear numerous times in the narrative of Luke-Acts, often at crucial stages of the development of Luke's story. The centurion of Luke 7:1–10 presents a unique example of faith in Jesus. The centurion of Luke 23:47 declares the crucified Jesus as δίκαιος, affirming both his innocence and his righteousness. The centurion of Acts 10:1–11:18 plays a key role in the birth of the first Gentile Christian church—a seminal event in the Christian mission to Gentiles, dominating the rest of the book. Centurions of Acts 21–23 aid Paul, the missionary to Gentiles, in Jerusalem and protect him on his way to Caesarea. Finally, the centurion of Acts 27 expresses friendliness to Paul, saves his life during the sea voyage, and delivers him to Rome, thus ensuring the safe arrival of the missionary and his gospel to the capital of the Roman world.

Although these accounts have received much attention from New Testament scholarship, the implications of the fact that these characters were centurions have not been examined. This neglect reflects a general lack of research pertaining to the Roman military within New Testament scholarship, which routinely resorts to citing monographs originally published over three quarters of a century ago.[1] Not only do these works lack

[1] These include Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (ed. Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar; 4 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1973), 1:363–67 (the work was originally published in 1886–90), and T. R. S. Broughton, "Note XXXIII. The Roman Army," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*. *Part I: The Acts of the Apostles* (ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake; 5 vols.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1933), 5:427–45. The examples of the recent commentaries that rely on the above volumes include Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971); I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1978); Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX* (AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1981); *The Gospel According to Luke X–XXIV (*AB 28a*;* New York: Doubleday, 1985), and *The Acts of the Apostles* (AB 31; New York: Doubleday, 1998); H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H.

the benefit of more recent research in Roman military history, but they also tend to be more concerned with the historicity of Luke's account rather than with the narrative function of the military figures in the two-volume work.[2]

Few attempts have been made to investigate the literary function of the Roman military within Luke-Acts. Vernon Robbins approaches the centurion stories of Luke 7 and Acts 10 from the perspective of the Roman Empire in the East as an appropriate workplace for Christian missionaries.[3] In Robbins's view, Luke aims at persuading his readers that the Roman Empire and Christianity are two powers that work symbiotically—Roman law allows Christians to advance the task initiated by Jesus, whereas Christianity in turn benefits the Roman Empire.[4] According to Robbins, in Luke's account the stories of Luke 7 and Acts 10 employ the figure of the centurion to exemplify the manner in which these structures work together. With the healing of his slave, the centurion of Luke 7 accepts the power structure of Jesus's realm, which sets the stage for further expansion of the power of God to the domain of the Roman leaders. The

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Juel; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; ed. B. W. Winter; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993); C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998); Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting* (vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; ed. B. W. Winter; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995); Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997); and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles* (ANTC; Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2003).

[2] In addition to the works of Schürer and Broughton, Adolf von Harnack, *Militia Christi: Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1905), studied the connection between the early Christian religion and the military, mainly discussing the questions of the church's attitude to soldiers and war. Similarly to the above authors, Harnack was not concerned with the questions of the presentation and role of the military in New Testament texts.

[3] Vemon Robbins, "Luke-Acts: A Mixed Population Seeks a Home in the Roman Empire," in *Images of Empire* (ed. Loveday Alexander; JSOTSup 122; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 201–21.

[4] Robbins, *Luke-Acts*, 202.

story of the centurion of Acts 10 reveals this symbiotic relation of two power structures more fully. As this dissertation will show, Robbins is correct in approaching the centurion episodes in the context of the Christian mission theme of Luke-Acts. However, the brief nature of his study, which does not engage relevant primary sources dealing with the Roman military, does not allow Robbins fully to explicate the role of the centurions in the narrative of Luke-Acts.

A short article by T. R. Hobbs proposes considering the Gospel references to the military from the perspective of the army as an institution of the first-century Mediterranean world. In his study, Hobbs aims at utilizing social scientific concepts in order to reconstruct the way the original readers might have perceived the soldiers's activity in the settings created by the writers of the Gospel texts.[5] Although Hobbs intends to go further than merely historical assessment of the soldiers's roles and to analyze the texts as literary creations by their authors, he does not address the nuances of authorial intent in dealing with these texts. This results from Hobbs's inability to appreciate the degree of authorial awareness of the military situation applicable to the context of these writings and, subsequently, the degree that awareness contributed to the authorial construction of the narrative and creation of the literary characters.[6] For instance, Hobbs deliberately overlooks the distinction between Roman and non-Roman

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[5] T. R. Hobbs, "Soldiers in the Gospels: A Neglected Agent," in *Social Science Models for Interpreting the Bible* (ed. J. J. Pilch; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 328–48.

[6] Hobbs, *Soldiers*, 335, claims that "It is a moot point whether that [*sic!*] the writers of the Gospels themselves were fully aware of the details of the military situation, nor of the niceties of Roman military protocol. In true artistic fashion, the Gospels writers create their literary worlds through the narratives they construct, and the characters that occupy these worlds." It seems that Hobbs's own apparent lack of familiarity with the military setting of the period hampers his ability to assess the function of Roman centurion in the civilian setting. Hobbs, *Soldiers*, 344, accuses Robbins of overstating the role of the Roman centurion as the broker between the emperor and people. However, further study will demonstrate that the centurion was the principal representative of Rome in the provincial countryside.

soldiers in the sources because he deems such distinction to be "of no great consequence."[7] This results in his failure to appreciate Luke's intent to lessen the degree of the Roman soldiers' involvement in the Passion of the Christ by transferring the scene of Jesus's mistreatment by the soldiers from the Roman *praetoria* to the court of Herod Antipas. Such lack of attention to details and to Luke's intention in reporting such details in the text results in Hobbs's misjudgment of the role of the military in the Gospel in general.[8]

A recent Ph.D. dissertation by Laurena Ann Brink aims at evaluating the literary characterization of solders in Luke's works.[9] In her study, Brink addresses two questions: "How did Luke portray military characters within his two volumes? and Why did Luke present them as he does?"[10] By way of applying the methods of redaction criticism and a literary analysis of the narrative, Brink argues that Luke utilizes Greco-Roman stereotypes as a basis of his portrayal of the soldiers and contradicts those stereotypes, upsetting expectations of the reader.[11] According to Brink, Luke's portrayal of soldiers contrary to the reader's expectations provokes "his audience to recognize that even a soldier possesses the possibilities of conversion and commitment." Brink argues that Luke's depiction of the Roman military "functions as a parabolic exemplum of true

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[7] Hobbs, *Soldiers*, 329.

[8] Hobbs, *Soldiers*, 344, asserts that Luke adopts an "extremely negative presentation of the activity of the 'soldier'."

[9] Laurena Ann Brink, "Unmet Expectations: The Literary Portrayal of Soldiers in Luke-Acts" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 2009).

[10] Brink, *Unmet Expectations*, 22.

[11] Brink, *Unmet Expectations*, 63.

disciples."[12] A major flaw of this approach is the need to argue that there was one common set of stereotypes known and accepted by Luke and his audience, and that it presented soldiers in a negative way. As I will show, this approach does not do justice to the different ways that the sources portray Roman soldiers and centurions. The need to argue for a common set of negative stereotypes guides Brink's selection of the primary sources and her treatment of the evidence. Although her treatment of the sources is usually fair, she sometimes over-interprets them in order to advance her argument that they present the military negatively. An adequate assessment of the literary function of the Roman military in general, and centurions in particular, in the narrative of Luke-Acts still remains to be done and is the goal of this dissertation.

Roman military historians have treated the subject of the Roman army extensively. Beginning with Theodor Mommsen, scholars considered the development of the Roman army within the larger context of the Roman imperial system.[13] Following Alfred von Domaszewski's seminal *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres*, a number of studies focused on the matters of Roman army structure, recruitment, composition, functions, and other issues pertaining to the army as a military institution.[14] Numerous works

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[12] Brink, *Unmet Expectations*, 275.

[13] Theodor Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1888); Lawrence Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1984); William V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327–70 B.C.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Arthur M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 48: Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Simon James, *Rome & the Sword: How Warriors & Weapons Shaped Roman History* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011).

[14] Alfred von Domaszewski, *Die Rangordnung des römischen Heeres* (Bonner Jahrbücher; Bonn: A. Marcus und E. Weber's Verlag, 1908); H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1928); R. W. Davis, "The Daily Life of the Roman Soldier under the Principate," *ANRW* 2.1:299–338; Brian Dobson, "The Significance of the Centurion and '*Primipilaris*' in the Roman Army and Administration," *ANRW* 2.1:392–434; David. J. Breeze, "The Career Structure below the Centurionate during the Principate," *ANRW* 2.1:435–51; Denis B. Saddington, "The Development of the Roman Auxiliary Forces from Augustus to Trajan," *ANRW* 2.3:176–201; Michael P. Speidel, "The Rise of Ethnic

specifically addressed the Roman military presence in Judaea.[15] Some of the authors considered the Roman imperial army within the larger context of society, exploring the nature and degree of interaction between Roman soldiers and the local population of the provinces.[16] A recent dissertation by Graeme A. Ward focused specifically on the military and social roles of Roman centurions during the late Republic and Principate.[17] However, in spite of the abundance of research on Roman military, none of these authors made the depiction and function of the military in the New Testament texts the focus of their study, limiting their involvement with the New Testament evidence to occasional brief remarks. To fill in that void, this dissertation will apply the insights provided by both the primary sources and the works of Roman military historians to the relevant passages in Luke-Acts.

Units in the Roman Imperial Army," *ANRW* 2.3:202–31; Roy W. Davies, *Service in the Roman Army* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1989).

[15] These include Benjamin Isaac, "Roman Colonies in Judaea: The Foundation of Aelia Capitolina," *Talanta* 12–13 (1980–1981): 31–54; Shimon Applebaum, *Judaea in Hellenistic and Roman Times: Historical and Archaeological Essays* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 40; Leiden: Brill, 1989); Michael P. Speidel, "The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators," in *Roman Army Studies* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992), 2:224–32; Jonathan Roth, "The Army and the Economy in Judaea and Palestine," in *The Roman Army and the Economy* (ed. Paul Erdkamp; Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2002), 375–97.

[16] Ramsay MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire* (Harvard Historical Monographs 52; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); Richard Alston, *Soldier And Society In Roman Egypt: A Social History* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East* (rev. ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East, 31 B.C.–A.D. 337* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993); C. R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire: A Social and Economic Study* (Ancient Society and History; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); David Cherry, *Frontier and Society in Roman North Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Nigel Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities, and Civilians in Roman Syria* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Sara Elise Phang, *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 B.C.–A.D. 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army* (Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 24; Leiden: Brill, 2001).

[17] Graeme A. Ward, "Centurions: The Practice of Roman Officership" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2012).

II. The Scope, Methodology, and Argument of the Study

This dissertation will consider the role of the Roman centurion in the narrative of Luke-Acts. First, I will analyze, compare, and contrast the treatment of the Roman soldiers in general and Roman centurions in particular (where available) in the Greco-Roman and Jewish sources, including both literary and non-literary evidence. This will provide the context and insight for explicating the role of the centurion in Luke's writings. Then, I will examine the relevant passages in Luke-Acts focusing on the accounts of Luke 7:1-10 and Acts 10:1-11:18, where the role of the centurion is most conspicuous. My analysis will show that 1) contemporary evidence reveals a common perception of the Roman centurion as a principal representative of the Roman imperial power, and that 2) based on that perception, Luke-Acts employs centurions in the role of prototypical Gentile believers in anticipation of the Christian mission to the Empire.

III. The Plan of the Study

Chapter 1, *Luke-Acts in the Roman Military Setting*, will survey the background data pertinent to the following analysis of the sources, including the place and role of the centurion in military organization and structure, the phenomenon of the army as the basis of the ruling power in the period of the late first century B.C.E.—first century C.E., the Roman military regiments in Palestine, the role of the Roman army in provincial administration, Luke's military terminology, and Roman military units in Luke-Acts. Chapter 2, *The Image of the Roman Soldier in Greco-Roman Sources*, will discuss Greco-Roman witnesses that contribute to understanding of the image of the Roman soldier, including the historical treatises of Polybius, Julius Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, and Appian; the biographical writings of Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch,

and Suetonius; the works of Plautus, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Petronius, Quintilian, Epictetus, Juvenal, Fronto, and Apuleius; and non-literary evidence. Chapter 3, *The Image of the Roman Soldier in Jewish Sources*, will engage the relevant Jewish witnesses, including 1 Maccabees, certain Qumran witnesses, pseudepigraphic sources, the historical works of Philo, and non-literary evidence. The examination of the works of Josephus, who provides the majority of the relevant material, will occupy most of the chapter. Chapter 4, *The Roman Military in Luke-Acts*, will examine the accounts in Luke's two-volume work that involve military The accounts of Luke 7, Jesus and the centurion at Capernaum, and Acts 10–11, the birth of the Gentile church in the house of the centurion Cornelius, are central for explicating the role of the centurion in Luke-Acts and will be examined in detail in the second half of the chapter. Finally, the *Conclusion* will review the findings of the entire study and summarize the results.

Chapter 1: Luke-Acts in the Roman Military Setting

I. The Purpose and Scope of this Chapter

The first words of Acts 10 introduce the reader to a Roman military setting. The concrete language of Luke's description suggests the importance of the details. Luke reports that Cornelius, who is about to become the first Gentile convert to Christianity, holds a specific military post of centurion and serves in a specific army unit with a specific name. Apparently, Luke intends this remarkably detailed description to convey a certain meaning to his reader; otherwise, there would be no need for him to be so precise.

What is the meaning of these details? What is their significance for the current stage in the development of the plot? What is their function in the narrative as a whole? Regretfully, these questions are typically ignored in commentaries on the book of Acts. In order to eliminate this deficiency, the present chapter will survey the aspects of the Roman military system relevant for understanding the presentation of the Roman army in the book of Acts. First, the chapter will outline the structure and organization of the Roman army of the first century C.E. and provide the basis for understanding the importance of the centurion's office in the Roman military system. Second, it will highlight the issue of the army's allegiance to an individual general or ruler. This issue is prevalent in the literary sources, which will be considered in the following chapter, and is especially prominent in the year of the four emperors of 68–69 C.E. that is chronologically close to the composition of Luke-Acts.[18] Third, this chapter will survey the Roman military presence in Palestine from the conquest of Pompey in 63 B.C.E. through the period under the Flavian emperors. It will illuminate the references to the

[18] For discussion of the date of the composition of Acts see, among others, Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 51–55.

Roman regiments that appear in Acts and underscore the impact of the Roman army on the affairs in Palestine in the period immediately prior the composition of Luke's works.

II. The Significance of the Centurion's Office in the Roman Army

A. The Place and Role of the Centurion in the Structure of a Legion

After the humiliation that Rome suffered from the Celtic tribes who swept down Italy and destroyed much of the city in the end of the fourth century B.C.E., the re-organization of the Roman army into a more efficient fighting machine became imperative.[19] Livy, in his narration of the events of that period, speaks of the innovative and more efficient legion, which replaced the rigid formations of the phalanx, ineffective against a highly mobile enemy.[20] As described by Livy, the legion was divided into three main ranks, allowing greater freedom of maneuver and flexibility.[21] According to Polybius, the legion was divided into the same three main ranks, with the addition of the lightly armed troops conscripted from the poorer citizens, who would harass the enemy before the engagement of the main forces.[22] Each of the three main ranks was divided into ten *manipuli*, and every *manipulus* was divided into two centuries, each led by a

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[19] Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries A.D*. (3d ed.; Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1985), 4–5.

[20] Livy 8.8.2–13. The size of the Republican legion was set annually by the Senate's decree depending on the availability of recruits and the needs of the army; thus, its size varied from year to year. Polybius 6.20.8-9, reports that normally a legion numbered 4,200 infantry, but in times of emergencies could be brought up to 5,000; cf. Livy 22.36. The size of the imperial legion will be discussed further.

[21] In the front there was a rank of the younger *hastati*, some light and some heavily armed, followed by more experienced heavily armed *principes*. The third rank consisted of the veteran and heavily armed *triarii*. The *hastati* would engage the enemy first, and if unsuccessful, would retreat through the gaps into the *manipuli* of the *principes,* who would replace them in the fight. If the *principes* were pushed back, the third rank of the *triarii* would come to their aid. These three main ranks were backed up by the younger *rorarii* and the least dependable and thus rearmost *accensi*.

[22] Polybius 6.20–21. The light troops had the name of the *velites*. Thus, the legion included 600 *triarii*, 1,200 *principes*, and 1,200 *hastati* (Polybius 6.21.9), which would mean that 1,200 *velites* comprised the rest of the 4,200 soldiers.

centurion. The *manipuli* of the foremost two ranks numbered 160 soldiers each, thus producing centuries of eighty men.[23]

This structure of the legion, based on the financial ability of the soldiers to outfit themselves with certain types of equipment, apparently disappeared around the time of Gaius Marius (157–86 B.C.E.) as part of the wider military changes of the late second century B.C.E.[24] Prior to Marius, the two consuls elected annually were in charge of two citizen legions each.[25] At the end of the campaign, which could last from a few months to several years, the legions were disbanded. Overall, the citizens were required to serve for sixteen—and in time of emergency—for twenty years.[26] However, in the second century B.C.E., the growing number of the provinces necessitated continuous maintenance of an army of several legions.[27] This required a larger number of soldiers continuously available, as well as provided an opportunity of permanent commitment to military service, that is, to the career of a professional soldier, and the beginning of a standing army.

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[23] The number of the soldiers in one *manipulus* is obtained through dividing every type of the infantry by ten, except the *velites.* Thus, one *manipulus* contains 120 *hastati*, or 120 *principes*, or sixty *triarii* (Polybius 6.24.2-5). The *velites* are divided equally between all the thirty *manipuli* (Polybius 6.24.4); i.e., 1,200 divided by thirty equals forty *velites* per a *manipulus*. Thus, every *manipulus* of the *hastati* and the *principes* has 160 soldiers. Since a *manipulus* consists of two centuries, every century numbers eighty men, and not a hundred, as the term may imply. We are, however, left with the problem of the *triarii* with only half the number of men, but with ten *manipuli* and twenty centurions. In any case, eighty and not a hundred men seems to appear as the number of the soldiers in a century already in the Republican legion, contrary to the widespread opinion expressed in numerous commentaries on Acts 10; see n. 34.

[24] Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 21.

[25] Polybius, 6.32.6; the actual number of the legions could vary depending on the campaign. For discussion, see Kate Gilliver, "The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army," in *A Companion to the Roman Army* (ed. Paul A. Erdkamp; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; Ancient History; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 190.

[26] Polybius, 6.19.2–4.

[27] Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 16.

Although an option of voluntary enlistment had been established at least since the third century B.C.E., prior to Marius a citizen must have met a minimum property qualification to be eligible for service, whether by the draft or voluntary enlistment.[28] Otherwise a citizen was classified in the category of the *capite censi*, and was normally exempted from service in the legions.[29] This required minimum was repeatedly reduced.[30] In 107 B.C.E., Marius, having difficulties in levying enough soldiers for the war against the Numidian king Jugurtha, made the final step and opened the army to the *capite censi*, accepting volunteers without requiring any property qualification.[31]

The far-reaching consequences of this innovation for the future of the Roman state will be discussed below. Its immediate outcome concerned the structure of the legion—the abolishment of the property qualifications eliminated the division into the ranks based on the soldier's ability to afford a certain type of equipment. The legion

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[28] Livy 32.9.1, describing the enlistment of 198 B.C.E., probably reflects common practice—experienced soldiers reenlisting voluntarily were preferred to a fresh conscript. Appian, *Iber.* 84.365, reports that P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus, consul in 134 B.C.E., brought 4,000 volunteers to the province of Spain instead of drafting a new army. Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 16, points out that the army, which P. Licinius Crassus raised to fight the third Macedonian War against Perseus in 171–168 B.C.E., was largely formed of volunteers.

[29] According to Livy 1.43, "the classes" were established by Servius Tullius, based upon property qualifications. The *capite censi*, "the headcount," were those below the lowest Servian class, without property and exempt from military service, except in times of crisis, such as the defeat at Cannae in 216 B.C.E., when legions had even been recruited from slaves freed for that purpose.

[30] The reductions occurred due to the series of catastrophic defeats at the beginning of the Second Punic war in the late third century B.C.E., and in the second half of the second century B.C.E. during the wars in Spain. See Pierre Cagniart, "The Late Republican Army (146–30 BC)," in *A Companion to the Roman Army* (ed. Paul A. Erdkamp; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; Ancient History; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 81. The earliest known qualification of 11,000 *asses* recorded by Livy 1.43.7, was, according to Polybius 6.19.2, reduced to 4,000 in the mid-second century, and apparently to 1,500 by 129 B.C.E. (Cicero, *Resp.* 2.40). See Keppie, *Roman Army*, 61–63.

[31] Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 86.2; Plutarch, *Mar.* 9.1.

became a uniform regiment, numerically divided into cohorts.[32] After Marius, the cohort appears to be the regular tactical division.[33] But whether in the manipular legion with several distinct ranks, or in the legion subdivided into uniform cohorts, a century, each led by its own centurion, remained the basic tactical unit.

The evidence indicates that under the Principate, the century comprised eighty men at its full strength.[34] A century was subdivided into ten *contubernia* of eight men, who shared a tent in the field camp or a pair of adjacent rooms in a permanent barrack.[35] Six centuries comprised a cohort of 480 soldiers.[36] Ten cohorts made up a legion of 4,800

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[32] Based on the accounts in Sallust, *Bell. Jug*. 49, 51, 100. Parker, *Legions*, 28, suggests that the last time the *manipuli* were definitely employed in battle was in the war of Q. Caecilius Metellus against Jugurtha in 111–105 B.C.E. Webster, *Roman Imperial Army,* 22, points out that although, according to Polybius, the cohort comprising three *manipuli* was used by Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus as a tactical division against Hasdrubal in the battle of Ilipa (206 B.C.E.), the three traditional battle-lines were deployed against Hannibal at Zama (202 B.C.E.). Polybius does not refer to the cohorts again, but continues to speak of the *manipuli*. Livy, on the other hand, speaks of cohorts frequently, but uses the term indiscriminately in conjunction with manipuli (e.g., 22.5.7).

[33] Thus, Julius Caesar consistently speaks of the cohort as his tactical regiment. Some commentators on Acts describing the organization of the imperial legion, erroneously speak of the manipulus as the tactical unit; e.g, Broughton, *Roman Army*, 5:427; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:498; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 449.

[34] Confusion over the number of soldiers in a century is a common problem of New Testament commentators. For instance, BDAG, 298-99; Broughton, *Roman Army*, 5:428; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:498; F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (3d rev. and enl. ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 252; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 449, all erroneously report that a century numbered a hundred men. This mistake leads to further errors in reporting the number of the soldiers in the cohort and in the legion. For detailed discussion of the data on the size of the century, the cohort, and the legion in the primary sources, see Jonathan Roth, "The Size and Organization of the Roman Imperial Legion," *Historia* 43 (1994): 344–62.

[35] Ps. Hyginus, *De mun. castr*. 1.2–6; see a translation and a commentary in Catherine M. Gilliver, "The *de munitionibus castrorum*: Text and Translation," *JRMES* 4 (1993): 33–48. This handbook on building a legionary camp was probably written in the first or second century C.E., and thus is the most contemporary source for the period under consideration on the size of a century.

[36] Dio 76.12.5 speaks of a unit of 550 men, from which some infer a legion of 5,500 soldiers; see Roth, *Size and Organization*, 348. The number, however, more likely refers to a detachment, *vexillatio*. Roth, *Size and Organization*, 354–55, points out that Ps. Hyg., *De mun. castr.* 1.4, 5.2–3, gives the strength of the century as eighty soldiers (*milites*), but says that a cohort of six centuries had 600 men (*homines*). Roth explains the discrepancy by proposing that the extra people in a cohort were military slaves, who were, in particular, responsible for defending the camp when legions went into battle. For slaves in camp, see Birgitta Hoffmann, "The Quarters of Legionary Centurions of the Principate," *Britannia* 26 (1995): 111.

infantrymen.[37] Thus, there were nominally sixty centurions in a legion.[38]

Centurions were known to stay in service for at least the required period of twenty-five years, and often longer. There is evidence showing that some of them served to quite senior age, making their service in the army literally a lifetime career.[39] The *legatus legionis*, who commanded a legion, usually held the post for no more than three or four years.[40] Six military tribunes, who assisted the legion's legate, usually served for the same short period.[41] Therefore, unlike the higher officers in the legion, the centurions had extensive military experience and established ties with the rank-and-file soldiers. In other words, the centurions were the officers who constituted the backbone of the legion

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[37] Josephus, *B.J.* 3.6.2, reports that a regiment of 120 cavalrymen was included in each legion, probably for scouting and communication, since the auxiliary forces provided the majority of cavalry. The regiments of auxiliary forces are discussed below.

[38] According to Ps. Hyg. *De mun. castr.* 3–4, and Vegetius, 2.8, the size of the first cohort was milliary (800 soldiers) with five double centuries, 160 soldiers each. In that case, the number of the centuries in the legion would be fifty-nine. However, Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.23.3, reports that in 14 C.E. mutineers gave the senior centurion of the legion sixty lashes, one for each century in the legion, which presupposes that the first cohort also had six, not five, centuries. Also, excavations at the Julio-Claudian camp at Vetera show that its military hospital had sixty wards, presumably one for each century. Therefore, the change to the double strength cohort probably occurred later in the first century C.E., possibly not earlier than the time of the Flavian dynasty. See Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 110, and Roth, *Size and Organization*, 358–61, for discussion of the inscriptional and archaeological evidence.

[39] Suetonius, *Cal.* 44, speaks of a well advanced age of some of the senior centurions. Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.193, mentions a sixtieth year of service in the centurion's office.

[40] Gilliver, *Augustan Reform*, 113. Brian Campbell, "Who Were the '*Viri Militares*'?" *JRS* 65 (1975): 11–31, argues that the careers of the provincial legates usually show no military emphasis or signs of preparation for military commands. By the late Republic, the generals appointed their clients and friends, who usually also were senators or their sons, as legates in command of one or more legions. Under the Principate, the emperor continued this practice and greatly systematized the army as a standing force. He personally chose legates of the senatorial status (except for two legions in Egypt, which were commanded by equestrians), and these were in charge of most of the imperial legions. If the army stationed in a single province comprised more than one legion, a senior legate, the *legatus pro praetore*, was in charge of the army and thus in command of other legates. The *legatus* was also charged with many functions typically handled by civilian governors in non-military (senatorial) provinces.

[41] Gilliver, *Augustan Reform*, 120. The senior tribune, the *tribunus laticlavius*, was the second person in command of the legion after the legate and was a man in the beginning of his senatorial career. The other five, the *tribuni angusticlavii*, were men of the equestrian status and were likely to have some military experience gained through command of an auxiliary cohort.

and served as intermediaries between the soldiers and the higher commanding officers.

The *primus pilus*, the centurion in command of the first century of the first cohort, ranked above all the other centurions in the legion. This senior centurion was more highly paid and expected a substantial bonus upon discharge, sufficient to acquire equestrian status. He could potentially continue the service as the *praefectus castrorum*, advance to the command of the Praetorian Guard, or even be appointed as a procurator of one of the provinces.[42] The *primus pilus* and the other centurions of the first cohort, known as the *primi ordines*, apparently were the members of the commanding staff consulted by the general during the campaign.[43]

A post of the centurion could be filled from several sources. Under the Republic, an experienced soldier from the ranks could be promoted to centurion on the battlefield.[44] Under the Principate, those qualities remained in demand and, along with literacy, could lead to the soldier's direct promotion to the office of centurion from the ranks as a matter of service.[45] This was usually possible only after at least a decade of faithful performance

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[42] See Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 114, and especially Dobson, *Significance of the Centurion*, 392–434, for discussion of the responsibilities and advantages of the position. The *praefectus castrorum*—the prefect of the camp—was the third in command after the legate and the senior tribune. According to Vegetius 2.42, his duties included the administration of the camp or fort and logistics, such as the food supply, munitions, and equipment. Beginning with Augustus, the *praefectus castrorum* was likely a former tribune or *primus pilus*, and by the reign of Claudius the latter case was the most common; see Gilliver, *Augustan Reform*, 190. Each of the legions stationed in Egypt was commanded by its *praefectus castrorum* to accommodate Augustus' concerns about the presence of senators in that province. For many *primipilares* the post of the *praefectus castrorum* was the peak of their army career, so it was held into advanced years. For example, *ILS* 8233 reports an inscription on the tombstone of M. Aurelius Alexander, a *primus pilus* who died at the age of seventy-two. For more examples, see Dobson, *Significance of the Centurion*, 420–21.

[43] According to Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 1.41.3, the *primi ordines* along with the tribunes likely formed a select staff that the general consulted.

[44] Livy 42.34.

[45] *BGU* 423, a second-century letter from a recruit to his father, expresses his hope for a quick advancement due to his prior education.

of duty.[46] Other routes to the office of the centurion were through the ranks of the Praetorian Guard in Rome and through service in an auxiliary unit.[47] Also, a civilian could begin his service in the army from the post of the centurion, if he held a high social status, such as that of a magistrate's office in a municipal town.[48] A recommendation from an influential patron would be crucial in this case.[49] The post could even attract a person of equestrian status, as some inscriptions refer to the centurions *ex equite Romano*.[50] Regardless of the way of progress to the office of centurion, apparently the candidate would have to attain a certain degree of Romanization in order to be eligible for the position.[51] The known names of centurions, including the name of Cornelius,

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[46] *ILS* 2666b reports a long career of L. Proculus from *legio V Macedonica*. Proculus began his service as a soldier, was appointed as *beneficiarius legati*—clerk on the staff of the legate, then was promoted to the *optio ad spem ordinis*—the understudy of the centurion, and then served as a centurion of five legions (*legio V*, *legio I Italica*, *legio XI Claudia*, *legio XXV*, and *legio IX Hispania*). For discussion of the title *optio* see Domaszewski, *Rangordnung*, 14; David J. Breeze, "A Note on the Use of the Titles 'Optio' and 'Magister' below the Centurionate during the Principate, " *Britannia* 7 (1976): 127–33; David J. Breeze, "Pay Grades and Ranks below the Centurionate," *JRS* 61 (1971): 130–35; Breeze, *Career Structure*, 435–51. Under the Republic, when soldiers served for the length of the campaign, the promotion to the rank of centurion could happen significantly sooner. Livy 42.34 reports that certain Spurius Ligustinus was promoted to centurion after less than three years of campaigning, when he presumably was still in his 20s.

[47] Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 114. *CIL* 8.2354, which commemorates Trajan's Parthian victory, reports a *decurion* of an *ala*, who was promoted to centurion of *legio III Augusta* and later served as centurion of *legio XXX Ulpia Victrix.*

[48] *CIL* 2654, an inscription from the time of Hadrian, reports a certain Marcius Celer, municipal magistrate, who was appointed as centurion of *legio VII Gemina*, and later served as centurion of *legio XVI Flavia Firma.*

[49] Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 6.25, acquired an appointment to the office of centurion for a client with no prior military experience.

[50] *ILS* 2654–2656, 2660. The records of promotions indicate that the centurions of this type were likely to advance quickly to the rank of *primus pilus*.

[51] See Yann Le Bohec, *The Imperial Roman Army* (trans. Raphael Bate; London: B.T. Batsford, 1994), 77–78.

reveal that they came from the families that obtained Roman citizenship in the somewhat distant past and so were believed to have stronger ties to Rome.[52]

B. The Role of the Centurion in an Auxiliary Cohort

Acts 10:1 specifies that Cornelius was a centurion of a cohort named Ἰταλική. This reference points to an auxiliary cohort.[53] About half of the Roman Imperial army of the first century C.E. consisted of auxiliary units, and each had centurions. As early as the third century B.C.E., the non-Roman peoples provided specialty troops that the Romans, whose legions were primarily heavily-armed infantry, lacked or did not have in sufficient numbers.[54] These auxiliary troops included light infantry, archers, slingers, and cavalry.[55] The practice of employing the auxiliary forces accelerated during the last decades of the

[52] As Le Bohec, *Roman Army*, 78, points out, new citizens adopted their Roman *nomen* from the magistrate who naturalized them. In the time of the Principate, in the vast majority of cases it was the emperor. Thus, a Julius would have been a native whose family had been naturalized no later than the mid-first century B.C.E. The name of Cornelius mentioned in Acts 10 likely originated from a family enfranchised in the time of Sulla (see Appian, *Bell. civ.*, 1.100), more than a century prior to the events that Luke describes.

[53] Chris Thomas, "Claudius and the Roman Army Reforms," *Historia* 53 (2004): 434, points out that infantry auxiliary units were often named after the ethnic group from which they were originally recruited. Michael P. Speidel, "Auxiliary Units Named after Their Commanders: Four New Cases from Egypt," *Aegyptus* 62 (1982): 168, provides the evidence that auxiliary cavalry units were originally named after their commanding officers. Later on, the titles of the cavalry units became similar to the titles of the infantry regiments.

[54] In his description of an engagement of a thousand archers and slingers from Syracuse in 217 B.C.E. against Hannibal, Livy 22.37, says that already by that time it was customary for the Romans to use foreign forces. Speaking of the same event, Polybius 3.75, reports Roman employment of archers and light infantry from Crete.

[55] By the end of the second century B.C.E., non-citizen auxiliary troops entirely supplied cavalry, with the exception of 120 mounted scouts attached to a legion. George Leonard Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army* (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1971), 9–10, suggests that changes in the condition of military service, in particular hard and unprofitable Spanish campaigns of the mid-second century B.C.E., made it harder to recruit the members of the upper classes, who normally supplied cavalry. Since the latest reference to the *velites*, the legion's light infantry, is found in Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 46, in the context of war against Jugurtha, they seem to have disappeared about that time and probably were abolished by Marius.

Republic.[56] By the time of the Principate, the norm of supplementing the citizen legions of the army with more lightly armed auxiliary infantry and auxiliary cavalry had been firmly established.

Under Augustus, auxiliary units became considerably more numerous and were made a regular part of the army. As Augustus pursued a policy of expansion, new units were recruited from the provinces.[57] By the end of his rule the number of the auxiliaries was approximately equal to those serving as legionaries. Additionally, the troops of client kings could be called upon to assist when required.[58] Under the Principate, the client kings were allowed to maintain armies and were obliged to furnish them at Rome's request.[59] As client kingdoms gradually became parts of the Empire, their troops were absorbed into the Roman army as auxiliary regiments.[60]

At the end of their service, auxiliary soldiers acquired Roman citizenship. This practice had become standard by the time of Claudius, who limited the length of their

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[56] Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 2.7, reports that his troops included Cretan archers, Balearic slingers, and Numidian cavalry. Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 10–11, points out that during the civil war, both Caesar and Pompey used non-Roman cavalry.

[57] Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 16–17; Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 145. The number of auxiliary units and annual quota of recruits were probably organized relative to the census of the population conducted for the purpose of taxation. Apparently different groups were treated differently—for instance, according to Tacitus, *Germ.* 29, the Batavians were exempt from paying taxes and were reserved exclusively for military service due to their fighting qualities. Inscriptions demonstrate that with the exception of Greece, every part of the Empire contributed its quota.

[58] Paul A. Holder, *Studies in the Auxilia of the Roman Army from Augustus to Trajan* (BAR International Series 70; Oxford: BAR, 1980), 140.

[59] Josephus, *B.J.* 3.4.2 reports that Antiochus III of Commagene, Agrippa II, Sohaemus of Emesa, and Malchus of Damascus contributed 15,000 men to the army, which Vespasian led into Palestine in the spring of 67 C.E.

[60] When in 6. C.E. Judaea came under direct Roman rule, the Sebastenian and Caesarean troops, formerly the army of Herod the Great and then Archelaus, likely became Roman auxiliary units.

service to thirty years and granted citizenship after twenty-five.[61] Under the Flavian emperors, the length of service was further reduced to twenty-five years, and thus the auxiliary soldiers became citizens upon discharge.[62] In exceptional cases, whole units were granted citizenship for distinguished service.[63] Although the award was retained in the name of the unit permanently, only the soldiers serving in the unit at the time of the award became citizens, whereas those who would join the unit later would receive their citizenship in a standard way upon the completion of the required years of service.[64]

The cohort named Ἰταλική in Acts 10:1 likely refers to the *cohors II Italica voluntariorum civium romanorum*, which was attested by other sources of the second half of the first century C.E. as a part of the Syrian army.[65] Although the auxiliary troops for

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[61] Holder, *Studies*, 47–48; Eric Birley, "Before Diplomas, and the Claudian Reform," in *Heer und Integrationspolitik: Die römischen Militärdiplome als historische Quelle* (ed. Werner Eck and Hartrnut Wolff; Köln: Böhlau, 1986), 249–50; Thomas, *Reforms*, 437.

[62] The privileges recorded on the discharge diplomas included *conubium*, which conferred full legalization of matrimonial union and citizenship for the wife and the descendants of the recipient; see Géza Alföldy, "Zur Beurteilung der Militärdiplome der Auxiliersoldaten," *Historia* 17 (1968): 216; Holder, *Studies*, 141–42; Thomas, *Reforms*, 437–38. The discharge diplomas provide lists of units in provinces at a particular date and thus supply important data for the Roman military history. See collections of discharge diplomas in Margaret M. Roxan, *Roman Military Diplomas 1954–1977* (Occasional Publication, Institute of Archaeology, University of London 2; London: Institute of Archaeology, 1978); Margaret M. Roxan, Helen Ganiaris, and J. C. Mann, *Roman Military Diplomas 1978–1984* (Occasional Publication, Institute of Archaeology 9; London: Institute of Archaeology, 1985); Margaret M. Roxan and Paul A. Holder, *Roman Military Diplomas* (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies; Supplement 82; London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2003). If the recipient already had a family, the names of the family members were also included in the text. Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 32, points out that the frequency of this occurrence shows the extent to which the military authorities permitted the soldiers to form family ties while on active service. The marriage of soldiers will be discussed in Chapter 4.

[63] For instance, *ILS* 2590 reports that the *cohors I Lepidiana equitata civium romanorum* had been awarded a block grant of Roman citizenship.

[64] There is no evidence that at the time of their discharge auxiliaries also received a monetary premium, as it was the case with legionaries. Their non-citizen status also excluded them from a share in the donatives given by the emperors, with the exception of the citizen units—Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.8.2. Dio, 59.2.3, confirms that in 37 C.E. only citizen troops received the donative paid by Caligula. Also see J. B. Campbell, *The Emperor and the Roman Army, 31 BC–AD 235* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 166.

[65] This argument will be discussed below.

the most part were recruited from non-citizens, the name *cohors civium romanorum voluntariorum* indicates that originally the cohort was recruited from citizen volunteers. Such citizen cohorts were usually raised in times of emergencies, but the circumstances of the creation of the *cohors II Italica civium romanorum* are unknown.[66]

The citizen auxiliary cohorts enjoyed special status, comparable to the status of the legions, which is seen from the fact that they, along with the legions, were the recipients of donatives in Augustus's will, whereas the non-citizen auxiliary units were excluded.[67] However, the auxiliary units stationed in a province for a protracted period of time had to replace retiring soldiers by means of local recruitment, and as a consequence, non-citizen recruits could be accepted into the ranks of a *cohors civium Romanorum*.[68] As a result, within a generation of a unit moving out of the area of its origin, its name likely became merely honorary, and the privileged position of the *civium Romanorum* regiments may have eventually ceased.[69]

The organizational structure of auxiliary troops differed from that of the legions. Three types of auxiliary units are known: infantry *cohors*, *cohors equitata* that contained

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[66] For instance, in 6 C.E., at the time of the Pannonian revolt, thirty-two cohorts of volunteers were recruited, and ten of them continued in existence afterwards. Another instance of an emergency levy was after the massacre of three Roman legions under the command of Varus by the Germans in 9 C.E., which led to creation of several voluntary cohorts of the citizen soldiers with the goal of replacement of this loss of the Roman manpower on the Rhine; see Suetonius, *Aug*. 25; Dio, 55.31; 56.23; Michael P. Speidel, "Citizen Cohorts in the Roman Imperial Army: New Data on the Cohorts Apula, Campana, and III Campestris," in *Roman Army Studies* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1984), 1:97.

[67] Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.8.2; Dio, 59.2.3.

[68] According to George Ronald Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), 218, n. 529, *CIL* 16, Dipl. 38, which dates to 93 C.E., records a grant of citizenship and *conubium* to veterans of *cohors VIII voluntariorum civium Romanorum*, who are further defined as those *qui peregrinae condicionis probati erant*. As Watson points out, this means that as early as 68 C.E., i.e., twenty-five years prior to their discharge, the *cohortes civium Romanorum* were at least partially recruited from non-citizens.

[69] Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 70.

both infantry and cavalry, and cavalry *ala*. Numerically, the units were either quingenary or milliary.[70] A quingenary cohort consisted of six centuries of eighty men each, which corresponds to a legionary cohort; a milliary cohort included ten centuries of eighty men each.[71] Quingenary and milliary *cohors equitata* had 120 or 240 cavalry in addition to the infantry of a quingenary or milliary cohort accordingly. Quingenary and milliary *alae* contained either 16 or 24 *turmae* of 32 cavalrymen each, thus amounting to 512 or 768 men.[72]

A *praefectus* commanded an *ala* or a *cohors quingenaria*; *cohortes miliariae* and the *cohortes civium Romanorum* were commanded by *tribuni*.[73] Thus, an auxiliary unit had only one senior officer, who was likely to be a young man without any previous military experience holding his first command for a period up to four years. Therefore, as was the case in the legions, the centurions of auxiliary regiments—or decurions in cavalry formations—were of prime importance, maintaining the unit's cohesion, discipline and effectiveness. The auxiliary centurions could be promoted to the post from the ranks of the auxiliary soldiers, from the ranks of the legionary soldiers, or enter the

[70] See Cheesman, *Auxilia*, 25–28, for discussion of the size of the auxiliary units. Josephus, *B.J.* 3.67, supplies the first known record of the milliary units; thus, they likely were a later development.

[71] Ps. Hyg., *De mun. castr.* 16, 26–28; also see Holder, *Studies*, 8.

[72] Gilliver, *Augustan Reform*, 193, points out that the official strength reports for various cohorts stationed throughout the Empire reveals that actual numbers deviated from the theoretical "paper" strength of the units. Auxiliary regiments could be over or under their theoretical strength, and it is probable that the actual strength of legions also varied from their theoretical strength.

[73] Cheesman, *Auxilia* 36. Thomas, *Reforms*, 429, observes that prior to Claudius, auxiliary commands were appointments without existing command structure and could be held by senators, equestrians, or *primipilares.*

service in that position through direct appointment in recognition of their higher civilian status, such as a magistrate of a provincial town or a member of an aristocratic family.[74]

In sum, both in a legion and in an auxiliary cohort, the centurions were the officers most represented numerically and with most military experience. They were the intermediaries between the few senior commanders and the ranks of soldiers, responsible for their century's discipline, cohesion, and effectiveness on the battlefield.

II. The Army and the Ruling Power

The army's role in the contest for power in Rome during the civil wars of the first century B.C.E. and the year of the four emperors greatly influenced the depiction of the Roman soldier in the Greco-Roman literary sources, considered in the following chapter. In view of the chronological proximity of the turbulent year of 68–69 C.E. to the time of the composition of the book of Acts, the issue of the army's relationship to the ruling power in Rome should be taken into account for the assessment of Luke's depiction of the army in his work. The following section will address the issues of the army's loyalty to the ruler and its involvement in the affairs of the state beginning with Marius and until the time of the composition of Luke-Acts.

The roots of the army's loyalty to a certain general, which made it possible for the legions to march on Rome and to fight each other in the civil wars, lay in the reforms of Marius, whose abolishment of property qualifications for the military service facilitated the transformation of loyalty of the soldiers from the state to their commander.[75]

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[74] Holder, *Studies*, 86–87.

[75] Although the recruitment of men without any property qualification was not unprecedented prior to Marius (see n. 29), he had the final say in this regard, since the qualification was never reinstated after him.

Although the booty acquired during the campaign was already an attraction of military service prior to Marius, now the newly recruited *capite censi*, who did not have a property to return to, looked at their general with the expectation of discharge benefits after the completion of the campaign.[76] L. Cornelius Sulla advanced the bond of the army with its general to a new level. In 88 B.C.E., Sulla and his legions for the first time in history marched on Rome in order to reverse the ruling of the Senate that deprived them of the campaign to the lucrative East. By doing so, the army of Sulla unambiguously put its allegiance to its general before its devotion to the conventions of the *mos maiorum* and demonstrated its loyalty to the one who could reward their service, even if it meant civil war.

A. The Army and the Julio-Claudian Emperors

Julius Caesar owed his victory in the civil war of 49–45 B.C.E. to his legions, whose loyalty he had secured by years of campaigning in Gaul, the doubling of their pay, and promises of rewards upon their discharge. Following Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March, his 19-year old heir Octavian, future Augustus, won the allegiance of his father's soldiers. After his legionaries marched on Rome and made him consul, he rewarded them with a substantial donative that amounted to a sum about ten times their annual pay.[77]

Following the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E., Augustus found himself in charge of an enormous force of about sixty legions and a fleet. In order to maintain order and stay

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[76] Cf. Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 86.2–3.

[77] Dio 46.42.4–43.4; 46.46.1–7; Appian *Bell. civ.* 3.13.94.

in power, he needed a loyal army. The presence of so many military regiments, including those that had sworn allegiance to factions opposing him in the Civil War, was contrary to the welfare of the state.[78] A reduction of the army and its reorganization were necessary. The majority of the soldiers was discharged and received land and cash grants.[79] The army of twenty-eight loyal legions remained in service spread around in the provinces of the Empire.[80] To minimize the risk of part of the army defecting to a popular commander and spawning the recurrence of civil war, Augustus acquired the control of those provinces that warranted the presence of legions.[81] He executed the command of these provinces through his handpicked *legati*, which permitted him to conduct an expansionary policy and to portray himself exclusively both as a conqueror and as a defender of the Empire.[82] For their military achievements made in his name, Augustus received special *dignitas*, which further reinforced his ties with the army.

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[78] Dio 52.27, speaking of the task before Augustus, notes that having excessive numbers of men under arms would cause στάσεις καὶ πόλεμοι.

[79] *Res gest. divi Aug.* 3, records the reduction of the army and rewarding of the veterans as the first actions of Augustus after the civil war, emphasizing the significance of the matter. Out of the half a million soldiers, Augustus discharged about 300,000 with the reward of land grants or cash bonuses. The Princeps ensured that the land was not confiscated, as was normally the case during the civil wars, but was purchased, and personally provided a total of 860,000,000 sesterces for the large-scale settlements of 30 and 14 B.C.E. Due to the enormity of expenses and scarcity of the land resource, increasingly the discharge premium was paid in cash rather than land.

[80] After the destruction of three of the legions in Germany in 9 C.E., twenty-five remained in service. The actual number of legions at any given time has been a matter of dispute. Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.5, reviews the military situation of 23 C.E. and lists eight legions on the Rhine, three in Spain, two in Africa, two in Egypt, four in Syria, two in Pannonia, two in Moesia, and two in Dalmatia, thus twenty-five in total. Although the number of legions fluctuated over the next two and a half centuries as units were destroyed, disbanded, and newly raised for campaigns, the total number of legions did not change considerably (cf. Dio 55.23–24). Jerome H. Farnum, *The Positioning of the Roman Imperial Legions* (BAR International Series 1458; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2005), 95–96, outlines the distribution of the legions by region for late first century B.C.E.–first century C.E.

[81] From the time of Augustus, Africa remained the only military province under the jurisdiction of the Senate, and had only one legion. According to Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.48, in 39 C.E. Caligula transferred the control over this legion from the proconsul of Africa to his legate.

[82] See n. 40.

As the expectation of monetary gain during the campaign and a reward upon its completion had been a principal motive for the loyalty of soldiers to their commander, Augustus instituted a regular income for the duration of the military service followed by a guaranteed bonus after the honorable discharge.[83] The Princeps personally financed five initial payments, which totaled the hundreds of millions sesterces.[84] To finance further retirement benefits, in 6 C.E. Augustus created the *aerarium militare*, the military treasury, which he endowed with a substantial amount of money from his personal funds.[85] The newly instituted taxes were to fund the treasury afterwards.[86] By introducing the fixed term of service, salary, definite retirement benefits, and specific funds to finance them, Augustus created a professional standing army loyal to his *persona*.

The *sacramentum* or oath of allegiance was another important instrument used to ensure the fidelity of the soldiers to their generals for the course of the campaign.[87] The generals of the turbulent years of the first century B.C.E. had begun to direct the oath to

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[83] Suetonius, *Jul.* 26, reports the amount of pay established by Caesar. For further discussion of army pay scales, see P. A. Brunt, "Pay and Superannuation in the Roman Army," *PBSR* 18 (1950): 50–71; M. Alexander Speidel, "Roman Army Pay Scales," *JRS* 82 (1992): 87–106. In setting the length of legionary service, Augustus drew on the traditional model and established the length of the service at sixteen years plus four in reserve. In 5 C.E. the duration of service was increased to twenty years plus five in reserve; probably soon thereafter the distinction between ordinary soldiers and those in reserve was dropped and the length of service was set at twenty-five years. Conscription through the *dilectus* could still be effected, in particular in times of emergencies, such as the Pannonian revolt and the destruction of three legions of Varus in 9 C.E., but volunteers constituted the vast majority of the army.

[84]According to *Res gest. divi Aug.* 16, the payments were made in 7, 6, 4, 3, and 2 B.C.E. and amounted to 400,000,000 sesterces. Dio 55.23.1, reports that the bonus was set at 12,000 sesterces, a sum exceeding thirteen years of soldier's pay.

[85] *Res gest. divi Aug* 17, quotes a sum of 170,000,000 sesterces.

[86] Dio 55.25.3; Suetonius, *Aug.* 49.2.

[87] Livy 22.38.

their *personae* in order to encourage the army's loyalty.[88] Augustus went a step further by requiring the *sacramentum* sworn to him to be repeated annually.[89] His successors followed this pattern, which resulted in the allegiance of the soldiers to their emperor becoming a literary *topos*: Epictetus (*ca.* 55–*ca.* 135 C.E.) admonishes philosophers to swear an oath to god like the soldiers do to Caesar, since the soldiers swear an oath to value the salvation of Caesar above everything.[90] The nature of the bonds between the army and the emperor imposed by the *sacramentum* was religious.[91] Breaking the oath was a transgression against the gods and punishable by death; it could only be dissolved by a special ceremony, *sacramentum*, upon discharge.[92] The emperor occupied a paramount place in the religion of the army, as revealed by *Feriale Duranum*, a papyrus discovered at the Syrian garrison of Dura Europos.[93] The papyrus contains the January–September section of the universally valid army religious calendar, listing dates and occasions of festival days.[94] Of the forty-one entries in the surviving section of the calendar, twenty-seven refer to the celebrations of the emperor cult, such as the emperor's birthday, the day of accession, and the dates of the deified emperors. Religion

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[88] Plutarch, *Sull.* 27.4.

[89] Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.55.

[90] Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.14.15.

[91] See *religio sacramenti* in Livy 26.48.12; 28.27.4; cf. Vegetius 2.5.

[92] Oliver Stoll, "The Religions of the Armies," in *A Companion to the Roman Army* (ed. Paul A. Erdkamp; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; Ancient History; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 455.

[93] *P. Dura* 54; see Arthur Darby Nock, "The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year" *HTR* 45 (1952): 187–252.

[94] Although the papyrus has been dated to the early third century C.E., the stock of the official festival calendar dates refers back to the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Inscriptions from the military provinces that provide the exact dates of their dedications correlate with the dates for the festivals prescribed in the *Feriale Duranum*, and thus indicate that the calendar was binding throughout the Empire. See Stoll, *Religions*, 455, for the references.

provided a cultic frame of reference specifically designed to supply regular symbolic interaction between emperor and the troops, creating a sense of closer relationship of soldiers to their ruler and strengthening their loyalty.[95] In sum, the soldiers saw the emperor as their patron, and the Princeps saw the troops as his army.[96]

The emperors following Augustus continued to take steps to maintain the loyalty of the troops, emphasize their ties with the army, and build their personal prestige on the army's military achievements. Tiberius acquired significant military standing as a general under Augustus, having led campaigns against the Parthians in 20 B.C.E., where he oversaw one of the proudest achievements of Augustus, the return of the standards lost by the Roman legions in a series of unfortunate wars. He went on to lead troops against the Alpine tribes in 15–14 B.C.E., the Illyrians in 12–9 B.C.E., and the Germans in 9–7 B.C.E. and 4–6 C.E. When Tiberius succeeded Augustus on the throne, his bond with the army was already established, and he no longer needed to validate his *virtus*. Thus, he did not conduct a major war of conquest, but did carry out several punitive campaigns through his *legates*, including strikes across the Rhine in 14–16 C.E., for which the Emperor's nephew Germanicus received a triumph, and the suppression of uprisings in North Africa in 17–24 C.E. and in Gaul in 21–22 C.E.[97] Realizing the expediency of having military support available close at hand, Tiberius built the barracks for the

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[95] Stoll, *Religions*, 455.

[96] Cf. *exercitus meus* and *classis mea* in *Res gest. divi Aug.* 15, 26, 30. Later sources speak of the army as the emperor's domain. *IGRR* 3.208, an inscription of 117 C.E., refers to Hadrian's army as τῶν ἱερῶν αὐτοῦ στρατευμάτων. *BGU* 423, a letter from a new recruit to the fleet to his father, demonstrates that the soldiers saw the emperor as their paymaster: the author reports that he received his travel money from Caesar.

[97] Suetonius, *Tib*. 37.4; Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.49–52, 55–71; 2.5–26, 52; 3.20–21, 40–47, 72–74; 4.23–26. Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.11, reports that in a document announced after his death, Augustus urged his successor to avoid further expansion of the Empire.

Praetorian Guard on the edge of Rome itself. For centuries, these troops influenced the choice of emperors, including several in the first. Neither the Emperor nor the Senate had any illusions about the military basis of imperial power. In the words of a later historian, "Tiberius gave to the senators an exhibition of the praetorian guard at drill, as if they were ignorant of the power of these troops; his purpose was to make them more afraid of him, when they saw his defenders to be so numerous and so strong."[98]

The regular payments during service, the discharge bonus, and the donatives given on special occasions remained the principal instruments used to maintain the loyalty of the army to the imperial household. Even the means of payment—the coins—which were the most widely distributed mass media of the time, frequently emphasized the imperial bond with the army.[99] Gaius, better known by his military camp name Caligula, was the first to issue a sesterce commemorating an imperial speech to the troops in Rome. The reverse of the coin depicts Caligula wearing a toga and standing on a raised platform; his right hand is raised in gesture towards five soldiers carrying military standards. The legend reads *adlocut[io] coh[ortium]*, "speech to the cohorts," referring to Caligula's address to the Praetorian Guard.[100] As Caligula paid the guardsmen 1,000 sesterces each upon ascension—the sum bequeathed to them in the will of Tiberius—he

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[98] Dio 57.24.5 (Cary and Foster, LCL). Tacitus, *Ann*. 6.3, reports that Tiberius severely rebuked Junius Gallio, who proposed that the Praetorians should acquire the privilege of sitting in the fourteen rows of the theatre after having served their campaigns. Harsh words of Tiberius emphasized that the soldiers could only receive benefits from the emperor himself. Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.1, relates that Claudius had the Senate pass an edict prohibiting soldiers from entering senators' houses to pay their respects as clients. These examples show that the emperor regarded himself as the sole patron of the army and jealously guarded that relationship.

[99] Even though only certain coins specifically emphasized the bond between the emperor and the army, most of the coins contained an image of the emperor and thus unambiguously pointed out the source of the soldier's monetary reward (cf. Luke 20:24–25; Mark 12:16–17; Matt 22:20–21).

[100] *BMC* I, Caligula, no. 33.

could have used the newly minted coins as the payment currency to both materially and ideologically strengthen his ties with the Guard. Caligula also sought to emphasize his bond with the army by exploiting the considerable popularity of his father Germanicus with the troops, calling himself *castrorum filius* and *pater exercituum*.[101]

Claudius was eager to stress his connection with the army throughout his reign and, in words of Suetonius, became "the first of the Caesars who resorted to bribery to secure the fidelity of the troops."[102] Claudius had strong reason to be especially grateful to the soldiers, owing his accession to the Praetorian guardsmen—after the assassination of Caligula, they conveyed Claudius to their camp and proclaimed him emperor, prompting the Senate to comply.[103] Two coins commemorated the occasion, portraying Claudius shaking hands with a soldier in the Praetorian camp. One of them features the legend *imperator receptus*, "the acceptance of the Emperor," the other—*praet[orianus] receptus*, "the acceptance of the praetorians," thus asserting the amicable spirit between the Emperor and the soldiers and their mutual recognition of each other's status.[104] Upon accession, Claudius paid the Guard a substantial donative of 15,000 sesterces, five times the normal year's pay of a guardsman, and likely used the commemorative coins as a part of the donative.[105] Moreover, all citizen troops throughout the Empire became the

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[101] Suetonius, *Cal.* 22.1. His military achievements, however, were insignificant. See Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.15.3; *Germ.* 37.5; Suetonius, *Cal.* 43–47; Dio 59.21.1–3.

[102] Suetonius, *Claud.* 10.4 (Rolfe, LCL).

[103] Suetonius, *Claud.* 10.1–4; Dio 60.1.1–4; Josephus, *A.J.* 19.212–260; *B.J.* 2.204–212.

[104] *BMC* I, Claudius, nos. 5, 8.

[105] Suetonius, *Claud.* 10.4.

recipients of a similar grant.[106] The emperors after Claudius followed his example, and the donative to the army upon one's accession to the throne became customary.[107]

The centrality of the army to the ruling power of Claudius was reaffirmed throughout his reign as the Emperor sought to built up his prestige through projecting the image of a great military leader. Claudius was the first after Augustus to continue the Augustan policy of expanding the Empire. Emulating the aspirations of Julius Caesar, he ordered the invasion of Britain, which began in 43 C.E. Having made a prearranged token appearance on the battlefield at a crucial part of the campaign, Claudius presided over the ceremony of the capitulation of some conquered tribes and returned to Rome to celebrate his triumph.[108] The inscription on the triumphal arch of Claudius declared that eleven British kings submitted to him and that he was the first emperor who brought the barbarians from across the ocean under the rule of the Roman people.[109] His other military achievements included the addition of two new provinces of Mauretania and Thracia to the Empire in 43 and 46 C.E., and expeditions along the Rhine and the Danube frontier. By the end of his reign, Claudius boasted twenty-seven military acclamations as *imperator*, more than any emperor until Constantine the Great.[110]

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[106] Although Suetonius mentions only the promise of money to the Guard, Josephus, *A.J.* 19.247, notes specifically that Claudius promised to the armies stationed throughout the Empire a grant similar to that he paid to the praetorians, although he names the sum of 5,000 *drachmae*, or 20,000 sesterces per person. Non-citizen *auxilia* would have been excluded from the donative, see n. 64.

[107] Dio 61.3.1, reports that Nero promised the Guard all that Claudius had given them. Dio 66.26.3, states that Domitian gave the soldiers the same donative as did Titus.

[108] Suetonius, *Claud.* 17.1; Dio, 60.21.

[109] *ILS* 216.

[110] *CIL* 6.1256.

B. The Army in the Year of the Four Emperors

The installment of Claudius to the throne by the soldiers marked the first intrusion of the military into the affairs of the state since the time of Augustus. Nero's removal and the subsequent struggle for the ruling power made it profoundly clear that the soldier's sword was its basis and guarantee.[111] In the period of eighteen months during 68–69 C.E., the army repeatedly marched on Rome and installed four successive emperors. Plutarch explains the turbulent times entirely by the actions of the army, and succinctly summarizes the events in two sentences:

> This [promise of financial reward] was at once the death of Nero, and soon afterwards of Galba: the one the soldiers abandoned to his fate in order to get their reward, the other they killed because they did not get it. Then, in trying to find someone who would give them as high a price, they destroyed themselves in a succession of revolts and treacheries before their expectations were satisfied.[112]

In 68 C.E., Galba, the governor of the province of *Hispania Tarraconensis*, through a promise of a substantial financial reward had acquired the support of the Praetorian Guard and marched on Rome. Abandoned by his supporters, Nero committed suicide. Galba became the first emperor who came to power on the shoulders of the soldiers and thereby revealed the secret of the Empire—"an emperor could be made elsewhere than at Rome."[113] Once in Rome, however, Galba upset the Praetorians by refusing to pay what had been promised. Taking advantage of the situation, Otho, Galba's former supporter, in turn promised the Praetorians money and instigated them to rise

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[111] Nero did not have any apparent interest in the military matters, and, according to Suetonius, *Nero* 18, even contemplated abandonment of some of the existing territories.

[112] Plutarch, *Galb.* 2.3 (Perrin and Cohoon, LCL). For further discussion of the army's direct involvement in the events, see Antony R. Birley, "Making Emperors," in *A Companion to the Roman Army* (ed. Paul A. Erdkamp; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; Ancient History; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 382–86.

[113] Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.4.2

against the Emperor. In January 69 C.E., the soldiers killed Galba and declared Otho emperor.

Meanwhile the legions stationed in Germany, whose dues Galba also failed to pay, proclaimed their commander Vitellius as emperor and advanced on Rome. Following the defeat of his army by the army of Vitellius, Otho committed suicide, having ruled only eight and a half weeks. Vitellius's reign was equally short. In July 69 C.E., the legions of Syria and Egypt proclaimed Vespasian, who was at the time engaged in the suppression of the revolt in Judaea, emperor.[114] Following the victory over the legions of Vitellius, Vespasian gained the throne, having become the first emperor of the Flavian dynasty, which was to rule the Empire for nearly three decades.[115]

To summarize, the series of the civil wars of the first century B.C.E. demonstrated the crucial importance of the army's support for securing power in Rome. Beginning with Augustus, emperors took measures to maintain the loyalty of the troops through the payment of monetary benefits, their personal involvement in military campaigns, and religion. Nero's inability to maintain the army's allegiance resulted in his demise, the outbreak of the civil wars, and the rapid succession of four emperors in 68–69 C.E. The army played a decisive role in these events and demonstrated its ability to install and depose emperors at will.

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[114] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.74–81.

[115] The other *Flavii* were also eager to acquire military support. When Titus returned to Rome in the summer of 71 on the wings of victory in the Judaean campaign, a joint triumph of father and son affirmed the latter as the worthy general and heir to the throne. In 72, Titus was also appointed the prefect in command of the Praetorian Guard at Rome, a particularly important post since the recent events yet again affirmed that loyalty of Rome's troops was indispensable to the success of the imperial power. After only two years in office, Vespasian's younger son Domitian gave the legions a 33% pay raise, the first one since Julius Caesar.

C. The Role of the Centurion as Representative of the Imperial Authority

The fundamental role of the centurion in the Roman military structure made him a key figure for securing the army's allegiance, crucial for the ruling power.[116] As the intermediaries between the commanding officers and the rank soldiers, centurions could be used to channel the mood of the troops in the right direction.[117] The value of the centurion's office for the imperial ruling power was acknowledged by his significantly higher pay, which under Augustus increased more than sevenfold from what it was under the Republic and amounted to fifteen times the salary of a common soldier.[118] The monetary advantages of the office, the possibilities of further career advancement to the lucrative post of the *primus pilus, praefectus castrorum,* and the prospects of moving into the upper echelons of society were factors implemented to deter the centurion from risking his benefits and career and to remain loyal to the emperor.[119]

Since the time of the late Republic, those in power employed centurions as mediators of their authority.[120] Thus, the centurions of Julius Caesar were his political

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[116] Campbell, *Emperor*, 160.

[117] For instance, Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 1.40–41, used his centurions to change the mood of his troops in 57 B.C.E. on the eve of an important battle in Gaul. Dio 38.35.3 and 38.47.1 also refers to the considerable influence that centurions had among the soldiers, asserting that they could easily persuade the soldiers to obedience.

[118] Polybius, 6.39.12, reports that in the second century B.C.E., a centurion earned twice the rank legionary's salary. Under Augustus, a centurion of a legion received 3,375 *dinarii* annually (an ordinary *miles* was paid 225), a centurion from the *primi ordines*—6,750, and a *primus pilus*—13,500. See Speidel, *Pay Scales*, 372–75; Brunt, *Pay*, 67–69. Juvenal, *Sat.* 14.193–199, expresses a conventional view of a lucrative career of a centurion.

[119] Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.6, refers to a centurion who is attempting to dissuade the Pannonian legions from supporting the leaders of the mutiny in 14 C.E. The centurion warns the soldiers that they may lose their pay and bonuses if the emperor is removed. This argument implies that the emperor was viewed as the guarantor and provider of the army's monetary benefits.

[120] See Ward, *Centurions*, 224–33.

allies and agents.[121] According to Plutarch, when in 49 B.C.E. the Senate hesitated to give Caesar an extension of his term of command in Gaul, one of his centurions slapped the hilt of his sword and said, ἀλλ᾽αὕτη δώσει.[122] Suetonius reports a similar story in regard to one of the centurions of Octavian. Following his victory over the army of Antony at Mutina in 43 B.C.E., Octavian sent his centurions to the Senate to request consulship. When the Senate refused to comply, the centurion Cornelius grabbed the hilt of his *gladius* and said, *hic faciet, si vos non feceritis*.[123]

The practice of employing centurions as mediators of the highest authority continued into the Principate. The function of centurions as the imperial agents encompassed both foreign and domestic affairs of the Empire. In 19 C.E., Tiberius charged a centurion with the task of settling a dynastic dispute in Thrace.[124] In 38, Caligula dispatched the centurion Bassus to Alexandria to arrest and deliver the prefect of Egypt, Aulus Avillius Flaccus.[125] In 62, Cn. Domitius Corbulo, the commander of the imperial army in the East, sent the centurion Casperius to the Parthian king Vologeses demanding the withdrawal of the king's army from Armenia.[126] In 72, the centurion C. Velius Rufus was entrusted to deliver the royal hostages, the sons of Antiochus IV of

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[121] Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1939), 70.

[122] Plutarch, *Caes*. 29.6; *Pomp*. 58.2. Cicero writes that centurions comprised Caesar's personal bodyguard when he was dictator (*Div.* 2.9) and the guard of Marc Antony (*Phil*. 1.8; 8.3, 9; cf. Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.5, 50).

[123] Suetonius, *Aug*. 26.1.

[124] Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.65–67.

[125] Philo, *Flacc.* 109–115.

[126] Tacitus *Ann*. 15.5.

Commagene, from Parthia to Vespasian.[127] In 116, Trajan sent the centurion Sentius as the envoy to the Persian king Mebaraspes.[128] These examples show that centurions occupied a prominent position within the imperial power structure and mediated the authority of Rome both within the Empire and outside of it.

III. The Roman Army in the Civilian Context

Although military conflicts were not unknown under the early Principate, the majority of the Roman troops spent most of their service in and around their garrisons along the borders of the Empire. The evidence shows that military units were closely integrated into the life of their surrounding civilian communities.[129] Since the troops possessed by far the largest resource of manpower in the Empire, soldiers and centurions performed a range of duties outside of their camps, including building projects, policing, and administration.

Detachments of soldiers were frequently summoned to acquire building materials, whether stone or timber, and to engage in building projects.[130] Besides, since the army had personnel skilled in building fortifications, bridges, roads, and siege engines, as well

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[127] *ILS* 9200, *hic missus in Parthiam Epiphanem et Callicinum, regis Antiochi filios, ad imp(eratorem) Vespasianum cum ampla manu tributariorum reduxit*.

[128] Dio, 68.22.3. Reportedly, the centurion was imprisoned by the king, but with the aid from his fellow-prisoners managed to escape, killed the commander of the garrison, and opened the gates of the stronghold to the approaching Roman army.

[129] Ramsay MacMullen, "The Legion as a Society," *Historia* 33 (1984): 441; Brent Shaw, "Soldiers and Society: The Army in Numidia," *Opus* 2 (1983), 148; Tim J. Cornell, "The End of Roman Imperial Expansion," in *War and Society in the Roman World* (ed. John Rich and Graham Shipley; London: Routledge, 1993), 168, and some others maintained that Roman troops during the Principate were isolated from the daily life of the civilians. However, the archaeological evidence suggests otherwise. More data showing the military's active interaction with the civilians and its integration into the surrounding communities will be discussed in the following chapters.

[130] Davies, *Daily Life*, 303–4, presents a duty roster dated to October 87 C.E., showing detailing soldiers of *legio III Cyrenaica* stationed in Egypt to limestone quarries. Also see Davies, *Service*, 63–65.

as in blacksmithing, masonry, carpentry, and other professions essential for providing military needs, its technical expertise was employed for various engineering projects outside of the camp.[131] Due to their place and function within the military structure, and their experience in leading military operations, centurions supervised the building and engineering projects conducted by the army in the civilian context as well.[132] The example of Caligula, who sent a *primus pilus* to supervise the cutting of a canal across the Corinthian isthmus, demonstrates that the leadership qualities and skills of centurions were known and appreciated in the highest echelons of power.[133]

A primary responsibility of the army was maintaining law and order.[134] This task included apprehension of criminals, protection from both domestic bandits and raiders from across the border, guarding roads and bridges, monitoring traffic, and supervising the water supply.[135] Smaller garrisons of soldiers (*stationes* or *praesidia*) were established for that purpose, in particular in less-populated areas of the Empire.[136] A

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[131] One of the most famous architects of the time of Augustus, M. Vitruvius Pollio, at some point in his service was in charge of construction and repair of *ballistarum et scorpionum* and other artillery engines (Vitruvius, *De arch.* 1.preface.2). See Domaszewski, *Rangordnung*, 25–26; Ramsay MacMullen, "Roman Imperial Building in the Provinces" *HSCP* 64 (1959): 214–17; Davies, *Daily Life*, 306–7; Davies, *Service,* 64–65; Webster, *Roman Imperial Army*, 276; Cuomo, "A Roman Engineer's Tale," *JRS* 101 (2011): 143–65.

[132] *IGRR* 3.1255, an inscription on the architrave of the Serapis temple at Mons Claudianus dated to 118 C.E., names a centurion of the *cohors I Flavia Cilicum* as the one in charge of the work. See Valery A. Maxfield, "Ostraca and the Roman Army in the Eastern Desert," in *Documenting the Roman Army: Essays in Honour of Margaret Roxan* (ed. J. J. Wilkes; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2003), 163.

[133] Suetonius, *Cal*. 21.

[134] Ps.Hyginus, *De mun. castr.* 1, indicates that guard duty and surveillance occupied much of the army's time, stating that about twenty percent of a legion might be on such duty during a night. Some of the primary evidence attesting to the police duties of the army will be addressed in the following chapters.

[135] See Christopher J. Fuhrmann, *Policing the Roman Empire: Soldiers, Administration, and Public Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 186–211.

[136] See Fuhrmann, *Policing*, 207-11; Ward, *Centurions*, 234.

considerable number of the late first–early second-century *ostraca* attests to centurions in charge of the larger and more significant outposts in Egypt.[137]

The army's role in administration of the Empire was significant. Although the provincial governor exercised the full range of civil and military administrative powers within his province, the size of his staff was quite limited.[138] Since the time of the Republic and throughout the period under consideration, the governors of the public provinces were given a designated number of functionaries, *apparitores*, who usually consisted of educated freedmen and included a secretary, several messengers and heralds, and the appropriate number of *lictores*.[139] Additional assistance was provided from the magistrate's own household by utilizing his slaves or freedmen. Further, a governor was aided by a *quaestor*, and a *consilium* of his friends and relatives, one or two of which could have an official recognition as the governor's legate.[140] With the advent of the Principate, as the emperor assumed control over the provinces that garrisoned troops, administering them through his legates, a new, military model of administration came into place. The establishment of the professional standing army required a sophisticated bureaucracy for administering the recruitment and discharge of troops, provisioning of

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[137] E.g., Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.77; *CIL* 3.6025 (=*ILS* 2615). The latter reports that a centurion of *legio II Traiana* was in charge of *cohors I Flavia Cilicum* in 138-140 C.E. Smaller units were commanded by the officers below the rank of centurion (or decurion in case of cavalry regiments). See Maxfield, *Ostraca*, 163-65.

[138] For detailed discussion and references, see Boris Rankov, "The Governor's Men: The *Officium Consularis* in Provincial Administration," in *The Roman Army as a Community: Including Papers of a Conference Held at Birkbeck College, University of London on 11–12 January, 1997* (ed. Adrian Goldsworthy and Ian Haynes; JRASup 34; Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), 15–34.

[139] There were twelve *lictores* appointed for a consul and six for a *praetor*.

[140] Rankov, *Officium*, 15, suggests that on average, a provincial governor could be assisted by twenty–thirty staff members of all ranks.

supplies and equipment, record keeping, accounting, transfers, mail services, and archiving. The military personnel, entrusted with conducting the army's business, in the absence of a civilian apparatus, inevitably became employed for administering the governor's civilian functions.[141] Since by the middle of the first century C.E. most of the provinces were governed by *legati Augusti pro praetore*, this meant that most of the Empire was administered by a staff drawn entirely from the Roman army.[142]

Several military administrative titles from the governor's staff, *officium*, are known for the first century C.E. At the head of the *officium* stood the *cornicularii*. Although their exact duties are uncertain, the *cornicularii* were likely involved in all the aspects of administration.[143] Of lower rank were the *speculatores*, who were employed as couriers and evidently served as police.[144] But their most known function was carrying out executions by decapitation with a sword. Seneca twice speaks of the *speculatores* decapitating criminals, and the Gospel of Mark describes the decapitation of the John the Baptist by the *speculator* of Herod.[145] The *beneficiarii* comprised the largest group in the governor's *officium*. They appear to have had diverse duties in provincial administration:

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[141] Rankov, *Officium*, 17, observes that since the imperial *legati* had their power delegated by the Princeps and did not acquire it directly from the Senate, they likely were not appointed the *apparitores*.

[142] Military staff could also administer territories that did not garrison troops on a permanent basis. Thus Pliny the Younger transferred twenty *beneficiarii*, two cavalrymen, and one centurion from his staff to aid the staff of other governors (*Ep.* 10.21, 27–28). Also see Richard Alston, "The Ties that Bind: Soldiers and Societies," in *Roman Army as a Community: Including Papers of a Conference Held at Birkbeck College, University of London on 11-12 January, 1997* (ed. Adrian Goldsworthy and Ian Haynes. JRASup 34; Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), 191, n. 61.

[143] Rankov, *Officium*, 19, suggests that since in the third century C.E. the full title of the governor's staff was *officium cornicularium consularis*, the *cornicularii* occupied the top position in the *officium*.

[144] The first references to the *speculatores* in an administrative context date to early first century C.E. Rankov, *Officium*, 27, provides the references to the primary sources.

[145] Seneca, *Ben.* 3.25; *Ira* 1.18.4; Mark 6:27.

they were custodians of the governor's household, assistants of the centurion in charge of the governor's headquarters, messengers, police, and executioners.[146]

The *cornicularii, speculatores*, and *beneficiarii* were ranked amongst the senior *principales,* and probably received double pay.[147] A fourth known group was the *frumentarii.* As their name suggests, at some point they were responsible for the supply of grain. However, under the Principate they are attested in the role of couriers and also served as police, making arrests and escorting prisoners. The *frumentarii* ranked lower than the *cornicularii*, *speculatores*, and the *beneficiarii*, and thus likely received pay-and-a-half.[148] The evidence suggests that the members of the provincial administrative staff, once they have received an appointment to a governor's *officium*, continued to serve in an administrative capacity beyond the governor's term in the office.[149]

The above four groups comprised the basis of the governor's *officium*.[150] Apparently, there were one *cornicularius,* ten *speculatores*, and sixty *beneficiarii* per legion, which would be one *speculator* per legionary cohort and one *beneficiarius* per

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[146] The first references to the *beneficiarii* in an administrative capacity date to the early first century C.E. See Rankov, *Officium*, 18, 27–29; Fuhrmann, *Policing*, 204–7; and Jocelyne Nelis-Clément, *Les* Beneficiarii*: Militaires et administrateurs au service de l'empire (I^er s. a.C. – VI^e s. p.C.)* (Paris: Diffusion De Boccard, 2000), 59–132, for discussion and references to the primary and secondary sources.

[147] Domaszewski, *Rangordnung*, 29–34.

[148] Rankov, *Officium*, 20.

[149] Thus, *CIL* 12.2602, which is the monument of a soldier of *cohors I urbana*—a part of the garrison of Lugdunum (London) in the late first century C.E.—reports that the soldier joined the cohort in 73 and then served in the *officium* from 79 under three governors—first as *beneficiarius* of Tettienus Serenus, and then, from 83, as *cornicularius* of Cornelius Gallicianus and Minicius Rufus, before becoming *evocatus* in 88 and centurion in 90. Rankov, *Officium*, 21, suggests that it is unlikely that each governor had to create his staff anew, and that it is also improbable that soldiers returned to the ranks as ordinary *milites* after serving a term as *principalis. CIL* 12.2602 (=*ILS* 2118), an inscription dated to the late first century C.E., mentions Marcus Carantius Macrinus, who was promoted from the ranks to centurion after serving in one governor's *officium* as a *beneficiarius* and in another's as a *cornicularius*.

[150] Rankov, *Officium*, 21, observes that all four administrative groups are epigraphically attested by the end of the Flavian period and were likely already in place under the Julio-Claudians.

legionary century.[151] Additionally, a governor would have had several centurions in attendance: the title of the senior centurion, *princeps praetorii*, and that of his deputy, *optio praetorii*, are attested.[152] A title of a district centurion, *centurio regionarius*, is also known.[153] Likely, this would have been a post with administrative duties encompassing a broader region at the periphery and far from the seat of the governor.[154]

It seems that a provincial *officium* would have taken over 100 personnel from each provincial legion.[155] Thus, in a province that garrisoned a military force, the representative of Roman administration—and thus the representative of the Empire for the provincials—was a soldier. In the time and the space where the story of Luke-Acts takes place, the Roman Empire had a military face.[156]

To summarize, the place and function of the centurion in the Roman military structure, his authority, experience, and leadership skills made him a key figure in various aspects of daily life of the civilian population of the Empire. In other words, the local

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[151] Rankov, *Officium*, 24.

[152] *AE* 1916.29 *(adiutor principis praetorii)*; *P. Oxy.* 14.1637 (πρίγκιπος τῆς ἡ[γεμονίας]); *CIL* 3.1094=7765, 5803; 8.2947, 4294; 10.7583 (*optio praetorii*). Rankov, *Officium*, 19, points out that the centurion's title suggests that he was in charge of the governor's headquarters, *praetorium*, rather than his staff, *officium.* The latter was the duty of the *cornicularius.*

[153] *T.Vindol.* 2.250, an inscription dated to *ca.* 97 C.E., attests to a *centurio regionarius* based at Luguvalium (modern Carlisle); see Sheppard Sunderland Frere, *Britannia: A History of Roman Britain* (London: Routledge, 1967), 181. *P. NYU*, inv. 69, dated to the first century C.E., refers to a district centurion at the Koranis in Egypt, who remained at that post for at least 4–5 years. See Alston, *Soldier and Society*, 187–88.

[154] Fuhrmann, *Policing*, 222–23. Fuhrmann points out that some inscriptions note centurions responsible for an area without calling them *regionarius* (*CIL* 5.1838=*ILS* 1349) and that in Egypt, centurions performing the duties of a *regionarius* were called ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων (e.g., *P.Tebt.* 2.333). Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.72, possibly presents a case of a *centurio regionarius* in charge of collection of ox hides from the local population of the *Frisii*, a tribe beyond the Rhine, in 28 C.E. According to Tacitus, the impossible requirements of the centurion impoverished the locals and forced them to revolt. More specific examples referring to centurions administering regions of the Empire will be given in Chapter 2.

[155] Rankov, *Officium*, 24–25.

[156] Rankov, *Officium*, 32.

inhabitants viewed the centurion as the principal representative of Roman imperial authority.

IV. The Roman Army in Palestine

A. Judaea—From Kingdom to a Province

Roman direct involvement in the Near Eastern arena began at the conclusion of the Mithridatic wars of 89–63 B.C.E. Pompey's annexation of Syria in 64 B.C.E. created the first Roman province in the region.[157] His capture of Jerusalem in the next year placed the Jewish kingdom firmly in the sphere of Roman influence. This was an important event because of Judaea's location on the border with Parthia, a powerful rival of Rome and the primary focus of Rome's policy in the East for the next 250 years. Between the annexation of Syria in 64 B.C.E. and the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E., the region witnessed the defeat of the armies of Crassus in 53 B.C.E. and those of Marc Antony in 36 B.C.E. Augustus managed to establish a balance of power in the region, the key to which were several legions and auxiliary units stationed in Syria, as well as the client kingdom of Judaea under the rule of Herod the Great.[158]

The army of Herod included both Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers. Additionally, a Roman legion placed by Marc Antony in Jerusalem supported Herod's power beginning in 37 B.C.E.[159] Following his accession to power, Augustus gave Herod 400 Gauls

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[157] The circumstances surrounding Pompey's invasion to Palestine and the following Roman military presence in Palestine will be considered in more detail in "The Roman Army in the Works of Josephus" section of Chapter 3.

[158] According to Josephus, *B.J.* 2.40, 67; *A.J.* 17.286, there were three legions in Syria in 4 B.C.E. Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.5, speaks of four Syrian legions for the year of 23 C.E. Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.5; 13.8, also reports that, numerically, the auxiliary forces in Syria were equal to those of the legions.

[159] Josephus, *A.J.* 15.71–73, 108–160; *B.J.* 1.334–385. The legion could have left following the outbreak of hostilities between Octavian and Antony in 32 B.C.E., most likely prior to the battle of Actium

previously employed by Cleopatra.[160] Herod's troops also included Idumaeans, as well as the recruits from the military settlements established by Herod including Sebaste, from Trachonitides, and from the Hellenistic towns in Herod's realm. Apparently, the structure of Herod's army paralleled Roman military organization, and some of his senior officers bore Roman names.[161]

After Herod's death in 4 B.C., the uprisings in his kingdom required a heavy involvement of the Roman forces from Syria to restore order. Consequently, the territories of Herod's realm were divided among his sons: Philip inherited the northeastern parts of his father's kingdom; Herod Antipas received Galilee and Peraea; and Herod Archelaus obtained Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea.[162] In 6 C.E., Rome deposed Archelaus for incompetence and placed his territories under the administration of the Roman equestrian *praefectus*, who had his headquarters in Caesarea.[163] The *praefectus* had no legionary forces at his disposal and relied on the auxiliary regiments, which likely incorporated the Caesarean and Sebastenian forces created by Herod. The *praefectus* and those military commanders of auxiliary units under him were the sole

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in 31 B.C.E. David Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King: The Character of the Client Kingship* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), 94, lists several occasions when the Romans installed a garrison in Alexandria, Bosporus, and Armenia to secure the client king's power. Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:239, adds that Roman troops were also stationed in the kingdom of Palmira. Aulus Gellius, *Bell. alex.* 33, indicates that Roman troops were both to protect and to restrain the client king if necessary.

[160] According to Josephus, *A.J.* 15.217; 17.198; *B.J.* 1.397, the western units seem to have comprised the elite troops of his army. Herod's funeral procession was led by three elite corps of Gauls, Thracians, and Germans.

[161] Josephus mentions Volumnius, a military tribune (*B.J.* 1.535), and also Rufus and Gratus, who were in charge of the royal cavalry and infantry respectively (*A.J.* 17.266; *B.J.* 2.52, 74). Also see M. H Gracey, "The Armies of the Judaean Client Kings," in *The Defense of the Roman and Byzantine East: Proceedings of a Colloquium Held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986* (ed. Philip Freeman and David Kennedy; BAR International Series 297 [i]; Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1986), 311–23.

[162] Luke 3:1; Josephus, *A.J.* 17.188–189; *B.J.* 1.668–669.

[163] The discussion of the administrative status of Judaea will follow in Chapter 3.

representatives of the imperial administration in Palestine.[164] The Syrian forces could and did aid the *praefectus* as needed in times of disturbances.[165]

When Caligula became emperor in 37 C.E., he appointed his loyal supporter, Herod Agrippa I, as the king over the northeastern territories of the former kingdom of Herod the Great.[166] In 39, Herod Agrippa inherited Galilee and Peraea, the territories of the deposed Antipas. In 41, following his succession to the throne, Claudius appointed Herod Agrippa as king over Judaea, Samaria, Idumaea, Galilee, and Peraea.[167] This made him the ruler over all the former lands of Herod the Great. The king likely acquired the armies of his uncles Philip and Antipas and also took charge over the Roman auxiliary regiments stationed in Judaea. With Agrippa's death in 44, Judaea again came under Roman control, now as a province under a procurator.[168]

B. *Sebasteni* Auxiliary Units

According to Josephus, during the disturbances following the death of Herod in 4 C.E., 3,000 soldiers recruited from Sebaste, both cavalry and infantry, sided with the

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[164] Above the *praefectus* was the Syrian *legatus*, who was in charge of the army and the regular military structure of the legions consisting of legates, tribunes, and centurions, along with the tribunes, prefects, centurions, and decurions of the auxiliary forces. The only other known Roman administrative official in Syria in this period was a procurator, who was an equestrian responsible for the raising of taxation and the payment of the troops.

[165] The following analysis of the works of Josephus in Chapter 3 will include the discussion of such military aid.

[166] That is, the territories given to Herod's son Philip in 6. After the death of Philip in 34, Tiberius added his realms to the province of Syria.

[167] According to Josephus (*B.J.* 2.206–216; *A.J.* 19.229–244, 274–275), the restoration of the Jewish kingdom to Agrippa followed his substantial role in Claudius's rise to power.

[168] The Roman jurisdiction over the troops in Caesarea is witnessed by the account in Josephus, *A.J.* 19.356–366, who reports that the Emperor intended to transfer the Caesarean and Sebastenian regiments stationed at the provincial capital to Pontus for their behavior following the death of Herod Agrippa, and to replace them with troops from Syria. The soldiers, however, managed to petition the Emperor's favor and stayed.

Romans.[169] Josephus further reports that following the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44, Claudius was going to transfer ἴλην τῶν Καισαρέων καὶ τῶν Σεβαστηνῶν καὶ τὰς πέντε σπείρας, that is, one *ala* and five *cohortes* stationed in Caesarea.[170] In 51, the procurator Cumanus led the cavalry *ala* and four infantry *cohortes* from Caesarea against the Jews during the quarrel between the Galileans and the Samarians.[171] In 59 C.E., at the time of the conflict between the Jewish and the Gentile inhabitants of Caesarea, the latter sought the support of the Caesarean soldiers, who are referred to as "Caesareans and Sebastenes."[172] In 67, during the Jewish war, Vespasian enlisted in his army one *ala* and five *cohortes* from Caesarea—the same number of troops as mentioned in relation to the events of 44.[173]

Thus, it appears that the Roman troops stationed in Judaea prior to the beginning of the Jewish war in 66 included one cavalry regiment, apparently *ala I Sebastenorum*, and no less than five cohorts of infantry with *cohors I Sebastenorum* among them. The question is whether the other four cohorts also were native *Sebasteni* regiments inherited from the army of Herod the Great.[174] The number of 3,000 *Sebasteni* of Herod reported by Josephus would perfectly accommodate six quingenary auxiliary regiments, i.e., one *ala* and five *cohortes*. However, the Romans could also have introduced outside troops

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[169] Josephus, *B.J.* 2.52.

[170] Josephus, *A.J.* 19.365.

[171] Josephus, *B.J.* 2.236; *A.J.* 20.122. A discussion of this episode will follow in Chapter 3.

[172] Josephus, *A.J.* 20.176.

[173] Josephus, *B.J.* 3.66.

[174] Schürer, *History*, 1:363–65, argues that all the Caesarean cohorts were *cohortes Sebastenorum*, the units originally raised in the city territory of Samaria-Sebaste, which made them useful against the refractory Jews because of the hatred between the Jews and the *Sebasteni*.

into the region.[175] Indeed, the inscriptional evidence attests to only one *ala* and one *cohors Sebastenorum*, both designated with the number I.[176] Therefore, the other cohorts stationed in the Caesarean garrison could have had different names and origins. In addition, other Roman auxiliary units could have been, and apparently were, stationed in Palestine. The book of Acts mentions several of them.

C. Roman Military Regiments in Luke-Acts

i. Military Terminology in Luke-Acts

Prior to discussing the military data found in Luke-Acts, it is necessary to address the question of Luke's linguistic rendering of the Roman military institutions. Luke-Acts employs two terms, ἑκατοντάρχης (Luke 7:2, 6; 23:47; Acts 10:1, 22; 21:32; 22:25–26; 23:17, 23; 24:23; 27:1, 6, 11, 31, 43) and χιλίαρχος (Acts 21:31–33, 37; 22:24, 26–29; 23:10, 15, 17–19, 22; 24:22) for Roman military officers, which are equal, according to the translators and commentators, to the Latin ranks of *centurio* and *tribunis militum* respectively.[177] Can such a rendering be deduced from the account of Luke-Acts? More importantly, can it be shown that the author used these Roman military titles of office correctly?

Greek papyri and inscriptions containing records of ranks of the Roman army

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[175] See Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:225–26.

[176] Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:225. Some evidence suggests that *cohors I Sebastenorum* was a milliary cohort. If that were the case, the remaining 2,000 *Sebasteni* from Josephus's account would not be sufficient to accommodate five more regiments. According to J. E. H. Spaul, *Cohors P2 S: The Evidence for and a Short History of the Auxiliary Infantry Units of the Imperial Roman Army* (BAR International Series 841; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), 453, discharge diplomas show that the cohort was quingenary in the province of Syria, but milliary in *Syria Palaestina*. Spaul suggests that the change of status, "if it is not a mistake," could occur under Trajan in connection with his campaign in Parthia.

[177] BDAG, 299, defines ἑκατοντάρχης (-ος) as "a Roman officer commanding about a hundred men" or centurion, and BDAG, 1084, defines χιλίαρχος (-ης) as a military tribune for all the New Testament passages containing the terms.

employ either Greek terms adapted to a Roman context, or transliterated Latin words. The term χιλίαρχος (-ης) is the only regular expression for *tribunus militum*, whereas ἑκατοντάρχης (-ος) and κεντυρίων are both regularly used as versions of *centurio*.[178] The works of literature that refer to the Roman army avoid the Latinisms and employ ἑκατοντάρχης and χιλίαρχος, along with the less precise λοχαγός and ταξιάρχης (-ος).[179] In both literary and non-literary witnesses, therefore, the terms ἑκατοντάρχης and χιλίαρχος are the regular and specific renditions of the Roman military ranks of *centurio* and *tribunus militum.*

There is nothing to suggest that Luke deviates from this pattern. In Luke 23:47 ἑκατοντάρχης refers to the Roman officer in charge of the crucifixion, who in the parallel account of Mark 15:39, 44–45 is called a κεντυρίων. Acts 21–24 depicts a χιλίαρχος in charge of the Roman σπεῖρα, the cohort stationed in Jerusalem, which was a regular responsibility of a *tribunus militum*.[180] Acts 21:31–32 conveys knowledge of the rank structure of a Roman cohort: the tribune of the cohort, ὁ χιλίαρχος τῆς σπείρης, takes soldiers and centurions, στρατιώτας καὶ ἑκατοντάρχας, and comes to Paul's rescue.[181] Further accounts in Acts show the ἑκατοντάρχοι performing the usual duties of centurions. In Acts 23:23 the tribune puts two ἑκατοντάρχοι at the head of the force

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[178] Hugh J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis* (American Studies in Papyrology 13; Toronto: Hakkert, 1974), 163. See Mason, *Greek Terms*, 41–42, 60, for examples of inscriptions containing ἑκατοντάρχης (-ος) and κεντυρίων.

[179] Mason, *Greek Terms*, 163–64.

[180] Mason, *Greek Terms*, 85, 163, reports that σπεῖρα is a usual equivalent in literary works for *cohors.* BDAG, 936, asserts that to be the case for the New Testament texts.

[181] Cf. Josephus, *B.J.* 3.87, where Josephus delineates the rank hierarchy of the Roman army in the procedure of a morning salute: the soldiers salute their centurions (ἑκατοντάρχοι), the centurions salute their tribunes (χιλίαρχοι). A similar hierarchical structure of the Roman army is also found in Josephus, *B.J.* 5.502, and Strabo, *Geogr.* 11.14.10.

transporting Paul from Jerusalem to Caesarea. In Acts 24:23 a ἑκατοντάρχης supervises the custody of Paul.[182] Finally, in Acts 27:1, 6, 11, 31, 43, a ἑκατοντάρχης is in charge of the guard and the transport of prisoners to Rome.[183] It may be concluded that when Luke-Acts refers to the Roman army, ἑκατοντάρχης equals *centurio*, and χιλίαρχος equals *tribunus militum*.

ii. The *Cohors Italica*

Acts 10:1 reports that Cornelius was a centurion from the cohort named *Italica*, who lived in Caesarea. The reference is likely to a centurion of the *cohors II Italica voluntariorum civium Romanorum*. The cohort is attested by other sources as a part of the Syrian army in the second half of the first century.[184] The narrative of Acts places the

[182] Josephus, *A.J.* 18.202, 229, 232, provides an example of a centurion guarding a prisoner.

[183] Josephus, *A.J.* 19.307, speaks of a centurion in charge of arresting and bringing to the governor of Syria those in the city of Doris who transgressed Claudius's edict. In *B.J.* 7.238, a centurion is put in charge of arresting Antiochus and transporting him to Rome. Philo, *Flacc.*110–115, reports a centurion sent to arrest Flaccus and deliver him to Rome (a more detailed discussion of this episode will be given in Chapter 3).

[184] *CIL* 16.35, a military diploma found in Thrace and dated to 88 C.E., was awarded to a soldier of the *cohors Musulamiorum* raised in *Africa Proconsularis*. The diploma mentions *cohors II Italica civium Romanorum*, and *cohors I Sebastena* as Syrian army units. *RMD* 4, a diploma of 91 C.E., also mentions *cohors II Italica civium Romanorum* as part of the Syrian army. *CIL* 16.106, the third known diploma that mentions the cohort, also as a part of the Syrian army under the command of the Syrian legate, dates to 156 or 157 C.E. For the list of the military diplomas that refer to the province of Syria, see Roxan, *Roman Military Diplomas 1978–1984*, 19–24. *CIL* 6.3528, an epitaph from Rome dated to the first-second century C.E., mentions C. Paccius Firmus, *trib. milit. coh. II Italicae.* Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 449, states that the *cohors II Italica* was milliary. Although Fitzmyer does not name the source for this information, it comes from a dedicatory stone found in the town of Forum Sepronii in Umbria, which has a record of *coh. mil. Italic. volunt. quae est in Syria* (*CIL* 11.6117). However, the rest of the evidence shows that the cohort was not milliary; for the full list of sources that mention the cohort, see Spaul, *Cohors*, 29. Spaul, *Cohors*, 31, n. 1, regards the above inscription to be erroneous and suggests that the writer, being uncertain of the identity of the cohort, misplaced the letters *mil* which should precede *coh* rather than follow it. Levinskaja, *Dejanija Apostolov,* 137–40, offers another explanation, suggesting that the inscription refers to the *cohors I Italica*. Levinskaja, *Dejanija*, 123-40, concludes her excursus into the identity of the cohort of Acts 10 with an assertion that Acts 10:1 could refer to either of the two known Italian cohorts, since either of them, as she argues, could have been garrisoned in Judaea in the 40s.

story of Acts 10–11 in the time when Herod Agrippa I ruled Judaea.[185] Thus the cohort, or at least a part of it, would have been a part of Herod's army, which he inherited from the Roman prefects in 41, and which after his death in 44 was transferred under the jurisdiction of the Roman procurator of Judaea. Some commentators expressed doubt that an Italian citizen cohort would have been stationed in Caesarea under the command of a mere equestrian or even less so a Jewish king.[186] However, equestrians were known to command Roman citizen troops.[187] Therefore, when in 41 king Agrippa assumed the rule over Judaea, the troops garrisoned in Caesarea could have already included *cohors II Italica.* The cohort or its part could also have been transferred to Judaea during Agrippa's rule, since the presence of the Roman troops in client kingdoms is not unknown.[188] Besides, by the mid-first century C.E., the name of the cohort could have been only honorary, without implying that it was exclusive to Roman citizens in general or Italians in particular. In fact, the only other known members of the cohort were Semites from Philadelphia in Jordan, which indicates that the cohort was recruited locally.[189] Given this evidence, there is no reason to doubt the historical veracity of the account of Acts 10:1.

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[185] Herod Agrippa dies in Acts 12:21–23.

[186] For instance, Schürer, *History*, 1:365, and Haenchen, *Acts*, 346 n. 2, contend that prior to Agrippa's death, Roman troops could not have been stationed in Caesarea.

[187] Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:226, counters the objection that a equestrian *praefectus* could not command a citizen cohort and points out that according to *CIL* 5.3936, the equestrian procurators of *Raetia* were in charge of *cohors I civium Romanorum ingenuorum* in 47 C.E.; moreover, the entire army of Egypt, which included two legions (comprised only of Roman citizens), was commanded by an equestrian prefect.

[188] See n. 159.

[189] *ILS* 9168, a gravestone found at Carnuntum, now in modern Austria, speaks of "Proculus, son of Rabili, of Collina tribe, from Philadelphia, an *optio* of the *cohors II Italica civium Romanorum*, of the century of Faustinus, from the detachment of archers, of the Syrian army, who served seven years and lived twenty-six." Proculus was likely a Roman citizen, as implied by his tribe, but his father had an Arab name, suggesting that he was a non-citizen by birth. The inscription is dated to 69–70 C.E., which implies that Proculus joined the cohort in about 63 C.E. It means that the Italian cohort was recruited locally at least in

iii. Roman Troops in Jerusalem

The identity of the Roman auxiliary troops stationed in Jerusalem is unknown. According to Josephus, at least one cohort was present in the city permanently, occupying the fortress Antonia adjacent to the Temple. The cohort was responsible for order in the city, particularly during Jewish festivals, and Luke describes the cohort in action on one such occasion.[190] The commander of the regiment was a χιλίαρχος, that is, a *tribunus militum*.[191] Usually, the commander of a regular auxiliary unit was a *praefectus*; the higher rank of a tribune in this case may suggest that the regiment was a *civium romanorum* unit or a milliary cohort.[192]

In Acts 23:12–35, the tribune prevented Jewish conspirators from killing Paul by transferring him to Caesarea under the protection of a formidable escort. Two centurions led the company of seventy cavalry, 200 infantry, and 200 mysterious δεξιολάβοι.[193] The presence of the cavalry, numbering about two *turmae*, suggests that the Jerusalem cohort

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the period when Judaea was ruled by procurators, and possibly earlier. The reference to the cohort as belonging to the Syrian army does not exclude the possibility that it had been stationed in Judaea. The repeated appearances of the Syrian legate and his army in Judaea in the first century C.E. clearly show that the province was under his jurisdiction. Therefore, at least some of the military regiment units stationed in Palestine were regarded as a part of the Syrian army.

[190] Josephus, *B.J.* 2.224; 5.244; Acts 21:31–36.

[191] John 18:12; Acts 21:31; Josephus, *A.J.* 15.408, calls him φρούραρχος, the commander of the guard.

[192] If the former was the case, the tribune could have been the commander of the *cohors II Italica civium romanorum* mentioned in Acts 10:1. A part of his cohort, including the centurion Cornelius of Acts 10, could have been assigned to the governor's headquarters in Caesarea. On the other hand, the number of forces sent with Paul (Acts 23:23) may suggest that the cohort was milliary.

[193] Acts 23:23. The term, which literally translates as "those holding by the right hand," is unattested elsewhere and its meaning is unknown. A soldier would carry his shield in his left hand and his spear or javelin in his right; hence, the Vulgate interprets the term as *lancearios.* Since the passage specifically mentions cavalry and infantry, the term could refer to some other type of auxiliary troops, such as light infantlry, archers or slingers. I. A. Levinskaja, *Dejanija Apostolov, glavy 9–28: Istoriko-filologicheskij kommentarij* (St. Petersburg: Fakultet filologii i isskustv SPbGU, 2008), 486, provides two references to δεξιολάβοι in the later sources, where they are placed among archers, light infantry, and lightly-armed scouts.

was partially mounted, that is, a *cohors equitata*, or was strengthened by a detachment of an *ala*. The numbers are significant and, if taken at face value, would suggest that either the tribune sent nearly his entire force with Paul or that the Jerusalem cohort was milliary. It is also possible that the tribune had more than one cohort under his command or that his cohort was strengthened for the time of the festival.

iv. The *Cohors Augusta*

Acts 27:1 reports that at the conclusion of his imprisonment in Caesarea, Paul was handed over to Julius, a centurion σπείρης Σεβαστῆς, that is of the *cohors Augusta*, to be transported to Rome.[194] A building inscription discovered in the Hauran—the mountains near the border of modern Syria and Jordan—suggests that this cohort might have been garrisoned in that vicinity as a part of the army of Agrippa II.[195] The surviving part of the inscription informs the reader that Lucius Obulnius, ἑκατοντάρχης σπίρης Αὐγούστης, accomplished the work in the twenty-eighth year of king Marcus Julius Agrippa.[196] The twenty-eighth year of Agrippa corresponds to 84 or 89 C.E.[197] There is also a similar text

[194] BDAG, 917, regards the expression σπεῖρα Σεβαστή as an exact translation of *cohors Augusta*; also Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:228.

[195] Schürer, *History*, 1:364, in pursuit of his conviction that the Caesarean garrison consisted only of the *cohortes Sebastenorum*, argues that one of the five Sebastenian cohorts had been awarded with the honorific title *Augusta*. Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:224–31, points out that there is no evidence to support this view, as well as there is no need to assume either that the Caesarean garrison was exclusive to the Sebastenian regiments or that the cohort Augusta was garrisoned in Caesarea.

[196] Maurice Dunand, *Le Musée de Soueida. Inscriptions et monuments figurés* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1934), no. 168 (cf. *AE* 1925, 121). *OGIS* 421=*IGGR* 3.1136, a fragmentary inscription from the same area, also mentions σπείρης Αὐ…

[197] Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:229.

from the same region, which records a dedication to Zeus made by the same Lucius Obulinius, ἑκατοντάρχης σπίρης Αὐγούστης.[198]

The inscriptions indicate that the Augustan cohort of Acts 27 could have served in the army of the kingdom of Agrippa II in northern Transjordan. It has been suggested that this cohort was the *cohors I Augusta Thracum equitata civium Romanorum*, originally an infantry regiment recruited from the Thracians and later transformed into a partially mounted unit.[199] If that was the case, the cohort, although being under the command of Agrippa, apparently was at the same time a part of the Roman army in Syria. Another option is that the cohort Augusta was the *cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum*.[200] As its name suggests, the unit was raised in Ituraea, which was within the domain of Herod Agrippa II at the time of Paul's trial.[201]

A detachment from the cohort apparently accompanied the king and his sister Bernice during their welcoming visit to the headquarters of the newly appointed procurator. The visit went "with a great pomp" in the presence of the tribunes and prominent citizens of the city.[202] The fact that the centurion, who was put in charge of Paul's transportation to Rome, belonged to the royal couple's entourage is also suggested by the grammar of Acts 27:1. The second clause of the verse reads, παρεδίδουν τόν τε

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[198] *SEG* 7.1100; Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:230.

[199] Spaul, *Cohors*, 355–56; Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:230, n. 16. Holder, *Studies*, 14, suggests that the *Cohors Thracum Augusta* may have been organized from the Thracians serving in Herod's army; cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 17.198.

[200] Spaul, *Cohors*, 440. The first record of that cohort dates to 80 C.E. and comes from Pannonia; the rest of the epigraphic evidence comes from Dacia.

[201] The unit could have been stationed in Syria or Palestine until Vespasian moved it along with other Eastern forces to the Danube frontier; see Josephus, *A.J.* 9.366, Spaul, *Cohors*, 440.

[202] Acts 25:13, 23.

Παῦλον καί τινας ἑτέρους δεσμώτας ἑκατοντάρχῃ ὀνόματι Ἰουλίῳ σπείρης Σεβαστῆς, "they handed over Paul and some other prisoners to the centurion named Julius of the cohort 'Augusta'." The use of the third person plural is expected if the text implies that Festus, who was in charge of the prisoner, and Agrippa, who was in charge of the Augustan cohort, were both involved in transferring Paul over to the centurion.[203]

D. The Jewish Revolt and the Roman Response

The period of Roman administration of Judaea was marked by numerous disturbances and conflicts that demanded the involvement of the Roman troops stationed in the province and the supporting forces from the garrisons in Syria.[204] The outbreak of the revolt in 66 led to a protracted intervention of tens of thousands of Roman troops. After the massacre of the Roman regiment garrisoned in Jerusalem and the retreat of the 2,000 cavalry sent there by Agrippa II, the intervention of the Roman army followed from Syria.[205] Cestius Gallus, the legate of Syria, marched from Antioch with a considerable army, including the entire *legio XII Fulminata*, 2,000 strong detachments from each of the other three Syrian legions, *III Gallica*, *IV Scythica*, and *VI Ferrata*, six cohorts of auxiliary infantry, four *alae* of auxiliary cavalry, significant forces of allied kings, and a considerable number of irregular forces from the Gentile-populated cities in the area.[206] Thus, the overall strength of the army was over 20,000 infantry and 5,000

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[203] Speidel, *Roman Army in Judaea*, 2:231.

[204] The pertinent primary sources will be considered in Chapter 3.

[205] *B.J.* 2.421.

[206] *B.J.* 2.499–502 reports that the forces of the client kings included 2,000 cavalry, 3,000 infantry, and 3,000 archers from Antiochus IV of Commagene, the same number of infantrymen and 1,000 cavalry from Agrippa II, and 1,000 cavalry and 3,000 infantry, predominantly archers, from Sohaemus of Emesa.

cavalry. According to Josephus, after some fighting, Gallus could have captured Jerusalem, but chose to retreat, was attacked on a unfavorable terrain, and suffered heavy losses equivalent to the entire legion and a cavalry *ala*.[207] In 67, Vespasian, whom Nero appointed the commander-in-chief for the Jewish campaign, mustered a massive army of three legions, *X Fretensis, V Macedonica*, and *XV Apollinaris*. The legions were accompanied by auxiliary units, which, in addition to five *alae* and eighteen *cohortes* from Syria, included an *ala* and five infantry *cohors* from Caesarea. In addition, the neighboring allied kings provided their aid.[208] According to Josephus, the entire army numbered about 60,000 soldiers. In two years the Romans regained control over Palestine with the exception of Jerusalem itself and the areas dominated by the fortresses of Herodium, Masada, and Machaerus. During the campaign, Caesarea served as the headquarters and the base of the Roman army, from which the Roman troops went to various regions, and to which they returned for rest and resupply.[209] In 69, Vespasian's army proclaimed him emperor.[210] The completion of the Jewish campaign was left to his son Titus, whose army was strengthened by *legio XII Fulminata* and other troops from Syria and Egypt.[211] In 70, the Romans took Jerusalem, Herodium in 71, Machaerus in 72, and Masada in 73. Following the victory, the province was raised to senatorial status and strengthened by the *legio X Fretensis*, which from then on was stationed in Jerusalem on

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[207] *B.J.* 2.527–555.

[208] *B.J.* 3.64–69. According to Josephus, ten of the auxiliary cohorts from Syria were milliary. Antiochus of Commagene, Sohaemus of Emesa, and Herod Agrippa II each suppied 2,000 archers and 1,000 cavalry; Malchus II, the Nabatean king, sent 5,000 infantry, mainly archers, as well as 1,000 cavalry.

[209] *B.J.* 3.412; 4.419. Some of the forces were sent to Scythopolis to avoid garrisoning the entire army in one city.

[210] Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.80.1; Josephus, *B.J.* 4.592–620.

[211] Josephus, *B.J.* 4.658–663; 5.41–42; Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.1.

a permanent basis for over the next 200 years. The auxiliary regiments, formerly stationed in Caesarea, were sent elsewhere and apparently replaced by predominantly Spanish and Thracian units that are frequently mentioned in Palestinian diplomas of the later first century.[212]

To summarize, Roman military presence in Palestine was well attested before the beginning of the Jewish war, and was overwhelming thereafter. It is important to note that the above analysis speaks in favor of the historical veracity of Luke's account of the Roman military units and personnel. Although Luke wrote his works after the Jewish revolt of 66–73 C.E., when Roman military presence in the region changed both quantitatively and qualitatively, he committed no anachronisms and portrayed the Roman army in Palestine prior to the revolt in agreement with the timeframe of his narrative. It is also worth noting that the overpowering Roman military presence in the region shortly prior to publication of Luke-Acts makes it likely that the image of the Roman centurion in Luke's narrative functioned as a particularly vivid representation of the Empire for Luke's readers.

V. Conclusion

The discussion has shown that centurions formed the backbone of the army's military structure. They were by far the most represented commanding officers, normally had considerable military experience, possessed strong leadership qualities, and were responsible for the skill, morale, and effectiveness of the soldiers. As the following chapter will demonstrate, the centurion's responsibility in maintaining the army's

[212] Millar, *Near East*, 76.

discipline and his personal valor in battle have found frequent attestation in the literary sources of the period.

The role of the army as the basis of the ruling power in Rome has been proved beyond any doubt by the series of the civil wars in the last century of the Republic and by the events of the year of the four emperors. Roman emperors made a great effort to win and maintain the allegiance of the troops, and the centurions were essential for channeling the mood of the troops in the desired direction. It is noteworthy that the army brought to power the imperial dynasty of the *Flavii* that ruled at the time of the publication of Luke-Acts, and it is not unlikely that the notion of the army as the foundation of the ruling power was especially relevant for Luke's audience. Roman centurions mediated the authority of the Empire in both foreign and domestic affairs and were key figures in representing the Roman imperial power for the civilian population, whether in building the infrastructure, law enforcement, or administration. In many respects, for the local population of the imperial countryside the centurion was Rome.

Chapter 2: The Image of the Roman Soldier in Greco-Roman Sources

I. The Purpose and Scope of this Chapter

This chapter will scrutinize the image of the Roman soldier emerging from the Greco-Roman sources of the period. The chapter will first examine the literary works that comment on the image of the Roman soldier, beginning with the historical writings of Polybius, Julius Caesar, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Tacitus, and Appian. The biographical writings of Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch, and Suetonius will complement the review of the historical works. The insights from the works of Plautus, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Petronius, Quintilian, Epictetus, Juvenal, Fronto, and Apuleius will conclude the survey of the literary sources. Finally, an analysis of the non-literary evidence will provide data that will enhance the perception of the Roman army and supply the context useful for evaluating the image of the Roman soldier emerging from the works of literature.

The range of sources considered in this and the following chapters covers nearly three centuries of history and raises a vast array of issues. To address those fully within the scope of these chapters would be unrealistic and is not the goal. The aim of the present discussion is to examine only the references relevant to each source's depiction of the Roman army in general or the Roman soldier in particular. The focus is always on the presentation of the Roman army, whereas a limited discussion of the relevant historical context and the issues illuminating this presentation is provided in the footnotes.

II. The Roman Soldier in Greco-Roman Literature

A. The Image of the Soldier in the Works of History

i. Polybius

By the mid-second century B.C.E. Rome had conquered most of the Mediterranean world. The *Histories* of Polybius (*ca.* 200–120 B.C.E.), which covers the span of 264-145 B.C.E., predates our chosen time period, but nevertheless is of interest for this survey because the goal of his work, targeted primarily for a Greek audience, is to explain the reasons for Rome's tremendous military success:

> For who is so worthless or indolent as not to wish to know by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years have succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government—a thing unique in history?[213]

Polybius accompanied Scipio Aemilianus during his military campaigns in Spain and Africa, including the capture of Carthage in 146 B.C.E., and personally witnessed the effectiveness of the Roman army. In his view, its efficiency was not a product of inherent qualities of the Roman soldiers, but rather was achieved in spite of their weaknesses. According to Polybius, the soldiers of any army and period were prone to self-indulgence, greed, and susceptible to loosing morale under stringent circumstances.[214] The Roman soldiers were victorious, Polybius maintains, because the Roman military system

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[213] Polybius 1.1.5 (Paton, LCL). In his goal to establish causes and provide explanations of how events occurred, Polybius follows Thucydides; see T. J. Luce, *The Greek Historians* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 93; Ronald Mellor, *The Roman Historians* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 9. For detailed discussion of Polybius as a historian, see Frank W. Walbank, *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World: Essays and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[214] The examples abound for the Hellenistic armies of various nations and periods; see Arthur M. Eckstein, *Moral Vision in the Histories of Polybius* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 16; Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), 164–66.

effectively controlled their inherent flaws and encouraged military virtues.[215] The incident that occurred at the siege of Agrigentum in the beginning of the First Punic War (264–241 B.C.E.) provides an example of this system in action. When the overwhelming force of the Carthaginians suddenly attacked the Roman troops, the Romans stood their ground despite heavy losses, fearful of capital punishment for desertion.[216] Polybius is explicit that "on this occasion and often on previous ones it is the excellence of their institutions which has saved the situation for the Romans."[217]

The analysis of the Roman military machine occupies the major part of Book 6, which, in particular, describes the Roman practices calculated to uphold military discipline and bolster valor through inspiring fear of punishment for committing mischief in the camp or for the failure on the battlefield.[218] Hence, according to Polybius, the Roman soldiers refuse "to leave their ranks in battle even when vastly outnumbered owing to dread of the punishment they would meet with." Likewise, those who lost their weapons in the heat of the battle "often throw themselves into the midst of the enemy, hoping either to recover the lost object or to escape by death from inevitable disgrace and the taunts of their relations."[219] Alternatively, those who displayed valor in battle could

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[215] According to Polybius 10.16.2–4 and 8–9, a high level of organization and discipline in the Roman army was seen even in pillaging the conquered cities or enemy camps. As Polybius reports, the Romans never employed more than half of their forces in looting, leaving the others to guard against possible counterattacks. Polybius 16.5 reports that the officers subsequently divided the booty equally among the soldiers.

[216] Polybius 1.17.11–12.

[217] Polybius 1.17.11–12.

[218] Polybius 6.37.8–38.4. Polybius's analysis of the Roman army as a military system originates from his conviction that the strength of the Romans was in their institutions; see Mellor, *Historians*, 9-10.

[219] Polybius 6.37.10–13.

expect their commander to praise and reward them in front of their fellow soldiers.[220] This system of rewards and punishments, Polybius concludes, was the means that made the Roman army so efficient:

> Considering all this attention given to the matter of punishments and rewards in the army and the importance attached to both, no wonder that the wars in which the Romans engage end so successfully and brilliantly.[221]

The same section reports that centurions were selected for their leadership qualities and their ability to maintain calmness of spirit and hold their grounds in deadly crisis.[222] Still, at times the inherent weaknesses of the soldier prevailed. Polybius tells a story of a centurion who exhibited the vices thought to be typical of a soldier and took advantage of and raped a captured Gallic noblewoman στρατιωτικῶς, "as soldiers do."[223] This "slave both of gain and lust," as Polybius calls him, who paid with his life for his moral flaws, serves as a reminder that the soldiers, even those promoted for their valor and leadership qualities, still could be prone to self-indulgence and lack self-control.

In sum, the account of Polybius presents a soldier who is by nature unable to exercise self-restraint, and thus needs a system of controls to prevent him from disregarding his military duties, to restrain his excessive self-indulgence, to curb his natural cruelty and greed, and to boost his valor on the battlefield. The health of the Roman army, therefore, depends on the ability of its commander to implement this

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[220] Polybius 6.39.1–7.

[221] Polybius 6.39.11.

[222] Polybius 6.24.1–9. Numerous accounts in the works of various authors considered further depict heroic behavior of centurions in combat and demonstrate their leadership qualities.

[223] Polybius 21.38.1–7. Livy 38.24.2–10, tells the same story and speaks of the centurion in similarly derogatory terms. Plutarch, *Mulier. virt.* 22, copies the story from Polybius almost verbatim.

system.[224] Failure to do so lets the inherent vices of the soldier flourish, corrupts the army, and is potentially disastrous to the state. As we will see, this view of the army is conventionally followed by most of the writers of the period considered in this chapter. The following section, however, presents an exception to this rule.

ii. Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.E.), who spent more than a decade commanding the army in a series of wars, was a writer with intimate knowledge of the Roman soldier. Each of the seven books of Caesar's *Gallic War* accounts for an annual campaign from 58 to 52 B.C.E.[225] The three books of his *Civil War* narrate the events of 49–48 B.C.E. Although these *Commentarii* of Caesar are his autobiographical writings, they were written with to supply material for writing history, and were acknowledged as clear and correct historical narratives by his contemporaries.[226] For these reasons, the writings are considered in this section.

Accounting for Caesar's many military campaigns, the *Commentarii* recount numerous acts of valor of his centurions and soldiers. When in 57 B.C.E. the tribe of the *Nervii* ambushed the army of Caesar in Northern Gaul and killed many of his centurions,

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[224] Polybius 11.6–7, lays out the basic principle to follow: "There is one rule, however, which in my opinion is equally applicable to armies, cities, and to the body, and that is never to allow any of them to remain long indolent and inactive and especially when they enjoy prosperity and plenty."

[225] The eighth book of the *Gallic War* was written by Caesar's general Aulus Hirtius (*ca.* 90–43 B.C.E.) and covers 51 and 50 B.C.E. See Andrew M. Riggsby, "Memoir and Autobiography in Republican Rome," in *Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (ed. John M. Marincola; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 272. Thus Aulus Hirtius offers a separate but corresponding and supportive view of the Roman army to that of the first seven books authored by Caesar himself.

[226] Cicero, *Brut.* 262, and Aulus Hirtius in *Bell. gall.* 8.praef. See Riggsby, *Memoir and Autobiography*, 271–73, and Mellor, *Historians*, 170–76, for the discussion of the genre of Caesar's writings.

Baculus, a *primus pilus*, stood his ground firmly and prevented otherwise leaderless legionaries from panicking and running.[227] When in the winter of 54–53 B.C.E., a Belgic tribe led by Ambiorix besieged one of the Caesar's legions, two of the centurions, Vorenus and Pullo, who for years competed with each other in courage, used the dangerous situation as another test case of their bravery. Eager to prove their valor, they alone fought against the numerous enemy, taking turns in saving each other when overwhelmed by the foes and thus earning "the utmost glory."[228] The whole legion is noted for its valor. The Roman soldiers, "handicapped by all these disadvantages, and with many men wounded," still gloriously withstood the enemy.[229] The besieged Romans displayed so great a courage and presence of mind, that

> …although they were everywhere scorched by the flame and harassed by the vast multitude of missiles, and understood that all their own baggage and all their possessions were ablaze, not only did no man leave the rampart to withdraw from the fight, but scarcely a man even looked behind him, and all at that time fought with the greatest zeal and gallantry.[230]

The heroism of centurions is a recurring motif in the account of the battle for the Roman fort of Aduatica in Northern Gaul, which happened in 53 B.C.E. When the guarding cohort of the starving Roman garrison was about to give up, the aforementioned centurion Baculus, now ill and five days without food, emerged from his tent, snatched arms from the nearest soldiers, and faced the enemy at the gate. Joined by the centurions of the guarding cohort, Baculus was able to sustain the fight until the soldiers, inspired by the example of their centurions, resumed courage and recommenced the defense. When

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[227] Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 2.25.

[228] Caesar, *Bell. gall*. 5.44 (Edwards, LCL).

[229] Caesar, *Bell. gall*. 5.35.

[230] Caesar, *Bell. gall*. 5.43

the five cohorts sent for foraging returned and found themselves in dire circumstances surrounded by the enemy, their centurions, some of whom were promoted from the lower ranks for their valor, "that they might not lose the renown for military prowess won in the past, fell, fighting most gallantly." The efforts of the centurions upset the enemy and allowed a part of the soldiers to reach the camp.[231]

In 52 B.C.E., during the war with the Gallic confederation led by chieftain Vercingetorix, Caesar sent several centurions and soldiers to collect arms and horses in a surrendered town of Noviodunum. The townsmen saw an approaching Gallic army, began to take up arms, shut the gates, and manned the walls. The centurions, however, having drawn their swords, recovered the gates and saved their men.[232] Later in the same year, in an attempt to retake Gergovia, the capital of the Arverni occupied by the forces of Vercingetorix, centurion Marcus Petreius rushed into the midst of the Gauls ignoring his multiple wounds, drove them back, and saved his men, while himself fell fighting.[233]

Several accounts of the *Civil War* also mark the bravery and devotion of Caesar's centurions. Narrating his Illerda campaign in 49 B.C.E., Caesar notes the death of Quintus Fulginius, the *primus pilus* of *legio XIV*, who attained this senior position progressing all the way from the ranks on account of his remarkable valor.[234] In 48 B.C.E., after the assault of Pompey's forces on Caesar's fort at Dyrrhachium, the centurion Scaeva presented to Caesar his shield pierced 230 times. Caesar rewarded

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[231] Caesar, *Bell. gall*. 6.38–40.

[232] Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 7.12.

[233] Caesar, *Bell. gall.* 7.50–51. The Romans lost forty six centurions in that fight.

[234] Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 1.46.4.

Scaeva for his valor and promoted him to the rank of *primus pilus*.[235] Subsequent literary works of various genres and periods provide additional details of this heroic incident.[236] These embellishments of Caesar's original text indicate that the theme of the valor of Caesar's centurions became a literary *topos*. Caesar's account further mentions four nameless centurions who lost their eyes in battle, demonstrating the extent they were prepared to fight on Caesar's behalf. Finally, the account of the battle at Pharsalus fought in the same year mentions the loss of thirty centurions.[237]

Despite the frequent references to the loyalty and devotion of Caesar's army to its commander, Caesar does not idealize his soldiers completely and admits that they can be rapacious, abusive, and insolent.[238] There is also a reason to believe that Caesar may not have had absolute confidence in the loyalty of his army, and, therefore, took special measures to secure it.[239] The fact that Caesar had to deal with mutinies on more than one occasion also demonstrates that the loyalty of his army was not unconditional. The first mutiny took place in 57 B.C.E. on the eve of the battle against Ariovistus, when the army

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[235] Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 3.53. Cicero, *Att.* 13.23, witnesses to the high status gained by Scaeva in Caesar's entourage and warns his friend Atticus to be careful dealing with Scaeva, since, as Cicero remarks, speaking to Scaeva is the same as speaking to Caesar himself.

[236] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.60; Plutarch, *Caes.* 16. 3–4; Suetonius, *Jul.* 68.4; Valerius Maximus 3.2.23.

[237] Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 3.99 (Peskett, LCL). In addition to the accounts written by Caesar, the anonymous author of *Bell. hisp.* 23 (Way, LCL) describes how in an encounter with the forces of Pompey, two of the Caesar's centurions, having perceived that their soldiers began to retreat, restored retreating soldiers to the battle, pressed upon the enemy "displaying dash and gallantry of an exceptional order."

[238] Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 1.21, 23, reports that in 49 B.C.E. Caesar had to protect the inhabitants of the Italian city of Corfinium from plundering and from the "clamorous insolence" of his soldiers. Rhiannon Ash, *Ordering Anarchy: Armies and Leaders in Tacitus' Histories* (London: Duckworth, 1999), 6, suggests that the depiction of the unruly behavior of the soldiers enables Caesar to emphasize his leadership skills in controlling such a potentially destructive force.

[239] According to Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 1.39, Caesar borrowed money from the tribunes and centurions and distributed it among the soldiers in order to achieve a double goal: to secure the interest of his officers and the affection of his soldiers.

succumbed to fear of the imminent encounter with the intimidating and numerous enemy, and was unwilling to fight.[240] Caesar, using his tribunes and centurions as intermediaries, was able to reverse the mood of his troops. The mutinies of 49 and 47 B.C.E. are absent from Caesar's account and will be considered in the relevant sections below.

It has long been recognized that Caesar's *Commentarii* are his political statement, and that his agenda affected the content, including the presentation of his army.[241] The stress on the army's loyalty boosted Caesar's image as a great military leader.[242] Also, the emphasis on the selfless devotion of his centurions and soldiers, who often demonstrated their willingness to die for their commander, enhanced the credibility of his cause in the civil war. However, this positive image of the soldiers can hardly be explained as an entirely literary invention.[243] Caesar's accounts of outstanding bravery of his soldiers and their selfless devotion to their leader are confirmed by the reality of Caesar's numerous victories and are corroborated by other authors writing subsequently on this period.[244] It seems, therefore, that Caesar's *Commentarii* express his genuine knowledge and

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[240] Caesar, *Bell. gal.* 1.39–41. Caesar places the responsibility on the shoulders of inexperienced tribunes, who panicked first and infected the spirit of the rest. In the account of Dio 38.35.1–2 (Cary and Foster, LCL), however, the soldiers were unwilling to fight in the war that "had not been decreed" and was conducted "merely on account of Caesar's personal ambition" and threatened to quit if he did not change his course.

[241] Ash, *Anarchy*, 5–17.

[242] Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 3.61.2, presents the desertion of two Gallic chieftains to Pompey as an exception and asserts that until that day there were no deserters from Caesar to Pompey, although the desertions from Pompey to Caesar happened daily.

[243] Caesar's respect for the Roman soldiers extends even to the army of Pompey. The examples of *Bell. civ.* 1.20, 74–76, 85, show that Caesar presents the soldiers of the opposing army as misguided by their leaders, whom he blames for the calamities of the war.

[244] For historical accounts see, for instance, Velleius Paterculus, 2.49.2; Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.82. For biographies see Plutarch, *Caes.* 16.1–9; *Pomp.* 71.1–3; Suetonius, *Jul.* 67.2–8.

appreciation of his soldiers, his conviction in their ability to discern the right cause and support it, and his sincere gratitude for their service.

iii. Sallust

Sallust (86–35 B.C.E.), a retired general of Julius Caesar, is known for his treatises, *Bellum Catilinae* (*The War of Catiline*) and *Bellum Iugurthinum* (*The Jugurthine War*). The writings reflect on the events that upset the republic for the half century prior to the rise of Caesar.[245] The underlying theme of his books is the degradation of Roman society. It is possible that Sallust channeled his dissatisfaction with his public career and military service into his writing. A member of the Senate, he was expelled in 50 B.C.E. for unspecified offence, to be later restored by Caesar. A commander of the legion in Caesar's army, Sallust was unsuccessful in his assignment to quell the mutiny of 47 B.C.E. and barely escaped with his life.[246] Appointed the first governor of the newly created province of Africa Nova in 46 B.C.E., Sallust was charged with malpractice upon his return to Rome. Although he never faced trial, this marked the end of his public career.[247] The first work of Sallust places the conspiracy of Catiline, who had attempted to seize power in 63 B.C.E., in the wider context of political and social corruption of the Roman elite, marked with "shamelessness, bribery and rapacity."[248] His second treatise explores the origins of the party struggle in Rome, where "everything can be bought," during the war with Numidian king Jugurtha. This struggle,

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[245] See Mellon, *Historians*, 30–47, for a survey of Sallust's life and works.

[246] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.92.35–36; Dio 42.52.2. See Stefan G. Chrissanthos, "Caesar and the Mutiny of 47 B.C.," *JRS* 91 (2001): 63–75.

[247] According to Dio, 43.9.2, Sallust escaped trial due to Julius Caesar's intervention.

[248] Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 3.3 (Rofle, LCL).

Sallust laments, "threw everything, human and divine, into confusion, and rose to such a pitch of frenzy that civil discord ended in war and the devastation of Italy."[249]

Sallust traces the beginning of the decline to the destruction of Carthage by the Roman army in 146 B.C.E. Prior to that turning point, the Republic is described idealistically: the people and the Senate of Rome governed the republic in concord, "peacefully and with moderation." The citizens did not compete for power, and the "fear of the enemy preserved the good morals of the state."[250] The soldiers of the distant past are in turn praised for their endurance, discipline, military skill, valor, and noble character:

> … as soon as the young men could endure the hardships of war, they were taught a soldier's duties in camp under a vigorous discipline, and they took more pleasure in handsome arms and war horses than in harlots and revelry. To such men consequently no labor was unfamiliar, no region too rough or too steep, no armed foeman was terrible; valor was all in all. Nay, their hardest struggle for glory was with one another; each man strove to be the first to strike down the foe, to scale a wall, to be seen of all while doing such a deed. This they considered riches, this fair fame and high nobility. It was praise they coveted, but they were lavish of money; their aim was unbounded renown, but only such riches as could be gained honorably. I might name the battlefields on which the Romans with a mere handful of men routed great armies of their adversaries, and the cities fortified by nature which they took by assault…[251]

After the Roman Republic reached its apogee in the victory over Carthage, its unchallenged power and great wealth began to destroy its morals:

> [W]hen the minds of the people were relieved of that dread [of the enemy], wantonness and arrogance naturally arose, vices, which are fostered by prosperity. Thus the peace for which they had longed in time of adversity, after they had gained it proved to be more cruel and bitter than adversity itself. For the nobles

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[249] Sallust, *Bell. Jug*. 5.2; 8.1 (Rofle, LCL).

[250] Sallust, *Bell. Jug*. 41.2.

[251] Sallust, *Bell. Cat*. 7.4–7.

> began to abuse their position and the people their liberty, and every man for himself robbed, pillaged, and plundered.[252]

The universal corruption of morals did not leave the army unaffected. Describing the events of the campaign against Jugurtha, Sallust reports that Metellus, who in 109 B.C.E. arrived in Africa to take over the command of the troops, found an army utterly corrupted by laxity and the lack of discipline:

> …it was an army spiritless and unwarlike; incapable of encountering either danger or fatigue; more ready with the tongue than with the sword; accustomed to plunder our allies, while itself was the prey of the enemy; unchecked by discipline, and void of all regard to its character...neither had the camp been fortified, nor the watches kept, according to military usage; every one had been allowed to leave his post when he pleased. The camp-followers, mingled with the soldiers, wandered about day and night, ravaging the country, robbing the houses, and vying with each other in carrying off cattle and slaves, which they exchanged with traders for foreign wine and other luxuries…and, in a word, whatever abominations, arising from idleness and licentiousness, can be expressed or imagined, and even more, were to be seen in that army.[253]

Metellus was a type of leader who was able to restore the discipline and get the army "alert and ready for battle."[254] Sulla, however, was a commander who in pursuit of his personal goals introduced the tactic of indulging the soldiers and buying their allegiance. He, "in order to secure the loyalty of the army which he led into Asia, had allowed it a luxury and license foreign to the manners of our forefathers."[255] During his Eastern campaign of 87–86 B.C.E., Sulla allowed the "charming and voluptuous" lands of the

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[252] Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 41.2–5. This line of thinking was anticipated by Polybius, 6.57.5–6: "When a state has weathered many great perils and subsequently attains to supremacy and uncontested sovereignty, it is evident that under the influence of long established prosperity, life will become more extravagant and the citizens more fierce in their rivalry regarding office and other objects than they ought to be. As these defects go on increasing, the beginning of the change for the worse will be due to love of office and the disgrace entailed by obscurity, as well as to extravagance and purse-proud display…"

[253] Sallust, *Bell. Jug*. 44.1–5.

[254] Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 46.5.

[255] Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 11.5.

East to demoralize the spirit of the soldiers. Their unrestrained and self-indulgent behavior posed a striking contrast to the image of the austere and noble army of the glorious past:

> There it was that an army of the Roman people first learned to indulge in women and drink; to admire statues, paintings, and chased vases, to steal them from private houses and public places, to pillage shrines, and to desecrate everything, both sacred and profane. These soldiers, therefore, after they had won the victory, left nothing to the vanquished. In truth, prosperity tries the souls of even the wise; how then should men of depraved character like these make a moderate use of victory?[256]

The corruption of the army by Sulla was facilitated by the practice established by Marius, who "enrolled soldiers, not according to the classes in the manner of our forefathers, but allowing anyone to volunteer, for the most part the *capite censi.*"[257] The landless poor, who were attracted to the army, depended on their generals for rewards of land or money upon discharge so that they could support themselves as veterans. This practice, according to Sallust and later writers, created the force of the mercenaries exploited by the civil war generals: "to one who aspires to power the poorest man is the most helpful,

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[256] Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 11.6–7. Sara Elise Phang, *Roman Military Service: Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 156, notes that according to Sallust and Cicero, Sulla's veterans exemplified abuse of wealth. Cicero, *Cat.* 2.2.10, claims that Sulla's veterans wasted their wealth on luxuries, became indebted, and were won over by Catiline, who promised rewards to his supporters.

[257] Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 86.2. Livy 8.20.4 (Foster et al., LCL), reports that in 329 B.C.E., during the war with the Gauls, "the mob of mechanics and artisans, a class utterly unfit for warfare, were called out." Tacitus, *Ann*. 4.4.2, speaking of the gathering of the army against the Germans by Tiberius in 25 C.E., remarks that the volunteers did not have sufficient bravery and discipline, "as it is chiefly the needy and the homeless who adopt by their own choice a soldier's life." Aulus Gellius (*ca*. 125–after 180) reports in *Noct. Att.* 16.10.11, that *proletarii* and *capite censi* were not recruited into the army except in cases of grave crises, because it was property that facilitated love to the fatherland.

since he has no regard for his property, having none, and considers anything honorable for which he receives pay."[258]

In sum, the overall theme of moral decline shapes the image of the Roman soldier in Sallust. Within this framework Sallust shows that military leaders of the period corrupted the soldiers through purchasing their loyalty and disregarding military discipline. As a result, the contemporary soldier—unlike the soldier of the past, the disciplined, able, and noble warrior—appears self-indulgent, insolent, unrestrained, and prepared to do anything for the right pay.

iv. Livy

There is no evidence that Livy (59 B.C.E.–17 C.E.) ever held a public office or served in the army. Despite this lack of practical experience, he produced *Ab urbe condita libri* (*Books from the Foundation of the City*), a vast narrative that traced the history of Rome from its foundation to 9 B.C.E. in 142 volumes, only thirty-five of which survive.[259] However limited, the surviving portion embraces the Roman expansion and such major military events as the capture of Veii in 396 B.C.E., the sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390 B.C.E, the wars in Italy against the Latins, Etruscans, and Samnites in 389–292 B.C.E., the First and the Second Punic wars of 218–201 B.C.E., the Syrian war of 192–188 B.C.E., and the Macedonian wars with Philip V and his son Perseus in 201–167 B.C.E. Although the surviving portion deals only with the Republican pre-Marian army,

[258] Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 86.3. Dio 108.1–2, repeats this theme for the followers of Sulla, saying that they would have done anything for the right reward. See *Bell. Cat*. 37.1–11, for Sallust's view of the poor as menace to society.

[259] Only books 1–10 and 21–45 survived.

Livy's choice and treatment of the material reveal his assumptions and shed light on the thought-world of his contemporary society.

The Roman army for Livy was, first of all, the force that conquered the known world in the name of Rome. He extols its skill, valor, and achievements:

> …what soldier can match the Roman in entrenching? Who is better at enduring toil? Alexander would, if beaten in a single battle, have been beaten in the war; but what battle could have overthrown the Romans, whom Caudium could not overthrow, nor Cannae?...The Romans have been at war with the Macedonians—not, to be sure, when Alexander led them or their prosperity was unimpaired, but against Antiochus, Philippus, and Perses—and not only without ever suffering defeat, but even without incurring any danger…A thousand battle-arrays more formidable than those of Alexander and the Macedonians have the Romans beaten off—and shall do—if only our present love of domestic peace endure and our concern to maintain concord.[260]

The valor of the Roman soldiers in battle is the leitmotif of the narrative.[261] In multiple accounts of Roman bravery, centurions serve the leading examples. In the battle with the Etruscans in 480 B.C.E., the Roman centurion Marcus Flavoleius swore to victory, invoking the wrath of gods on himself in case of his failure to accomplish the task. His pledge inspired the whole army, which took the same oath, sprang to the battle, and emerged victorious.[262] In the battle with the Samnites in 294 B.C.E., when the Romans gave in to the enemy and faced defeat, the centurions snatched the standards from the standard-bearers, led the soldiers in the attack, and repulsed the enemy troops, who were eventually all slain or taken prisoners.[263] Two similar episodes emerge from the account of the war with Hannibal. In the attack of a Carthaginian camp in 213 B.C.E., Titus

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[260] Livy 9.19.9–17. 75.

[261] E.g., Livy 32.12.2; 37.30.6.

[262] Livy 2.45.13–14; 2.47.10.

[263] Livy 10.36.10–14.

Pedanius, the *primus pilus* of the third legion, "took a standard away from the standard-bearer and said 'This standard and this centurion will in a moment be inside the enemy's wall. Let those follow who are to prevent the standard from being captured by the enemy.'" His century and then the entire legion followed the centurion and overcame the enemy. After the battle, the centurion was rewarded for his act of bravery.[264] Two years later, in the battle under Capua, it was the Romans who were now pressed hard in their camp by the troops of Hannibal. Centurion Quintus Navius snatched the standard from the standard-bearer, and "carried it towards the enemy, threatening that he would throw it into their midst if the soldiers did not quickly follow him and take a hand in the battle." His prominent stature and his act of bravery attracted a shower of the enemy's projectiles, but "neither the numbers of the enemy nor the mass of weapons could beat off the attack of such a man."[265]

Notwithstanding the references to the valor of the Roman soldiers in battle, the passages that present the Roman army in a negative light are overwhelming. Hannibal found the army of Cneius Fulvius "loaded with booty," consumed by "license and indifference," and negligent to all military discipline, and which could not withstand the single attack of the Carthaginians.[266] The Roman soldiers, plundering the fallen Syracuse in 212 B.C.E., exhibited many "shameful examples of anger and many of greed."[267] In 206 B.C.E., the army of Scipio Africanus stationed in Spain mutinied because of the rumors of Scipio's death. The troops plundered the province and disregarded their duties

[264] Livy 25.14.7–13.

[265] Livy 26.5.9–17.

[266] Livy 25.20–21.

[267] Livy 25.31.9.

in the camp, where everything was done "in accordance with the whim and fancy of the soldiers, nothing according to the traditions and discipline of the service or the orders of superior officers." Livy sees the rumors of Scipio's death as a catalyst rather than the primary cause of the insubordination. The soldiers "accustomed to live unrestrainedly on plunder in an enemy's territory felt the pinch of peace-time," and "the usual license resulted from long inaction" led to the disorder in the camp and to the oppression of civilians.[268] The latter manifested to the extreme in the city of Locri in 205 B.C.E., where the Roman garrison displayed radical "villainy and greed" toward its inhabitants. As Livy reports, "Of all the things that make the power of the stronger odious to the helpless man not one was overlooked by commander and soldiers in dealing with the townspeople. Unutterable insults were practiced upon their own persons, upon their children, upon their wives."[269] In the words of the Locrian ambassadors to the Senate, "They all rob, plunder, beat, wound, slay. They defile matrons, maidens and free-born boys, dragged from the embrace of parents. Every day our city is captured, every day it is plundered. Day and night every part of it re-echoes the wailing of women and children who are being seized and carried off."[270]

These passages, which present the Roman army as undisciplined and corrupted by indolence and licentiousness accord to the underlying goal of Livy's work to show the continuous and accelerating decay of the national character, leading into ruin until the point when "we can bear neither our diseases nor their remedies."[271] As did Sallust, Livy

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[268] Livy 28.24.1–16.

[269] Livy 29.8.7–8.

[270] Livy 29.17.15–16.

[271] Livy praef.9.

saw Roman history in terms of moral erosion and viewed the decline as the result of Rome's military conquests that led to the influx of wealth and the pursuit of luxury, "For the beginnings of foreign luxury were introduced into the City by the army from Asia."[272] In particular, the campaign of Gnaeus Manlius Vulso against the Galatians in 189 B.C.E. acquainted his soldiers with the pleasures of Asian cities and spoiled them with the luxuries of the opulent East:

> They [the military] for the first time imported into Rome couches of bronze, valuable robes for coverlets, tapestries and other products of the loom, and what at that time was considered luxurious furniture—tables with one pedestal and sideboards. Then female players of the lute and the harp and other festal delights of entertainments were made adjuncts to banquets; the banquets themselves, moreover, began to be planned with both greater care and greater expense. At that time the cook, to the ancient Romans the most worthless of slaves, both in their judgment of values and in the use they made of him, began to have value, and what had been merely a necessary service came to be regarded as an art. Yet those things which were then looked upon as remarkable were hardly even the germs of the luxury to come.[273]

The army, corrupted with "every kind of license," became careless and undisciplined, and carried the infection of the luxurious living back to Rome.[274]

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[272] Livy 39.6.7.

[273] Livy 39.1.3–4; 6.5–9; cf. 7.25.9.

[274] Livy habitually depicts the Easterners, affected with the corrupting influence of the region, as poor soldiers. Thus, Livy 35.49.8, reports that Titus Quinctius Flamininus, speaking about the army of Antiochus III, remarks that the Syrians were "far better fitted to be slaves, on account of their servile disposition, than to be a race of warriors." In Livy 36.17.7, Consul Manius Acilius brands this army of "Syrians and Asiatic Greeks" as "the most worthless peoples among mankind and born for slavery." The reported behavior of Antiochus and his army confirms this unflattering assessment of their military abilities. Livy 36.11.1–5, narrates that in 192 B.C.E., while campaigning in Greece, Antiochus III spent the winter in Chalcis "in banquets and the delights which follow wine and then, from weariness rather than satiety of theses pleasures, he gave himself over to sleep." His army followed its leader: "the soldiers too fell into the same way of life, nor did one of them put on his armor or walk his post or perform sentinel-duty or do anything else which pertained to the tasks and duties of a soldier." See Everett Wheeler, "The laxity of Syrian legions," in *The Roman Army in the East* (ed. David L. Kennedy; *JRASup* 18; Ann Arbor, Mich.: 1996), 229-276, for detailed discussion of the *topos*. The employment of the *topos* by Tacitus and Fronto will be discussed below.

To summarize, the overall theme of the moral decline of the Roman society in Livy's work determines his treatment of the Roman soldier. Lacking personal knowledge of the army, Livy draws the image of the soldier in accord with the literary conventions also seen in Polybius and Sallust. Although the surviving portion of Livy's work treats the soldier of the earlier Republican army up to 167 B.C.E., the general direction of his presentation is instructive. In his depiction of the army, Livy follows the general pattern of the progressive decline outlined in his Preface.[275] He begins with the accounts illustrating the former glory of Rome and analyses the characters, whose moral qualities won and extended Rome's dominion. From this perspective, the accounts of the heroic actions of the centurions and soldiers in the earlier part of Livy's work serve as the model and provide the contrast for the following references to the army's deterioration.[276] Illustrating a gradual decline of moral standards, Livy describes instances when excesses, indolence, and lack of discipline adversely affected the army. Finally, following Sallust, Livy presents the military expansion to the East (albeit a century earlier) as the decisive turning point: the army was corrupted by Eastern luxury and carried the plague back to Rome, setting off its rapidly accelerating moral degradation.

v. Velleius Paterculus

Velleius Paterculus (*ca.* 20 B.C.E–after 30 C.E.) is an author with extensive military experience. He began his career as a military tribune about the turn of the

[275] Livy praef.9.

[276] The accounts of military valor appear stereotypical and include the stock elements, such as snatching the standard from the standard-bearer and throwing it in the midst of the enemy, thus inspiring the soldiers to engage into the fight in order to rescue the standard (as in Livy 10.36.10–14; 25.14.7–13; 26.5.9–17).

millennium.[277] In 4–12 C.E., he served as a cavalry commander under Tiberius in Germany, Pannonia, and Dalmatia.[278] In 7 C.E., he entered the Senate.[279] After 14 C.E., when Tiberius succeeded Augustus as emperor, Velleius may have been a commander of a legion.[280]

Velleius is known for his short compendium of Roman history. It is comparable to the work of Livy in scope, but not in size: the work covers a vast period from the origins of Rome to 29 C.E. in only two books. The section beginning with the death of Julius Caesar is treated most fully, as the author devotes an increasing amount of pages to Augustus and especially Tiberius, whose life and achievements form the climax of the treatise. Since Velleius served under Tiberius, the later, most detailed portion of his writing is well-informed and in many instances constitutes an eye-witness account: "I held the rank of tribune…in Thrace and Macedonia; later I visited Achaia and Asia and all the eastern provinces, the outlet of the Black Sea and both its coasts, and it is not without feelings of pleasure that I recall the many events, places, peoples, and cities…"[281]

Thus, Velleius spoke of the army as one who possessed extensive personal experience in military matters and a genuine knowledge of the soldiers. His selection of the material on the army accords to his overall literary framework. Velleius follows

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[277] Velleius Paterculus 2.101.3.

[278] Velleius Paterculus 2.104.3, 111.3, 114.2, 115.5.

[279] Velleius Paterculus 2.111.4.

[280] Karl Christ, "Velleius und Tiberius" *Historia* 50 (2001): 180–92. *CIL* 8.10311, an inscription from North Africa, refers to a certain Gaius Velleius Paterculus, commander of *legio III Augusta*.

[281] Velleius Paterculus 2.101.1–4 (Shipley, LCL).

Sallust, conceiving of the destruction of Carthage in 146 B.C.E. as the turning point in the history of Rome:

> For, when Rome was freed of the fear of Carthage, and her rival in empire was out of her way, the path of virtue was abandoned for that of corruption, not gradually, but in headlong course. The older discipline was discarded to give place to the new. The state passed from vigilance to slumber, from the pursuit of arms to the pursuit of pleasure, from activity to idleness.[282]

These words introduce the second half of Velleius's work, thus emphasizing his division of history. The decline of morals following the fall of Carthage led to the civil wars, when the generals, who purchased the loyalty of the troops with promises, rewards, and the relaxation of discipline, and executed their rivals by the swords of their soldiers, corrupted the army. Thus, in 88 B.C.E. "the hands of Roman soldiers were first stained with the blood of a consul," and in 87 B.C.E., "first the centurions and tribunes and then even the private soldiers" were corrupted by Cinna with promises of rewards for their allegiance in his bid for power in Rome.[283] Half a century later, during another series of civil wars, the soldiers of Octavian mutinied, demanding rewards for their services, "for it happens not infrequently that when soldiers observe their own numbers they break discipline and do not endure to ask for what they think they can exact." The mutineers had to be pacified by payments of money and distributions of lands.[284] Good generals understood the importance of discipline and training, and they took measures to fight the vices in the army.[285]

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[282] Velleius Paterculus 2.1.1.

[283] Velleius Paterculus 2.20.1–4. The first reference is to the murder of Quintus Pompeius, the colleague of Sulla, by the troops of Gnaeus Pompeius.

[284] Velleius Paterculus 2.81.1–2. The account refers to the mutiny of 36 B.C.E.

[285] Velleius Paterculus 2.78.2–3.

The author's personal experience of service under Tiberius beginning in 4 C.E. paints the most vivid pictures of the soldiers. Velleius praises as "superhuman" the military achievements of his patron, who "by virtue of his services had long been a Caesar before he was such in name."[286] He reports the delight of the soldiers at the sight of their old general, and through their exclamations of joy lists the military accomplishments of the commander:

> Indeed, words cannot express the feelings of the soldiers at their meeting, and perhaps my account will scarcely be believed—the tears which sprang to their eyes in their joy at the sight of him, their eagerness, their strange transports in saluting him, their longing to touch his hand, and their inability to restrain such cries as "Is it really you that we see, commander?" "Have we received you safely back among us?" "I served with you, general, in Armenia!" "And I in Raetia!" "I received my decoration from you in Vindelicia!" "And I mine in Pannonia!" "And I in Germany!"[287]

The account of the following campaign in Germany in the summer of 5 C.E. speaks of the victories of a superior army under the leadership of an outstanding general.[288]

It could be argued that the positive references to the army in Velleius's work are only consequential to his positive treatment of the commanders. However, this is not always the case. Several references laud the soldiers in contrast to the failures of their generals. During the Pannonian war of 6–9 C.E., when five Roman legions, along with the troops of their allies, found themselves in a dire situation due to the carelessness of their commanders, the Roman soldiers saved the day:

> The horsemen of the king [of Thrace] were routed, the cavalry of the allies put to flight, the cohorts turned their backs to the enemy, and the panic extended even to

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[286] Velleius Paterculus 2.104.3.

[287] Velleius Paterculus 2.104.4. The army's devotion to Tiberius unambiguously likens him to Julius Caesar, who, as Velleius notes earlier (2.49.2), "was armed…with the devotion of the soldiers."

[288] E.g., Velleius Paterculus 2.106.1: "Ye Heavens, how large a volume could be filled with the tale of our achievements in the following summer under the generalship of Tiberius Caesar!"

> the standards of the legion. But in this crisis the valor of the Roman soldier claimed for itself a greater share of glory than it left to the generals, who departing far from the policy of their commander, had allowed themselves to come into contact with the enemy before they had learned through their scouts where the enemy was. At this critical moment, when some tribunes of the soldiers had been slain by the enemy, the prefect of the camp and several prefects of cohorts had been cut off, a number of centurions had been wounded, and even some of the centurions of the first rank had fallen, the legions, shouting encouragement to each other, fell upon the enemy, and not content with sustaining their onslaught, broke through their line and wrested a victory from a desperate plight.[289]

Another account refers to the ambush and massacre of three Roman legions under Varus in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 C.E. Velleius praises the qualities of the Roman soldiers and puts the blame for the disaster on their commander:

> An army unexcelled in bravery, the first of Roman armies in discipline, in energy, and in experience in the field, through the negligence of its general, the perfidy of the enemy, and the unkindness of fortune was surrounded, nor was as much opportunity as they had wished given to the soldiers either of fighting or of extricating themselves, except against heavy odds; nay, some were even heavily chastised for using the arms and showing the spirit of Romans... it is evident that Varus, who was, it must be confessed, a man of character and of good intentions, lost his life and his magnificent army more through lack of judgment in the commander than of valor in his soldiers.[290]

In sum, Velleius Paterculus follows Sallust in his division of the Roman history into two major periods, separated by the fall of Carthage. The following decline of morals culminated in the series of civil wars of the first century B.C.E. This general literary framework of moral degradation and the particular context of the civil wars explain the series of negative references to the soldiers of the period. The period of the rise of Tiberius, the author's military commander and patron, is most detailed and often conveys Velleius's immediate knowledge of the events and characters. The soldiers of this period

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[289] Velleius Paterculus 2.112.5–6.

[290] Velleius Paterculus 2.119.2–120.5.

are presented favorably and praised, at times in contrast to their failing leaders, for their discipline, skill, and valor shown in the most stringent circumstances.

vi. Tacitus

Tacitus (*ca.*56–after 118 C.E.), whose writings contain numerous references to the Roman army, had an illustrious public career under the Flavian emperors, which could include military service.[291] Tacitus was a member of the Senatorial class, and it is possible that he served as a military tribune or commanded a legion.[292] It is also possible that Tacitus had been governor of Upper or Lower Germany in 101–104 C.E., which would have put him in charge of the army of several legions.[293] However, nothing is known for certain about the military experience of Tacitus.

Agricola, one of the earliest published works of Tacitus, narrates the governorship of Iulius Agricola, Tacitus's recently diseased father-in-law.[294] Contrasting the efficiency of Agricola to the ineptness of his predecessors, Tacitus uses the behavior of the soldiery to illustrate his point. The injustice of the governors is underscored by the accounts of abuses inflicted by their staff, which included military personnel: in the words of a British chieftain spoken at the time of the revolt of Boudicca in 60–61 C.E., the centurions "deal violence alike and insult: nothing is beyond the reach of their avarice or

[291] Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.1.3. He received his first public office under Vespasian, entered the Senate under Titus, and served as a senior provincial official under Domitian.

[292] Ronald Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), 64, 68.

[293] Syme, *Tacitus*, 72.

[294] Although the work is the biography of Agricola, the governor of Britain for seven years from 77 or 78 C.E., Syme, *Tacitus*, 121–22, points out that the subject matter of Agricola goes beyond the theme of a biography and contains historical narrative. Due to the historical nature of the account, this work will be considered here in conjunction with the two major historical writings of Tacitus.

their lust."[295] The indolence of Agricola's predecessors led to the corruption of the troops: demoralized by idleness, the soldiers became unruly, careless, and helpless before the enemy.[296] Agricola, however, already in his first year in the office was able to restore the discipline in the army and inflict a series of defeats on the rebellious Britons.[297] Although the soldiers boastfully praised their own valor, the full credit in the victories is given to Agricola's skillful leadership.[298]

Some of the references to the army are clearly made in the context of Tacitus's contempt for the regime of Domitian and his predecessors. Prior to the battle of Mons Graupius in northern Britain in 83 or 84 C.E., the British leader Calgacus urges his men to fight for freedom against Roman oppression, portraying Roman military domination as avaricious, brutal, and destructive:

> Harriers of the world, now that earth fails their all-devastating hands, they probe even the sea; if their enemy have wealth, they have greed; if he be poor, they are ambitious; East nor West has glutted them; alone of mankind they behold with the same passion of concupiscence waste alike and want. To plunder, butcher, steal, these things they misname empire: they make a desolation and they call it peace.[299]

Through the mouth of the British chieftain, Tacitus further asserts that "that army, gathered from races widely separate," in time of crisis will turn against Rome. Such an army is bound to Rome not by fidelity and affection, but rather by fear and terror—"put

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[295] Tacitus, *Agr.* 15.1–3 (Hutton and Peterson, LCL). In *Ann.* 14.31 (Jackson, LCL), Tacitus reports that the kingdom of Prasutagus, Boudicca's husband, "was pillaged by centurions."

[296] Tacitus, *Agr.* 16–18.

[297] Tacitus, *Agr.* 20.

[298] Tacitus, *Agr.* 27.

[299] Tacitus, *Agr.* 30.5–6.

these away, and they who have ceased to fear will begin to hate."[300] The theme of the barbarous army ravaging Italy and Rome was further developed in the following major historical work.

The *Historiae*, the first large-scale historical treatise of Tacitus, initially covered the years 69–96 C.E. Its surviving part discusses the recent turbulent events of the year of the four emperors, which brought down the Julio-Claudian dynasty and established the house of the *Flavii*.[301] The perspective of Tacitus is explicitly stated: he conceives the account as a "period rich in disasters, terrible with battles, torn by civil struggles, horrible even in peace."[302] Not only does this framework place the army in the center of the plot, but it also portrays the army as the force directly responsible for the calamities: "Four emperors fell by the sword; there were three civil wars, more foreign wars, and often both at the same time."[303] It was the soldiers who, after the demise of Nero, offered the Empire to Galba.[304] It was the soldiers who disposed of Galba, when he failed to reward them. The account of Galba's gruesome death presents the soldiers as frightening and vicious murderers, utterly irreverent and immoral:

> So Roman soldiers rushed on as if they were going to drive a Vologaesus or a Pacorus from the ancestral throne of the Arsacidae and were not hurrying to slay their own emperor — an old man all unarmed.[305] They thrust aside the rabble, trampled down senators; terrifying men by their arms, they burst into the forum at

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[300] Tacitus, *Agr.* 32. An example of *Agr.* 28 illustrates the unreliability of the foreign troops— the soldiers of an auxiliary cohort levied in Germany and transported into Britain, killed a centurion and some of the Roman soldiers, who were transferred from the legions to train them, and attempted desertion.

[301] Out of probably twelve books of the *Histories*, only the first five survive, of which the last breaks off in 70 C.E.; see Mellor, *Historians*, 80.

[302] Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.2.1–2 (Moore, LCL).

[303] Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.2.2.

[304] Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.8.

[305] This refers to the Parthian war of 54–63 C.E.

> full gallop. Neither the sight of the Capitol nor the sanctity of the temples which towered above them, nor the thought of emperors past and to come, could deter them from committing a crime which any successor to the imperial power must punish…a soldier of the Fifteenth legion, Camurius by name, pierced his throat with a thrust of his sword. The rest shamefully mutilated his legs and arms, for his breast was protected, and in their cruel savagery they continued to inflict many wounds on his body even after his head had been cut off.[306]

The following narrative reveals further instances of the soldiery's indiscriminate and unprovoked malevolence. The soldiers of Otho, whom he called the sons of Italy and "the true Roman youth," devastated Italy on their way to meet the army of Vitellius in the spring of 69 C.E. as if it were the land of the enemy:

> It did not seem as if it were Italy and the haunts and homes of their native land that Otho's troops were approaching. They burned, devastated, and looted, as if they were on foreign shores and in an enemy's cities; and their action was the more horrible, for no provision had been made anywhere to oppose their terrifying advance. The fields were filled with workers, the houses open. The owners of estates who hurried to meet them with their wives and children, in the security which peace warrants, were overwhelmed by the horrors of war…the invaders satisfied their greed with the misfortunes of the innocent.[307]

The troops of Vitellius, marching toward Italy on the other side of the Alps, are painted in similarly dark colors: in the town of Divodurum, which received the army with courteous hospitality, the soldiers, caught up by a sudden violent impulse, massacred its innocent population for no apparent reason.[308]

In their lack of restraint and love of violence for its own sake the soldiers of Vitellius are portrayed as a barbarian horde on its way to invading Rome.[309] Tacitus

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[306] Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.40–41.

[307] Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.84; 2.12–13.

[308] Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.63.

[309] Ash, *Anarchy,* 39–40, suggests the intended comparison of the soldiers of Vitellius with the invasion of the Gauls in the early 4th century B.C.E.

emphasizes the foreign nature of the troops through naming several auxiliary regiments of foreign origin and providing several accounts of bloody encounters between the legionaries and auxiliaries.[310] The army of Vitellius attacks the troops of Otho in a barbarian fashion at the first battle of Bedriacum in 69 C.E., charging them in a reckless manner.[311] At the following siege of Placentia, the Vitellians first gorged themselves on food and wine, and then approached the walls openly and recklessly as a crowd of barbarians rather than as a formation of Roman soldiers. The besieged Othonians make the association explicit by calling the soldiers of Vitellius *peregrinum et externum*, "foreigners and aliens."[312] Tacitus's further remark, "both emperor and army, believing that they had no rival, broke out into cruelty, lust, and rapine, equaling all the excesses of barbarians," underscores the impression.[313]

After the army of Otho was defeated, the Vitellian soldiers took their turn in inflicting considerable sufferings on the Italian land:

> But the distress of Italy was now heavier and more terrible than that inflicted by war. The troops of Vitellius, scattering among the municipalities and colonies, indulged in every kind of robbery, theft, violence and debauchery. Their greed and venality knew no distinction between right and wrong; they respected nothing, whether sacred or profane. There were cases too where, under the disguise of soldiers, men murdered their personal enemies; and the soldiers in their turn, being acquainted with the country, marked out the best-stocked farms and the richest owners for booty or destruction, in case any resistance was made.

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[310] Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.68, 70, speaks of cohorts of Thracians, Raetians, Germans, Gauls, Lusitanians, and Britons, as well as the German and Petrian cavalry. Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.54, 64; 2.27, 66–68, 88, narrates a series of violent conflicts that occurred between the soldiers of the fourteenth legion and the Batavian auxiliaries in the army of Vitellius in 68–69 C.E

[311] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.14.3.

[312] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.21.1–4.

[313] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.73.2. Tacitus blames Vitellius for corrupting his army. In *Hist*. 2.62, he asserts that "his soldiers lost their energy and their valor as they became accustomed to pleasure and learned to despise their leader." *Hist.* 2.68, shows the logic of the argument: "*legati* and *tribuni* either imitate their strictness or find pleasure in extravagant dinners; and in the same way the soldiers exhibit devotion or license."

> The generals were subject to their troops and did not dare to forbid them…Italy, whose wealth had long before been exhausted, now found all these troops, foot and horse, all this violence, loss, and suffering, an intolerable burden.[314]

As the victorious army approached the capital, it stripped the fields bare "as if the land were an enemy's."[315] When in Rome, the soldiers of Vitellius looked and acted as barbarians. They frightened the population with their savage appearance, "dressed as they were in shaggy skins of wild beasts and armed with enormous spears." Confused and aggravated with the unfamiliar environment of the capital city, they "broke out in curses and soon went on to use their fists and swords."[316] The soldiers gave no impression of a professional army, but rather resembled an unruly and indolent horde: they did not know their headquarters, kept no watch, and spent their time in idleness and debauchery.[317]

Tacitus treats the army of Vespasian in similarly unflattering terms. Antonius Primus, a general of Vitellius, sent out his auxiliary cohorts into the vicinity of Cremona, ostensibly for foraging, but in reality to give his soldiers a taste for plundering civilians.[318] After the victory at Cremona, the soldiers of Vespasian demanded the imminent attack on the city in order to deprive it of a chance to surrender and thus deny

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[314] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.56.

[315] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.87.2.

[316] Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.88. In *Hist*. 2.74, Tacitus remarks that the Vitellian soldiers were even more barbaric then other troops in the provinces: by their savage appearance, rude dialect, and insolence the Vitellians irritated the soldiers stationed in the Balkans. Pliny the Younger, *Pan*. 23.3, seeking to please Trajan, says that the soldiers, who came to Rome with the Emperor, were in no way different from the dwellers of the capital in their appearance and behavior.

[317] Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.93–94.

[318] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.15.2.

them satisfaction of their "ingrained desire for plunder."[319] When the soldiers got their chance, the plundering went for four days, marked by the astonishing cruelty and greed:

> Neither rank nor years protected anyone; their assailants debauched and killed without distinction. Aged men and women near the end of life, though despised as booty, were dragged off to be the soldiers' sport. Whenever a young woman or a handsome youth fell into their hands, they were torn to pieces by the violent struggles of those who tried to secure them, and this in the end drove the despoilers to kill one another. Individuals tried to carry off for themselves money or the masses of gold dedicated in the temples, but they were assailed and slain by others stronger than themselves. Some, scorning the booty before their eyes, flogged and tortured the owners to discover hidden wealth and dug up buried treasure. They carried firebrands in their hands, and when they had secured their loot, in utter wantonness they threw these into the vacant houses and empty temples.[320]

As was the case with the troops of Vitellius, the ethnic diversity of soldiers translated into the multiplicity of vices: "In this army there were many passions corresponding to the variety of speech and customs, for it was made up of citizens, allies, and foreigners; no two held the same thing sacred and there was no crime which was held unlawful."[321]

Among the array of negative accounts of soldiery's crimes, there are few accounts of their valor. At the second battle of Cremona, two soldiers of Vespasian's army performed another deed "of splendid bravery": they infiltrated the enemy's position and sacrificed their lives to destroy an artillery machine that was devastating their ranks.[322] Atilius Verus, the centurion of the seventh legion fighting on the side of Vespasian, saved the eagle standard of the legion.[323] Finally, there was an instance of "notable courage"

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[319] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.19, 32.

[320] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.33.

[321] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.33.2.

[322] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.23.

[323] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.22.

displayed by Vitellius's centurion Julius Agrestis, who by taking his life affirmed to Vitellius the truth of his intelligence report on the post-battle situation at Cremona, thus bearing testimony to "his fidelity and courage."[324]

The instances of display of honor and bravery, however, are rare deviations from the numerous references to the soldiery's sins. The morals plummeted so low in 68–69 C.E. that even the gruesome acts of the civil wars of the previous century paled in comparison:

> [T]he victors had come to disregard the difference between right and wrong so completely that a common soldier declared that he had killed his brother in the last battle and actually asked the generals for a reward. The common dictates of humanity did not permit them to honor such a murder or military policy to punish it…And yet a similar crime had happened in civil war before. In the struggle against Cinna on the Janiculum…one of Pompey's soldiers killed his own brother and then, on realizing his crime, committed suicide. So much livelier among our ancestors was repentance for guilt as well as glory in virtuous action. Such deeds as this and others like them, drawn from our earlier history, I shall not improperly insert in my work whenever the theme or situation demands examples of the right or solace for the wrong.[325]

The dismal state of morals in the army reflected the pervasive moral decline of the Empire. Describing the sack of Rome by the soldiers of Vespasian in December 69 C.E., Tacitus makes the point that these "horrible and hideous sights" were worse than under Sulla and Cinna in 88 and 87 B.C.E.— not in the quantity of the blood spilled on the streets of the city, but in the attitude of Rome's populace. The people of the capital observed the fighting "as if they were games in the circus." They encouraged the soldiers with cheering and clapping, cried out for more blood, and harvested the booty while the soldiers were busy with the massacre. Behaving "as if it were a new delight added to their

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[324] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.54.

[325] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.51.

holidays" the people "gave way to exultation and joy, wholly indifferent to either side, finding pleasure in public misfortune."[326]

In the following *Annales*, Tacitus travels further back in time to trace the decline of senatorial liberty under the growing tyranny of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.[327] The army is treated in the familiar terms of corruption, laxity, and greed. Disobedient soldiers enter the scene as soon as the story begins: following the death of Augustus in 14 C.E., the Pannonian legions revolted.[328] The soldiers complained about the length and conditions of military service, insufficient wages, and the extortion of centurions, who demanded bribes for exemptions from duties. The revolt was marked by the typical instances of plunder of the provincials, as well as the acts of violence toward the centurions, who attempted to enforce discipline.[329] Although the demands and complaints of the soldiers might seem just, Tacitus's commentary denies the mutineers any sympathy. He remarks that the soldiers revolted without "fresh grievances; only the change of sovereigns had excited a vision of licensed anarchy and a hope of the emoluments of civil war."[330] In particular, Tacitus blames the commander of the legions, who allowed the soldiers to rest from their military duties for the period of mourning for Augustus. This

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[326] Tacitus, *Hist*. 3.83.

[327] John Matthews, "The Emperor and His Historians," in *Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (ed. John M. Marincola; Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 290.

[328] Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.16–30.

[329] Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.20–23.

[330] Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.16.

laxity resulted in demoralization of the troops, who "became eager, in short, for luxury and ease, disdainful of discipline and work."[331]

The mutiny in Germany, where Germanicus was in charge of eight legions stationed on the Rhine, follows the account of the mutiny in Pannonia. Having their minds instigated by a rabble of the city slaves levied from Rome in 9 C.E. and "familiar with license and chafing at hardship," the legions of the Lower Germany "plunged into delirium," posed similar demands, and took their vengeance on their centurions, "the traditional objects of military hatred, and always the first victims of its fury."[332] Germanicus was able to put the mutiny down by use of persuasion and force. In both episodes, Tacitus speaks of the soldiery's greed, rebellious spirit, madness, and rage as their motivating forces.[333]

In some instances, idleness and laxity were not only permitted but even encouraged by the leaders. When Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, the governor of Syria in 17–19 C.E., took over the Syrian legions, he used bribery and exercised favoritism in order to win the affection of the army. He removed the existent centurions and tribunes, who enforced the discipline and supervised military duties in the legions, and assigned their

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[331] Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.16. As Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.24–28 points out, the situation was so serious that Tiberius sent out his son, Drusus, and praetorian prefect L. Aelius Sejanus with two cohorts of the Praetorian Guard to settle the upheaval. The attempts of the Roman delegation to pacify the mutineers were unsuccessful until a sudden eclipse of the moon frightened the ignorant soldiers, who considered the phenomenon as a bad omen, and enabled Drusus to persuade them into obedience.

[332] Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.31–49. Tacitus emphasizes the similarity between the two mutinies, although there was a major difference—the soldiers in Germany offered assistance to their general Germanicus in taking control of the Empire.

[333] For a discussion of the mutinies, see Mary Frances Williams, "Four Mutinies: Tacitus *Annals* 1.16–30; 1.31–49 and Ammianus Marcellinus *Res Gestae* 20.4.9–20.5.7; 24.3.1–8," *Phoenix* 51 (1997): 44–74.

positions to "men of the worst character." He permitted "indolence in the camp, license in the towns, and in the country a vagrant and riotous soldiery."[334]

Corbulo provides an example of a general, who demonstrated the effective technique of fighting corruption in the army. In 47, Corbulo assumed command over the troops stationed in the Germania Inferior, who had become "as lethargic in their toils and duties as they were ardent in pillage," and he restored discipline, reportedly resorting to extreme measures in the process.[335] The Eastern legions deteriorated even further. In 58, when Corbulo took charge over the Eastern legions, he inherited an army demoralized by the absence of combat and incapable of military duty:

> It was a well-known fact that his army included veterans who had never served on a picket or a watch, who viewed the rampart and fosse as novel and curious objects, and who owned neither helmets nor breastplates—polished and prosperous warriors, who had served their time in the towns.[336]

In order to restore discipline in the Syrian army, Corbulo had to take measures of utmost severity, including capital punishment for offences usually condoned. Tacitus speaks of this approach approvingly, noting that there were fewer cases of desertion in Corbulo's camp than in those where leniency was habitual.[337]

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[334] Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.55. Tacitus suggests that Piso's actions presented him as a usurper of the Emperor's domain: "He went to such lengths in demoralizing them, that he was spoken of in their vulgar talk as the father of the legions."

[335] Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.18.

[336] Tacitus, *Ann.*13.35. In *Hist.* 2.80.3–81.1, Tacitus speaks of a clever move of Gaius Licinius Mucianus, the governor of Syria and a supporter of Vespasian. In 69, Mucianus exploited the alleged softness and laxity of the Syrian legions and managed to kindle their intense indignation by revealing plans of the Emperor Vitellius to transfer the legions from Syria, where they enjoyed "a profitable and easy service," to the Rhine frontier, known for its harsh climate and hard labor. Without further ado, the alarmed Syrian troops turned away from Vitellius and swore their allegiance to Vespasian.

[337] Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.35.

To summarize, the presentation of the army in Tacitus is conditioned by his literary aim of displaying the moral decline under the Julio-Claudian emperors. With the rare exception of competent generals like Corbulo and Agricola, the leaders, because of their ineptness, immorality, or pursuit of popularity with the soldiery for achieving their personal goals, corrupted the troops through their failure to maintain military discipline and prevent idleness. The resultant depiction of the soldier emphasizes his ignorance, irrational impulses, cruelty, rapacity, laxity, and indolence. In the *Historiae*, the source of most references involving the army, the civil wars of the year of the four emperors become the climax of moral degradation, with the army playing the role of the villain. In this context, the soldiers are portrayed in extremely dark colors as vicious murderers, insatiable plunderers, and ruthless barbarians, devastating Italy and Rome.

vii. Appian

Appian (late first century–160s C.E.), a Greek historian from Alexandria, wrote from the provincial perspective and, similarly to Polybius, attempted to explain the history of Rome to Greek readers.[338] His allusions to the Roman army primarily come from his chapters that cover the civil wars of Caesar and Octavian.

Appian's portrayal of Caesar's soldiers differs from the eulogistic treatment seen in the works of their commander. In particular, he questions the professed loyalty of Caesar's soldiers, reporting desertions from Caesar's army to Pompey.[339] He also narrates two mutinies that are absent from Caesar's account: the mutiny of 49 B.C.E., when some of Caesar's veteran soldiers revolted at Placentia in the Po Valley, and the mutiny of 47

[338] Appian's provincial perspective is apparent from his *Hist. rom.* praef.13.

[339] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.61.152, contra Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 3.61.2.

B.C.E., when Caesar's troops designated for the campaign in Africa revolted at Campania.[340] In both instances, the soldiers expressed their dissatisfaction with the protracted length of the war and demanded payment of the promised rewards.

The prejudice against the increase of the non-Roman element in the army seen in the works of Tacitus is reported in Appian's account of the auxiliary forces at the battle of Pharsalus in 48 B.C.E. Appian remarks that his sources carefully accounted for the number of the Roman citizens serving in Caesar's legions, but paid little attention to the allied forces, "regarding them as mere foreigners and as contributing little to the issue of the day."[341] Appian also reports that at the conclusion of the battle, Caesar ordered his troops to spare the Roman citizens in the Pompeian army, but to kill the auxiliaries. Consequently, Caesar's soldiers "fell upon the auxiliaries, who were not able to resist, and made a very great slaughter among them."[342] In his account of the losses in both armies, Appian remarks that "there was no report of the losses of auxiliaries, either because of their multitude or because they were despised."[343]

Numerous references concern the accounts of proscriptions of 43 B.C.E., carried out by the centurions and soldiers of the triumvirs.[344] In those accounts, the centurions are presented in the role of the agents of those in power, sent with a mission to dispatch from

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[340] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.47, 92–94.

[341] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.70 (White, LCL).

[342] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.80.

[343] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.82. In *Bell. civ.* 1.94.437–438, Appian reports that after the capture of Praeneste in 82 B.C.E., Sulla divided his prisoners into ethnic groups and slaughtered the non-Romans.

[344] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 3.

the opposition. Appian's accounts of slaughter involve at least twenty cases, including the assassination of Cicero.[345]

Another cluster of references comes from the account of the land distribution to the soldiers of Antony and Octavian. The civilians dispossessed of their land suffered "many injuries at the hands of the soldiers" and cried out against Octavian, "saying that the colonization was worse than the proscription, since the latter was directed against foes, while the former was against unoffending persons."[346] Octavian, according to Appian, chose to allow the injustices and "to overlook for the time being their insolence and arrogance," since he neither had the means to pay for the land, nor could he fail to reward the soldiers in view of the ongoing civil war.[347] Two examples illustrate the impudence of the soldiers. On one occasion, Octavian faced an infuriated crowd of soldiers for removing their comrade from an equestrian seat in theater.[348] At another time, the soldiers, aggravated with Octavian's delay for a land distribution gathering, killed a centurion who attempted to calm them down and posed a threat for Octavian's own safety.[349] Analyzing these instances of "the prevailing insubordination," Appian

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[345] According to Appian, *Bell. civ.*. 4.20, the centurion Laena kills Cicero. Plutarch, *Cic*. 48, reports that Cicero was killed by the centurion Herennius.

[346] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 5.14.

[347] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 5.15.

[348] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 5.15. Suetonius, *Aug*. 14, also reports this incident and says that Octavian narrowly escaped the "furious mob of soldiers" with his life, and was saved only by the sudden appearance of the man safe and sound.

[349] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 5.16. Dio 48.9.1–2, reports that the soldiers, who felt deceived by Octavian over the distribution of land, "killed many of the centurions and of the others who were friendly to Caesar and were trying to restrain them from rioting, and they came very near slaying Caesar himself, making any excuse suffice for their anger."

succinctly summarizes the causes and effects of the corruption of the army during the civil wars:

> [T]he generals, for the most part, as is usually the case in civil wars, were not regularly chosen…their armies were not drawn from the enrolment according to the custom of the fathers, nor for the benefit of their country…they did not serve the public so much as they did the individuals who brought them together…they served these not by the force of law, but by reason of private promises; not against the common enemy, but against private foes; not against foreigners, but against fellow-citizens, their equals in rank. All these things impaired military discipline, and the soldiers thought that they were not so much serving in the army as lending assistance, by their own favor and judgment, to leaders who needed them for their own personal ends… Understanding these facts the generals tolerated this behavior, for they knew that their authority over their armies depended on donatives rather than on law.[350]

In sum, the framework of the civil wars determines Appian's portrayal of the soldiers. Beginning with the cases of the mutinies in Caesar's army, Appian indicates that the soldiers came to a realization of their value for their leaders, who could not afford to lose their troops, especially to lose them to their opponents. The generals had to entice the loyalty of the soldiers by material inducements and by tolerating their vices at the expense of military discipline, cultivating greed, insolence, and insubordination among their troops.

viii. Summary of the Section

Polybius accounts for the superiority of the Roman army as based on the Roman military system imposed on soldiers in order to control their natural weaknesses. With rare exceptions, the Greek and Roman historians of the mid-first century B.C.E.–mid-second century C.E. reflect on how the failure of the generals to enforce this system led to the corruption of the army. The common theme of the deterioration of Roman society governs the treatment of the soldiers: the influx of wealth and pursuit of luxury (Sallust,

[350] Appian, *Bell. civ.* 5.17.

Livy, Velleius Paterculus), combined with the wickedness of certain imperial dynasties (Tacitus), brought about moral decay of the Roman elite who commanded the army, and, consequently, the degradation of the army itself. The civil wars at the end of the Republic (Sallust, Velleius Paterculus, Appian) or those of the year of the four emperors (Tacitus) constitute the climax of moral decline. During these years, the focus of attention was the corruption of the army as well as the vices of the soldiery that inflicted so much suffering on the state.

The works of Julius Caesar portray the soldiers in a positive light, emphasizing their ability to discern and support the right cause, their loyalty to their commander, their valor, discipline, and skill. This favorable treatment cannot be dismissed as solely a literary technique serving Caesar's agenda of presenting himself as a great leader and his cause just. The effectiveness of his army is confirmed by his victories, and the devotion of his soldiers is noted in the works of others. Moreover, Caesar's positive presentation of the soldiers extends beyond his army to the troops of his opponents. It appears, therefore, that Caesar's favorable portrayal of the army results from his personal and thorough knowledge of the soldiers acquired through decades of military campaigning. The writings of Velleius Paterculus, whose treatment of the soldiers becomes overwhelmingly positive in the part of the work that conveys his own experience, confirm the supposition that deep personal knowledge of the army translated into favorable treatment of the soldiers.[351]

[351] The writings of Sallust present an exception for the reason discussed above.

B. The Image of the Soldier in the Works of Biography

i. Cornelius Nepos

Although Cornelius Nepos (*ca.* 110–24 B.C.E.), the earliest extant biographer in Latin, was not a member of the Senate and avoided personal involvement in political life of the capital, his work demonstrates his awareness of the political issues prevalent at the time. His *De viris illustribus*, *On Famous Men*, is a collection of biographies comparing foreigners with Romans in various categories. This work seeks to interpret international culture and history for his Roman audience and to draw moral lessons from the lives of foreign notables.[352] In the process, Nepos highlights the themes and issues relevant to the concerns of his age.

One of the pertinent issues that Nepos addresses is the danger posed by an army not properly controlled by its leader. Nepos tells the story of Eumenes, a former general of Alexander the Great, who fought to transfer Alexander's kingdom to his son. The veteran soldiers of Philip and Alexander, who fought in the army of Eumenes, betrayed him to his adversary Antigonus, "though they had previously sworn, at three separate times, that they would defend him and never forsake him."[353] Nepos finds the actions of the veterans of Eumenes similar to the conduct of the contemporary Roman veterans:

> He [Eumenes] fought with Antigonus at Paraetacae, not in order of battle, but while on the march, and having worsted him, compelled him to return to Media to pass the winter. He for his part in the neighboring region of Persia distributed the winter quarters of his soldiers, not according to his own wishes, but as their desires dictated. For that famous phalanx of Alexander the Great, which had overrun Asia and conquered the Persians, after a long career of glory as well as of

[352] Nepos, *Praef.* 1–3; Timothy E. Duff, *The Greek and Roman Historians* (Classical World Series; London: Bristol Classical, 2003), 77; Mellor, *Historians*, 139.

[353] Nepos, *Eum.* 10.2 (Rolfe, LCL). According to Plutarch, *Eum.* 15–19, Antigonus captured the baggage containing the loot accumulated by veterans over the years of successful warfare. He then made a deal with the veterans to trade the baggage for their commander.

> license claimed the right to command its leaders instead of obeying them, even as our veterans do to-day. And so there is danger that our soldiers may do what the Macedonians did, and ruin everything by their license and lawlessness, their friends as well as their enemies. For if anyone should read the history of those veterans of old, he would recognize a parallel in our own, and decide that the only difference is one of time.[354]

The comparison implies that according to Nepos, the Roman soldiers of his time were conceited, dissolute, undisciplined, insubordinate, and demanding.

ii. Plutarch

The *Lives* of Plutarch (before 50–after 120 C.E.), the Greek philosopher and biographer from Chaeronea, explore historical figures with the goal of the moral improvement of the reader.[355] This goal controls Plutarch's selection of the material as he presents those details and anecdotes that reveal character more fully:

> [I]t is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles when thousands fall.[356]

The approach to narrative construction with the aim of making a moral point determines Plutarch's treatment of the Roman army. Speaking of Roman victories, Plutarch conventionally notes the aptitude and valor of Roman soldiers, who "were considered by foreign peoples to be skillful in carrying on war and formidable fighters."[357] In particular, he finds these qualities in the soldiers of Caesar, whom he praises for their zeal in service, and provides several examples of their heroism during the Gallic and Civil Wars,

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[354] Nepos, *Eum.* 8.1–3.

[355] Christopher Prestige Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 100.

[356] Plutarch, *Alex.* 1.2.

[357] Plutarch, *Marc.* 20.1.

including the heroic act of the centurion Crassinius at the battle of Pharsalus in 48 B.C.E.[358]

Far more numerous, however, are the accounts that portray the army in a negative light, building on the stock *topoi* of the immorality of the soldiers. Several references concern the greed of the soldiers and resulting disobedience to their general. In 168 B.C.E., after the victory at Pydna over the army of the Macedonian king Perseus, the soldiers did not support the plea of their commander L. Aemilius Paulus for a triumph because they did not get as much plunder as they expected. Through the mouth of the Senate Plutarch speaks of this behavior as "full of baseness and disobedience." He condemns "the bold license of the soldiers," which could escalate to "any and every deed of lawlessness and violence" if allowed to go unchecked.[359] In 73 B.C.E., when Quintus Sertorius sent Roman troops into Asia to fight king Mithridatus VI, the province was "oppressed by the rapacity and arrogance of the soldiers quartered there."[360] Due to the "greed" and "petty avarice" of his soldiers, Lucius Licinius Lucullus was unable to capture Mithridatus after the victory at Cabeira in 72 B.C.E.: the soldiers got distracted with a load of gold right when the king was within their reach.[361] A case of disobedience due to the avarice of the soldiery is reported for the army of Pompey. In 81 B.C.E., while

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[358] Plutarch, *Caes.* 16.1–9; *Pomp.* 71.1–3 (Perrin and Cohoon, LCL. Cf. *Caes.* 44.9–12; Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.82). The centurion expressed to Caesar his confidence in winning a glorious victory and died fighting most valiantly.

[359] Plutarch, *Aem.* 29.1–31.4. In 73 B.C.E., the soldiers of Lucullus found fault with their general for the similar reason of not being able to enrich themselves by way of plundering wealthy Asian cities (*Luc*. 14.2–3).

[360] Plutarch, *Sert.* 24.3. In *Sull.* 25, he narrates Sulla's punishment of the province of Asia for supporting Mithridatus against Rome. In 88 B.C.E., Sulla laid a massive fine on the province, and also demanded that besides providing lodging for his army, individual families should pay four tetradrachms a day to any soldier billeted with them and provide meals for as many friends as he cared to invite. Above this, tribunes were to receive fifty drachmas a day and two changes of clothing.

[361] Plutarch, *Luc*. 17.5–6.

in the vicinity of Carthage, "Pompey could do nothing with his soldiers for many days because they were hunting treasures," which, as the soldiers imagined, the Carthaginians had hidden sixty-five years earlier. Plutarch ridicules the gullibility and foolishness of the soldiers, presenting Pompey "laughing at the spectacle of so many myriads of men digging and stirring up the ground," until the soldiers, tired of their fruitless efforts "bade Pompey to lead them where he pleased, assuring him that they had been sufficiently punished for their folly."[362]

Several episodes play out the *topos* of the corruption of the army due to luxury and laxity. Spending the winter of 97 B.C.E. in a Spanish town of Castulo, the soldiers of Quintus Sertorius "shook off all discipline in the midst of plenty, and were drunk most of the time."[363] A similar case of corruption by leisure and excess is reported for the army of Lucullus, who in 68 B.C.E. had to give up his plans of expedition against the Parthians, because the reinforcement troops, formerly "unmanageable and disobedient" and now "utterly beyond control," refused to aid, and his own soldiers, through "wealth and luxurious life" became "averse to military service and desirous of leisure," and declared that "their many achievements entitled them to respite from toil and freedom from danger."[364] Finally, in 69 C.E. the generals of Otho had difficulties conducting the campaign against the army of Vitellius, due to "the disorderly and arrogant spirit of their soldiers." The troops, being soft and unwarlike due to their tranquil and relaxed way of life in Rome spent in entertainment rather than in drilling, tried "to cloak their weakness

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[362] Plutarch, *Pomp.* 11.3–4.

[363] Plutarch, *Sert.* 3.3–4.

[364] Plutarch, *Luc*. 30.3–31.1.

with insolence and boasting, disdaining to perform the services laid upon them because they were above the work, not because they were unable to do it."[365]

Another *topos* that Plutarch develops is the image of the commander of the army and his influence on his troops. In Plutarch's observation, the soldiers "have more affection for those who are willing to join in their toils than for those who permit them to lead an easy life."[366] He points out, however, that a number of leaders sought to win the allegiance of the army by lavishing money and allowing laxity.[367] In particular, the military leaders of the civil wars of the first century B.C.E. purchased the services of their soldiers with donatives, and thus "unwittingly made their whole country a thing for sale…" In sharp contrast to the generals of the past—the "lawful commanders" appointed by the Senate, men of self-restraint and modesty, who deemed "it more disgraceful to flatter their soldiers than to fear their enemies"—the civil war generals "won their primacy by force, not merit," using their mercenary armies "for service against one another, rather than against the public enemy."[368] Sulla gets most of the blame. He, "more than any one else, paved the way for these horrors, by making lavish expenditures upon the soldiers under his own command that he might corrupt and win over those whom others commanded," making profligates of his soldiers and traitors of the soldiers of

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[365] Plutarch, *Oth.* 5.3–5.

[366] Plutarch, *Mar.* 7.3.

[367] Plutarch, *Cat. Maj.* 3.5–6. When in 204 B.C.E. Cato Major arrived in Africa to assist Scipio Africanus in the war against Carthage, "he saw that the man indulged in his wonted extravagance, and lavished money without stint on his soldiery." Cato thus rebuked Scipio for "corrupting the native simplicity of his soldiers, who resorted to wanton pleasures when their pay exceeded their actual needs."

[368] Plutarch, *Sull.* 12.6–8.

others.[369] The example of Sulla was followed by the leaders of the warring factions throughout the civil wars of the century. In 44 B.C.E., Octavian came to Rome as soon as he learned about Caesar's fate "and by a lavish use of money assembled and got together many of Caesar's veteran soldiers."[370] Marc Antony responded by raising his army through a monetary incentive, "and the soldiers, as though for sale at auction, flocked to the highest bidder."[371] This corruption of the troops seen in the times of Marius and Sulla, Caesar and Pompey, Augustus and Marc Antony manifested to the extreme degree in the year of 68–69 C.E., when "the house of the Caesars, the Palatium… received four emperors, the soldiery ushering one in and another out, as in play," owing the rapid and violent succession of the rulers not so much to their conflicting ambitions, but mostly to "the greed and license of the soldiery, which drove out one commander with another as nail drives out nail." A solitary example of bravery, loyalty, and the sense of duty, shown by the centurion Sempronius Densus, who "in defense of honor and law" alone took a mortal stand in front of Galba's litter against the outraged mob of the soldiers set to kill the emperor, only highlights the prevailing wickedness of the soldiers.[372] The events of the year of the four emperors, Plutarch remarks, became a painful proof that the Empire

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[369] Plutarch, *Sull.* 12.9.

[370] Plutarch, *Brut*. 22.3.

[371] Plutarch, *Brut*. 23.1. The bonuses furnished to the army came at the expense of the civilian population. In *Brut.* 46.2, Plutarch remarks that in order to furnish the promised rewards to their soldiers, Antony and Octavian "drove her ancient inhabitants out of almost the whole of Italy, in order that their followers might get land and cities to which they had no right."

[372] Plutarch, *Galb.* 26.4–5.

has no greater danger to fear "than a military force given over to untrained and unreasoning impulses."[373]

To summarize, the predominantly negative portrayal of the Roman soldier in the moralizing work of Plutarch results from his employment of stock literary conventions to make his points. Most of the references explore the soldiery's proverbial greed, rapacity, arrogance, and lack of self-control. The context of the civil wars puts a particular emphasis on the soldiery's vices, exacerbated by the leaders, who corrupted the armies with license and luxury in an attempt to win their support. Notwithstanding the plethora of negative comments on the soldier's character, Plutarch's treatment of Julius Caesar's army accords with the positive presentation found in the works of Caesar himself.

iii. Suetonius

Although Suetonius (*ca.* 70–*ca.* 130 C.E.) was a son of a military tribune of *legio XIII*, who fought for Otho at Bedriacum in 69 C.E., there is no indication that Suetonius himself served in the army. To the contrary, it is known that he declined the post of military tribune that Pliny's patronage had secured for him about 102 C.E. As *ab epistulis*—the person in charge of the imperial correspondence—in Hadrian's court, Suetonius likely accompanied Hadrian to Gaul, Germany, and Britain, and could have had some exposure to the legions stationed there.[374]

As an equestrian who managed to achieve a high position in the imperial court, Suetonius in his *De vita Caesarum* does not lament the death of the Republic and the loss

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[373] Plutarch, *Galb.* 1.3–5; cf. *Oth.* 9.4.

[374] Hugh Lindsay, "Suetonius as *ab epistulis* to Hadrian and the Early History of the Imperial Correspondence," *Historia* 43 (1994): 454–68.

of the senatorial freedom. He is not interested in moralizing and does not criticize the imperial regime *per se*, but limits his evaluations to the virtues and vices, the achievements and defects of individual emperors.[375] His references to the army are selective and subordinated to this purpose of choosing the material to illustrate his statements about the army's particular character.

Suetonius speaks at length on the mutual affection between Caesar and his army. He reports that Caesar addressed the soldiers by flattering them as *commilitones*, "fellow-soldiers," and that he took the army's affairs personally.[376] This attitude made his soldiers "most devoted to his interests as well as most valiant." The examples of this devotion abound. At the beginning of the Civil War, every centurion of Caesar's legions proposed to supply a cavalryman from his own savings, and the soldiers offered their service without pay and rations, taking care of each other. There were no desertions from Caesar's army, and the prisoners of war chose death rather than the offer to serve against him. In rare cases of defeat the soldiers even insisted on being punished for letting their commander down. Their endurance and resolution made the opponents shudder, and their valor was such that they could withstand the countless enemy.[377]

When Suetonius speaks of the mutinies in Pannonia and Germany, he simply lists the grievances of the soldiers. The references to the baseness of the character of the

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[375] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius: The Scholar and His Caesars* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1983), 19; Duff, *Historians*, 106; Matthews, *Emperor*, 291.

[376] Suetonius, *Jul.* 67.2 (Rolfe, LCL). He reports that when Caesar learned about the annihilation of the Roman forces due to the treachery of Ambiorix, he let his hair and beard grow long until he had taken vengeance.

[377] Suetonius, *Jul*. 67.8. For instance, one cohort of Caesar's army kept at bay four legions of Pompey—thus being outnumbered forty to one—for several hours.

soldiers, found in the works of others, are absent from his description of the revolts.[378] Although Suetonius hints at the soldiery's lack of self-control, his remark is brief and forgiving: "when they threatened mutiny after the death of Augustus and were ready for any act of madness, the mere sight of Gaius [Caligula] unquestionably calmed them." The soldiers, Suetonius reports, repented of their behavior and begged to be spared the disgrace for their misdemeanor.[379]

A negative comment about the army of Vitellius is conditioned by the author's evaluation of the Emperor. As Vitellius displayed laxity and wantonness, so did all his followers, including his soldiers.[380] Again, Suetonius limits his remarks to a mere statement, avoiding moralizing on account of the soldiery's character and omitting any details or examples that could have illustrated the improper conduct of the army.

Another comment on the military is made in the context of the rule of Galba. Suetonius reports that Galba, hated by "almost all men of every class," was "especially detested by the soldiers." The reason for this particular dislike was Galba's failure to furnish the reward expected by the troops:

> [A]lthough their officers had promised them a larger gift than common when they swore allegiance to Galba in his absence, so far from keeping the promise, he declared more than once that it was his habit to levy troops, not buy them; and on this account he embittered the soldiers all over the empire.[381]

This account presents resentment toward the Emperor not as behavior particular to the army, but as an expression of a common mood of the time. Moreover, Suetonius seems to

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[378] Suetonius, *Tib.* 25.1–2.

[379] Suetonius, *Cal.* 9.1. Gaius, nicknamed Caligula for wearing little boots (*caligae*), won the affection of the soldiers by being brought up among the troops.

[380] Suetonius, *Vit.* 10.2.

[381] Suetonius, *Galb.* 16.1.

justify the acrimony of the soldiers: it was common to reward them on such occasions, but instead of the promised largesse they received an insult.[382]

In sum, Suetonius makes brief, selective, and unembellished references to the army in the context of his discussion of a particular ruler. Unable to provide any personal insight on the soldier's character due to his lack of military experience, Suetonius does not resort to conventional views, but explains the instances of misbehavior of the soldiers that he chooses to bring to light by causes other than the proverbial baseness of their character. His portrayal of the positive relations between Julius Caesar and his army adds to the validity of the image of the soldier found in Caesar's account.

iv. Summary of the Section

The lack of military experience prevented the biographical writers from adding any personal insight to their portrayal of the Roman soldier. As do most of the historical authors, the biographers—with the exception of Suetonius, who avoids any discussion of the soldier's nature—simply rehash the conventional low views of the soldier's character, whose inherent vices are displayed most clearly in the context of the civil wars. The emphasis that Plutarch and Suetonius put on valor, skill, and loyalty of the soldiers of Julius Caesar corroborates the presentation of the soldier found in the works of Caesar himself.

[382] On the opposite side of the spectrum, several passages speak of the devotion of the soldiers to a particular emperor. Besides *Cal.* 9.1 mentioned earlier, *Tit.* 5.2 remarks that Titus gained the army's loyalty through his military achievements during the Jewish War. *Dom.* 23.1 speaks of the great grief of the soldiers due to Domitian's assassination.

C. The Image of the Soldier in Other Literary Sources

Several literary sources of various genres present examples of a similarly derogatory attitude toward the Roman soldiers that is prevalent in the works of history and biography. A century prior to the period under discussion, a Roman playwright Titus Maccius Plautus (flourished in *ca.* 205–184 B.C.E.), who served as a soldier at some point in his life, already displays the stock features of the soldier's literary character found in the later sources. In one of his plays, a soldier's slave calls his master "a bragging, brazen, stercoraceous fellow, full of lies and lechery."[383] Another character of the play describes the soldier as "general nuisance," "a boastful, frizzle-pated, perfumed lady-killer."[384]

In 49 B.C.E., Cicero, speaking of the army of Julius Caesar approaching Rome, expresses concern about the coming barbarians.[385] The troops of Antony, who entered Rome in 44 B.C.E., are described in a similar manner. Elsewhere Cicero calls the soldiers of the period rustics, brutes, and animals.[386] Also in the context of the civil wars, Virgil (70–19 B.C.E.) speaks of "an impious soldier, a barbarian," who has appropriated someone's field.[387] Horace (65–8 B.C.E.) highlights monetary reward as the primary motivation for the soldier's bravery.[388] Petronius (*ca.* 27–66 C.E.) underscores

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[383] Plautus, *Mil. glor.* 89–90 (Nixon, LCL). Although the characters of the play are the Greeks in Ephesus, the play was written for a Roman audience and thus presented the characters in a way familiar to the Roman spectator.

[384] Plautus, *Mil. glor.* 924–925.

[385] Cicero, *Att*. 7.13.3.

[386] Cicero, *Phil.* 8.9.

[387] Virgil, *Ecl.* 1.70–72 (Fairclough, LCL).

[388] Horace, *Ep*. 2.2.26.

animalistic features of the soldier's character in the story of a soldier, who among the tombs outside Rome turns into a wolf.[389] Quintilian (*ca.* 35–*ca.* 100 C.E.) remarks that soldiers are rapacious and insolent, explaining these inherent features of the soldier's character by the nature of their occupation.[390]

The writings of Marcus Cornelius Fronto (*ca.* 95–*ca.* 166) demonstrate that the *topos* of the laxity of the Syrian troops, found in the works of Livy and Tacitus, was exploited outside of the works of history and in a later period. In his letter of 164 C.E. written to Emperor Lucius Verus, Fronto remarks on the pitiful state of the Syrian legions in terms similar to those found in the earlier authors:

> The army you took over was demoralized with luxury and immorality and prolonged idleness. The soldiers in Antioch were wont to spend their time clapping actors, and were more often found in the nearest café-garden than in the ranks. Horses shaggy from neglect, but every hair plucked from their riders: a rare sight was a soldier with arm or leg hairy. Withal the men better clothed than armed... Gambling was rife in camp: sleep night-long, or, if a watch was kept, it was over the wine-cups.[391]

The *topos* also surfaces in the vivid language of his Preface to *History*:

> Truly the most corrupt of all were the Syrian soldiers, mutinous, insolent, rarely at their posts, leaning on their weapons, wandering off from their garrisons, dispersed like scouts, drunk from noon till the next day, untrained at enduring even their armament, but, by taking off their equipment piece by piece in their intolerance of the hardship, half-naked like skirmishers and slingers. Besides disgraces of this sort, they were so unnerved by defeats that at the first sight of the Parthians they fled; they heard the trumpets blaring as if a signal for flight.[392]

Several authors address the theme of the soldiery's oppression of civilians. Juvenal (flourished in the late first–early second century C.E.) points out the difficulty of

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[389] Petronius, *Sat.* 62.

[390] Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.1.88.

[391] Fronto, *Ad Ver. Imp.* 2.1.19 (Haines, LCL); see Wheeler, *Laxity*, 230.

[392] Fronto, *Praef.*12; the translation is given according to Wheeler, *Laxity*, 230.

gaining redress for an assault by a soldier. The case was judged by a centurion and heard in the military camp in the midst of the offender's comrades:

> First, let's deal with the advantages shared by all soldiers. Not the least of these is that no civilian will have the nerve to beat you up. Instead, if he gets beaten up himself, he'll pretend he wasn't, and he won't be eager to show the praetor his teeth that have been knocked out, or the black lump on his face with the swollen bruises, or the eye he still has, though the doctor isn't making any promises. If he seeks redress for this, he gets a hobnailed boot for a judge, with huge calf-muscles sitting at the big bench…"The centurions' jurisdiction over soldiers is absolutely fair," you say, "and I'll have my satisfaction, if the case I bring before them is a justified complaint." But the entire cohort is hostile, and all the units act with one mind to ensure that your redress needs medical attention and that it's worse than your original injury…When the judge says, "Call your witness"…you can more quickly produce a false witness against a civilian than someone to tell the truth against the property and honor of a military man.[393]

According to Juvenal, those seeking justice for offences from the soldiers faced intimidation of the military camp, the lack of a fair court procedure, and the prospect of further cruelty.

In his *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius (born *ca.* 125 C.E.) plays out the themes of brutality and injustice in the story of a gardener and a soldier of a legion.[394] The unfortunate gardener met the soldier, who spoke "with proud and arrogant words" and,

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[393] Juvenal, *Sat.* 16.7–34 (Braund, LCL). See Edward Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London: Athlone, 1980), 615-16.

[394] Apuleius, *Metam.* 9.39–42 (Adlington, LCL). Werner Riess, *Apuleius und die Räuber: Ein Beitrag zur historischen Kriminalitätsforschung* (Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien 35; Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2001), 287, n. 100, raises the question why there was a legionary in a non-military province of Asia. Admitting that the phenomenon may simply be the result of an error of the author or of the ignorance of the donkey who tells the story, Riess suggests that the contradiction seems to resolve itself further in the narrative—the soldier was travelling, and thus could be a legionary passing though this non-military province. However, the soldier could have been a member of the *auxilia*. In *Metam.*10.13, the soldier's commander is called a *tribunus*, who normally would have been a commander of an auxiliary unit. It is known that the governors of the non-military provinces could have some auxiliary units of soldiers at their disposal. See E. Ritterling, "Military Forces in the Senatorial Provinces," *JRS* 17 (1927): 28–32; Cédric Brélaz, *La sécurité publique en Asie Mineure sous le Principat (I^{er}-III^{ème} s. ap. J.–C.)* (Basel: Schwabe, 2005), 231–84. Specifically for the evidence for auxiliary forces and the detachment of legions in Asia Minor, see Robert K. Sherk, "The *Inermes Provinciae* of Asia Minor," *AJP* 76 (1955): 400–13.

"unable to refrain his proper insolence" knocked the gardener off the donkey with a stick for his failure to understand Latin and answer his question.[395] Following the soldier's attempt to requisition the donkey, violence escalated. When the soldier's assault surprisingly failed and the gardener managed to beat the soldier up and escape, the soldier brought the full force of the official judicial system on his offender. Immediately and without any evidence, the magistrates accepted the false testimony of the soldier and his comrades against the gardener and delivered him to prison for capital punishment, while the soldier got possession of the donkey.[396]

It appears that the scenario described by Apuleius was not a rare phenomenon. Epictetus (*ca.* 55–*ca.* 135 C.E.) advises against contesting the requisition of a donkey by a soldier due to the futility of resistance and the danger of provoking physical abuse in addition to losing the animal:

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[395] The numerous tombstones of centurions demonstrate that the *vitis*—the wooden staff—was associated with the centurion's office (also see Dio 55.24.8). The text, however, calls the offender a *miles*, soldier, and further speaks of his *commilitones*, "fellow soldiers," not subordinates. The inscriptional evidence indicates that a *miles* could indeed carry a staff. One of the first-century witnesses of a soldier carrying a rod is the grave relief from Corinth dated to 45–75 C.E. It depicts C. Valerius Valens, a *miles* of *legio VIII Augusta*, holding a stick in his right hand and what appears to be a stack of writing tablets in his left. The relief can be viewed online at http://www.livius.org/a/1/legio/viii_augusta/viii_augusta_mus_corinth1.JPG, accessed on 01.29.13. M. Sasel Kos, "A Latin Epitaph of a Roman Legionary from Corinth," *JRS* 68 (1978): 23, points out that several similar inscriptions are known. Michael P. Speidel, "The *fustis* as a Soldier's Weapon," *Antiquités Africaines* 29 (1993): 146–49, discusses a gravestone from Pireus, Achaia, dated to the first century C.E. The soldier depicted on the stone also carries a stick in his right hand and a stack of writing tablets in his left. Speidel suggests that each of the stones could depict a *beneficiarius* charged with special tasks, such as collection of taxes and policing. Although the precise significance of the soldier's staff cannot be determined, Kos, *Latin Epitaph*, 22, suggests that its likely function was chastisement. As centurions used their staffs to encourage discipline among the ranks, so the soldiers on police duty could use their sticks to enforce order among the civilians, not unlike modern law-enforcement officers. Alternatively, the soldier could have been attached to the entourage of the governor as he traveled through the province, perhaps on his assize tour; see Fergus Millar, "The World of The Golden Ass," *JRS* 71 (1981): 67; G. P. Burton, "Proconsuls, Assizes and the Administration of Justice under the Empire," *JRS* 65 (1975): 92.

[396] As Campbell, *Emperor*, 244, points out, the story presents the soldiers frequently appealing to the genius of the Princeps and swearing by the name of Caesar, and thus portrays them as a privileged group under the imperial protection and above the provincial law.

> You ought to possess your whole body as a poor ass loaded, as long as it is possible, as long as you are allowed. But if there be a press, and a soldier should lay hold of it, let it go, do not resist, nor murmur; if you do, you will receive blows, and nevertheless you will also lose the ass.[397]

The fact that Epictetus uses an example of requisition as an established convention in order to make a philosophical point strongly suggests that requisitions and the accompanying physical violence were not infrequent.[398]

In sum, already in the third century B.C.E., Plautus presents the image of the Roman soldier—an arrogant, impudent, greedy debauchee—that is taken over by the literary sources of the mid-first century B.C.E.–mid-second century C.E.[399] All of the witnesses considered in this section emphasize the same unattractive conventional features of the soldier's character, as found in the most historical and biographical writings. Fronto employs the same *topos* of the laxity of the Syrian troops, as do Livy and Tacitus. Juvenal, Epictetus, and Apuleius point to the specific abuses inflicted by the army on the civilian population, which are also attested in the non-literary sources, considered in the following section.

III. The Roman Soldier in Non-Literary Sources

Non-literary evidence supplements the literary sources and allows evaluation of their claims about the army's conduct. Multiple instances of abuses, including the situations depicted by Epictetus and Apuleius, resulted from the obligation of the civilian

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[397] Epictetus, *Diatr.* 4.1.79 (Oldfather, LCL).

[398] Riess, *Apuleius,* 287, 299. Matt 5:41 speaks of "summoning for a mile," ὅστις σε ἀγγαρεύσει μίλον ἕν (cf. *Did.* 1.4; Justin, *1 Apol.* 16.2). The verb ἀγγαρεύω means "to requisition, press into service, compel" (BDAG, 7) and likely implies compulsory assistance provided to the military (cf. Mark 15:21; Mat 27:32).

[399] Notably, the military experience of Plautus does not reflect on his employment of the stock weaknesses of the soldier's nature in his play.

population of the Empire to provide liturgies, transportation, supplies, and accommodation to the troops on the move.[400] The continuous efforts of the government to rectify the problem are attested in a series of imperial edicts that range from the beginning of the reign of Augustus and continue up to the early fifth century C.E.[401] Almost without exception, these documents concern the abuse of the civilian's obligation to provide service and frequently point to soldiers as culprits.[402] The documents show that the Roman governing authorities did not intend to overlook the predicament; however, despite the threats of severe punishment for the offenders, the frequency of the edicts—at least five instances in the first century in the Eastern provinces of Achaea, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria—demonstrate that the abuse persisted. As the edict of Petronius Mamertinus, the prefect of Egypt, points out, the illegal requisition adversely affected both civilians and the army: due to the insult, the civilian population suffers damages, and the army shames itself ἐπὶ πλεονεξίᾳ καὶ ἀδικίᾳ, "in greed and injustice."[403]

Along with requisition of the means of transportation, the above documents mention obligatory hospitality provided by the civilian population to the travelling

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[400] Campbell, *Emperor*, 249, concludes that requisitions of animals and provisions, usually carried out by soldiers, were a major source of grievance to the civilian population. Millar, *World*, 68, calls the transportation provision the most important area of contact and conflict between state and subject. For a detailed treatment of the issue see Stephen Mitchell, "Requisitioned Transport in the Roman Empire: A New Inscription from Pisidia," *JRS* 66 (1976): 106–31.

[401] Mitchell, *Requisitioned Transport*, 111. The documents pertaining to our period include: the edict of Sextus Strabo Libuscidianus, the legate of Tiberius in Galatia, *ca.* 13–15 C.E., which mentions the Augustan *mandata* of similar nature; the edict of Germanicus published in Egypt, 19 C.E.; the edict of L. Aemmilius Rectus, prefect of Egypt, 42 C.E.; the edict of Cn. Vergilius Capito, prefect of Egypt, 48 C.E.; the edict of Claudius, found at Tegea in Achaea, 49–50 C.E.; the letter of L. Vinuleius Pataecius, procurator of Thrace under Vespasian, to Thasos; an extract from the *mandata* of Domitian to Claudius Athenodorus, procurator of Syria; and Pliny's letter to Trajan and Trajan's reply regarding sending a legionary centurion to Iuliopolis in Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.78–79.

[402] Mitchell, *Requisitioned Transport*, 106, 114, 125.

[403] *PSI* no. 446.

military officials or troops on the move. Billeting could pose a considerable problem for civilians. Higher military ranks could demand not only food and accommodation appropriate to their status, but also entertainment arranged by the host. Soldiers were also entitled to mandatory hospitality, and on campaigns, when their numbers were significant, could become a burden to the population of an entire region.[404]

Some of the witnesses refer to the extortion of money by the soldiers. The aforementioned Claudian edict of the Egyptian prefect Aemilius Rectus threatens the utmost penalty upon any offender, including soldiers, who use force against the civilians to exact money.[405] A papyrus of 37 C.E. seems to present a testimony of a village scribe, who denies any knowledge of διασεσεισμένῳ ὑπὸ στρατιώτου καὶ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ, "an extortion by a soldier and those with him," apparently in response to an accusation or complaint.[406] A list of expenses dated to the second century C.E. includes hundred drachmas to two police agents, a further hundred to another police agent, and astounding 2,200 drachmas for διασεισμός, extortion.[407]

Some cases of extortion occurred in the collection of taxes. The whole taxation enterprise could be extortion in itself. Reportedly, Tiberius informed a prefect of Egypt, who had sent more tribute than had been required, that he wanted his "sheep shorn, not shaven."[408] As some of the documents suggest, the army was actively involved in the

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[404] Plutarch, *Sull.* 25, reports an extreme case of Sulla's punishment of the rebellious province of Asia, when he demanded extraordinary additional arrangements and supplies for his army.

[405] E. Mary Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), no. 381.

[406] *P.Oxy.* 2.240.

[407] *SB* 6.9207. According to BDAG, 236, the verb διασείω, "shake violently," means "to shake down," or "to extort money by force or threat of violence." The case of Luke 3:14, where the verb refers to the Roman soldiers, will be discussed below.

[408] Dio 57.10.5.

collection of taxes. According to the papyrological records found in Egypt, soldiers could guard customs points, collect taxes, and regularly accompany tax collectors to ensure their safety and facilitate the collection.[409] At times, the collection exceeded the stipulated amount and was accompanied by violence or thievery.[410] The association of soldiers with the unpopular business of tax collection, the accompanying threat or use of violence, and the instances of abuse contributed to the negative perception of soldiers by civilians.[411]

Although soldiers could be abusive and unjust, it was the army that facilitated the peaceful existence of the provincials, protecting their rights and maintaining their security.[412] An important aspect of the policing function of the army is attested in the records of civilian petitions.[413] Centurions in particular could be requested to investigate crimes, and as the records demonstrate, they became a regular feature of upholding law

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[409] There is evidence that soldiers occasionally collected taxes themselves during the Principate. *OGIS* 671 of 90 C.E. speaks of the charges made for the use of the desert roads in Egypt. *BGU* 2.597 reports that in 75 C.E. in Fayum a soldier was associated with the σιτόλογος in a context related to taxes on grain. Philo, *Spec.* 3.159–162, narrates the horrors of tax-collection in Egypt and speaks of the use of brutal force on a considerable scale in the process, which strongly suggests the involvement of the military. *P.Oxy.* 42.3028 reports that in the third-century Oxyrhynchite, the collection of taxes got out of hand since the collector, although not doing anything illegal, seemed to be overly enthusiastic about his task. Soldiers had to be sent to protect him.

[410] *BGU* 4.1188 of 15 B.C.E. reports that the records of the ferryman in the Egyptian village of Komas were audited by the tax collector Apollos, accompanied by a soldier. The visitors stole two cloaks from the ferryman's house.

[411] Luke 3:12,14 is an example of such association.

[412] Literary sources also point to the army's duty to maintain order in the provinces. Apuleius, *Metam.* 2.18, presents a character, who refers to the danger of traveling to a certain city at night due to the bandits, since, as she says, "the auxilia of the governor, far away as they are, [cannot] rid the city of such carnage." Dio 56.19, gives an account of the events preceding the ambush and destruction of three Roman legions of Varus in 9 C.E. Speaking of the police duties performed by the Roman army in Germany, Dio reports that Varus "did not keep his legions together as was proper in a hostile country, but distributed the soldiers to helpless communities, which asked for them for the alleged purpose of guarding various points, arresting robbers or escorting provision trains." The evidence related to police functions of the army in Judaea will be covered in Chapter 3.

[413] Burton, *Proconsuls*, 92–106, argues that the bulk of justice was executed by local courts. The evidence shows that whereas the civilians had access to their local courts, which practiced the local laws, they could choose to petition Roman authorities nevertheless.

and order throughout the countryside. Although the majority of the petitions date to a later period, a number of cases from the late first century B.C.E.–early second century C.E. is also known.[414] An early example of a civilian petition to a centurion is found in a papyrus of 31 C.E. from Oxyrhynchus. A fisherman, who had been assaulted and robbed by several civilians and a soldier, petitions a centurion to investigate the matter and to force the accused to pay the penalty.[415] This and other petitions show that the litigants asked the centurion to judge the cases on his own initiative and make legal decisions.[416] Some of the petitioners were unable to identify the offender, which suggests that they expected the centurion to investigate the case and find the culprit.[417] The cases presented to centurions covered a wide range of issues, including assault, theft, robbery, fraud, and various disputes.[418]

Although the evidence overwhelmingly comes from Egypt, petitions to centurions from other parts of the Empire are also attested, including several early-second-century

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[414] MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian*, 53; John Whitehorne, "Petitions to the Centurion: a Question of Locality?" *BASP* 41 (2004): 155–169. Whitehorne observes that most petitions to centurions in Egypt come from Fayum and lists sixteen such petitions from the period between the late first century B.C.E.–early second century C.E. Michael Peachin, "Petition to a Centurion from the NYU Papyrus Collection and the Question of Informal Adjudication Performed by Centurions," in *Papyri in Memory of P.J. Sijpesteijn* (ed. A.J.B. Sirks and K. Worp; *ASP* 40; Oakville, Conn.: American Society of Papyrologists, 2007), 86, lists four more petitions from other locations in Egypt, which are dated to the first–early second centuries C.E.

[415] *P.Oxy.* 19.2234.

[416] *P.Oslo* 2.21, a petition dated to 71 C.E., presents a case of a theft of olives from an estate and requests a centurion to summon the accused to recompense. *BGU* 1.36, a petition dated to 101/103 C.E., reports that certain people, who owed the petitioner money, refused to pay, beat him up, and threatened his life. The petitioner asks a centurion to punish the accused.

[417] *SB* 16.12951, a petition dated to 100 C.E., presents a case of a theft of olives and other property from a house in Karanis and requests a centurion to conduct investigation.

[418] Richard Alston, *Soldier and Society In Roman Egypt: A Social History* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 91, provides a grouping of the types of cases represented in the petitions.

documents from the Roman fort of Vindolanda at Hadrian's Wall in Britain.[419] One of them is of particular interest since it provides insight into the way civilians solicited Roman justice. In this document, a civilian trader writes to a senior Roman official, likely the provincial governor, about having been beaten up by a soldier.[420] The petitioner reports that after he was unable to file his complaint with the *praefectus cohortis*, probably the commanding officer of the soldier, due to the officer's illness, he unsuccessfully attempted to gain redress from the *beneficiarius* and then from the centurions of the unit. In other words, only after all attempts to solicit justice locally have failed, the plaintiff resolved to contact the governor.[421]

Thus, in the absence of a developed provincial bureaucracy, the centurion often was the Roman representative who, unlike the remote prefect or procurator, was accessible locally and directly. The petitions indicate that the centurion was involved in the day-to-day life and administration of the province and a vital part of the local administration. For the provincials, he was the Roman official with social status and power sufficient for effective assistance in a wide range of problems.[422] Therefore, the

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[419] The petitions from Vindolanda include *T. Vindol.* 2.257, 281, 322, 344. See Michael Peachin, "Five Vindolanda Tablets, Soldiers, and the Law," *Tyche* 14 (1999): 223-35; Alen K. Bowman and J. Davis Thomas, *The Vindolanda Writing-tablets (Tabulae Vindolandenses II)* (London: British Museum Press, 1994), 329–34. The evidence from Judaea will be covered in Chapter 3.

[420] *T. Vindol.* 2.344. The writer complaints that he has been beaten with sticks (*virgis*), which may be a reference to the rods carried by soldiers for peacekeeping as discussed above; see n. 395.

[421] Peachin, *Petition*, 84, observes that the higher number of petitions found in Fayum can be explained by the remoteness of that location: people in need of legal assistance petitioned centurions because they were the nearest available arm of Roman authority. Also see MacMullen, *Soldier and Civilian*, 52-53 n. 9; Campbell, *Emperor*, 432-33.

[422] Peachin, *Petition*, 79-97, argues that generally centurions did not have formal authority to adjudicate legal cases. He proposes that civilians still petitioned them because the civilians wanted—and apparently received—assistance with their problems, whereas "procedural propriety in reaching that goal was at best a secondary concern." For similar reasoning see Deborah W. Hobson, "The Impact of Law on Village Life in Roman Egypt," in *Law, Politics and Society in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (ed.

centurion provided a link and an immediate means of interaction between the people and the governing power of Rome. The importance of centurions for the local communities is confirmed by the inscriptions that honor them as benefactors.[423] Since centurions were effectively integrated into the power structure of the local society, it would be vitally important for the locals to establish and maintain good relations with them.

In sum, non-literary evidence records actual instances of abuse connected to an obligation of the civilian population to provide services, including furnishing transportation and accommodation to military personnel, and associated with the army's assistance with collection of taxes. A particular stratum of the evidence presents a positive aspect in the interaction between centurions and civilians. The sources reveal the important function that the centurion carried in the local administration. In the absence of a developed provincial bureaucracy, it was the centurion, who as the representative of the governing power of Rome provided accessible and efficient assistance in investigating various legal matters and administering justice. Consequently, the centurion became effectively integrated into the power structure of the local society. This is confirmed by the inscriptional evidence honoring them as benefactors of the local communities.

IV. Conclusion

This assessment of the sources demonstrates that well-informed witnesses, such as Julius Caesar and Velleius Paterculus (in those accounts that derived from his personal military experience), speak of soldiers in overwhelmingly positive terms. Their accounts

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Baruch Halpern and Deborah W. Hobson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 216; William Turpin, "Imperial Subscriptions and the Administration of Justice," *JRS* 81 (1991): 101-18.

[423] The inscriptions portraying centurions as benefactors of local communities will be presented in discussion of Luke 7:1-10 in Chapter 4.

offer outstanding examples of heroism among the centurions and soldiers on the battlefield and their allegiance to their commander. The military setbacks are blamed on incapable commanding officers rather than on the rank-and-file soldiers and centurions.

Other writings considered in this section do not share this positive outlook. Beginning with Polybius, the writers of histories and biographies hold a low view of the soldier's character. Regardless of the military experience and political agenda of the writers or the genre and literary purpose of the writings, the sources portray the soldiers in stereotypically derogatory terms. Even though the authors note the valor and military skill of the Roman army, they habitually speak about the dark side of the soldier's character: the soldiers by their nature are unable to exercise self-restraint; their bravery verges on uncontrolled anger and brutality; they are rapacious, indolent, and prone to excessive self-indulgence whenever given an opportunity. The military leaders, who would enforce strict discipline, austerity, and labor necessary to keep the army from falling into degenerate state, are mostly lacking or ineffective due to the moral decline of Roman society, most evident in the civil wars. The civil war generals are portrayed as individuals who served their personal goals rather than the benefit of their country, who competed in attracting their private armies by promises of rewards, and kept the allegiance of their soldiers by corrupting them with excesses and the relaxation of military discipline.

The dissatisfaction of these writers with the Roman army is also connected with the increasing provincialization of the legions and the institutionalization of the non-citizen *auxilia* as a regular part of the army in the first century C.E. The prejudice against things "un-Roman" contributed to the negative image of the soldier. The corrupting

influence of the Eastern way of life received particular emphasis. Livy, Tacitus, and Fronto apply similar degrading terminology to Eastern soldiers of different armies and periods. The Eastern troops, demoralized by comfortable living, habitually neglect their armor and their duties. They are also insolent and un-warlike. This negative depiction of the Roman auxilia and the Eastern legions will be further compared with the description of the Roman army in the East in the accounts of Josephus and Luke.

The literary writings other than the works of history and biography share the stock *topoi* of the soldier's brutality, greed, insolence, and self-indulgence. The non-literary evidence partially attests to actual instances of abuse connected to the obligation of the civilian population to provide transportation and accommodation to the military personnel and to provide services associated with the army's involvement in the collection of taxes. It has to be noted, however, that the reported instances of abuse, which by their very nature were aberrations from the norm, should be treated as exceptions to accepted behavior. The very existence of complaints and rectifying edicts shows that the Roman governing authorities took measures to eliminate these excesses. On the positive side, the evidence shows the army facilitating the peaceful existence of the provincials, protecting their rights under the rule of law and maintaining their security. In particular, the sources reveal the centurion's role in local provincial administration by providing immediately available and apparently effective aid in resolving various legal issues for the civilian population of the provinces. In a sense, the centurions made the power of Rome directly accessible, and thereby they were effectively integrated into the power structure of the local society, inspiring the provincials to establish and exploit positive relations to their benefit.

Chapter 3:The Image of the Roman Soldier in Jewish Sources

I. The Purpose and Scope of this Chapter

The present chapter expands the discussion of the image of the Roman army to the Jewish sources relevant to the period under consideration. It complements the depiction of the Roman army in the Greco-Roman sources discussed above and provides additional points of comparison for the following analysis of the Roman army in Luke-Acts. The present survey of the Jewish sources will begin with 1 Maccabees as a witness to a positive view of Rome and its army prior to the Roman conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey. Then it will consider the relevant Qumran sources and Jewish pseudepigraphic literature, including *Psalms of Solomon*, *Assumption of Moses*, *Sibylline Oracles*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and *Apocalypse of Abraham*. The analysis of the sources will continue with the historical works of Philo, Talmudic sources, and the available non-literary evidence. A discussion of the works of Josephus, by far the most prolific author on the Roman army of our period, will occupy most of this chapter.

II. The Roman Soldier in Jewish Literature

A. The Roman Army in Jewish Literature Prior to 63 B.C.E.: 1 Maccabees

Although 63 B.C.E. marks the beginning of Roman military presence in Palestine and thus the beginning of the period under discussion here, political contact between Rome and Jerusalem had begun about a century earlier during the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucids. The straightforward historical narrative of 1 Maccabees (ca. late 2nd cent. B.C.E.–before 63 B.C.E.) covers the affairs in Palestine from about 175 B.C.E., the year of Antiochus IV Epiphanes's return from Roman captivity to Syria, until the end of

the rule of the Jewish leader Simon the Hasmonean in 134/3 B.C.E.[424] The book provides several comments on the Roman army and presents a view that highlights its contrasting depiction found in the sources written after 63 B.C.E.

In 164 B.C.E., Judas Maccabaeus, who had just established control over Jerusalem, sent an embassy to Rome with the objective of attaining a powerful ally.[425] The text of 1 Macc 8:1–16 substantiates this action through a lengthy eulogy dedicated to the victories of the Roman army. The beginning of the passage emphasizes the might of the Romans and their kindness toward those who reach out for their friendship.[426] The list of Roman military successes follows in verses 2–13. The passage alludes to the Roman victories over the Gauls ("Galatians," v. 2, in Asia Minor) in the late third and early second centuries B.C.E.; to the Roman conquest of Spain in the course of the Second Punic War of 218–201 B.C.E. (v. 3); to the victories of the Roman legions over the Macedonian phalanx of king Philip V of Macedon in the battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 B.C.E.; the defeat of the army of his son, king Perseus of Macedon, in the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C.E. (v. 5); the Roman rout of the cosmopolitan forces of Antiochus the Great in

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[424] Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees: A New Translation, with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 41; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 62–64, dates the book to the reign of Alexander Janneus (103–76 B.C.E.), suggesting 103–90 B.C.E. as the likely time of writing. He points out that due to its favorable attitude toward the Romans, the work could not have been written after 63 B.C.E. George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 106, more broadly suggests 104–64 B.C.E. as the time of writing.

[425] Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 24, points out that under the Republic, the recognition of *amicitia*, a formal friendship, with a foreign ruler has to be conferred by the Senate.

[426] Each quality is reinforced by repetition in the form of a chiasmus:

εἰσὶν δυνατοὶ ἰσχύι
καὶ αὐτοὶ εὐδοκοῦσιν
ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς προστιθεμένοις αὐτοῖς,
καὶ ὅσοι ἂν προσέλθωσιν αὐτοῖς,
ἱστῶσιν αὐτοῖς φιλίαν,
καὶ ὅτι εἰσὶ δυνατοὶ ἰσχύι.

the battle of Magnesia in 190/189 B.C.E. (vv. 6–8); and, anachronistically, to a later Roman victory over the Greek states of the Achaean League and destruction of Corinth in 146 B.C.E. (vv. 9–10).[427] This passage makes the point that the Romans destroyed, enslaved, and subdued everyone who ever opposed them, far and near (vv. 11–12). The acclamation concludes with a succinct affirmation of Rome's sovereign power to punish and reward, reiterating the initial assertion: "Those whom they wish to help and to make kings, they make kings, and those whom they wish they depose; and they have been greatly exalted" (v. 13).[428]

The following verses confirm that the alliance was successfully achieved. Although at the time the Romans had not yet acquired provinces in Greece or Asia, the series of wars they fought in the East in the half-century preceding the treaty effectively established their influence in the region. The list of the Roman military successes in 1 Macc 8:2–13, specifically Rome's victories over the Macedonian and Seleucid kings in vv. 5–8, demonstrates that Roman presence in eastern politics was apparent. Since the Seleucid kingdom was a major player in the region, Rome was bound to get involved in the conflict between the Maccabean Jews and Syria. The treaty that Judas's envoys brought back from Rome stated that the Jews and the Romans agreed to assist each other

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[427] For discussion, see Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 350–55. Daniel 11:18 is a biblical allusion to the battle of Magnesia, where the Romans are referred to as the *Kittim* (see the discussion of the term as applied to the Romans in the Qumran sources further in this chapter).

[428] The accolade concludes with a proclamation of the virtue of the Roman government: the senators do not envy each other and aim to govern the Roman people well (vv. 14–16). The purpose of the praise of Rome was to justify the formation of an alliance between Jews and Gentiles. Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, 347, points out that since Hebrew prophets condemned Jewish alliances with Gentiles, the author of 1 Maccabees makes the point that Rome was neither a cruel nor a wicked power like Assyria or Babylon. Goldstein also observes that some biblical prophecies could have been interpreted in favor of an alliance with Rome: the Hebrew of Isa 26:11, יהוה רמה ידך, could be read as "YHWH, Rome is your hand."

in the event of war (vv. 23–30).[429] To that effect, the Romans sent a letter to Demetrius I protesting his oppression of the Jews and threatening to make war on him if he gave them any further grounds for complaint.[430] The letter referred to the Jews as τοὺς φίλους ἡμῶν τοὺς συμμάχους, "our friends and allies" (v. 31).[431] About twenty years later (ca. 145–43 B.C.E.), Judas's brother and successor Jonathan sent ambassadors to Rome to confirm and renew their friendship (12:1–4).[432] Shortly thereafter, Jonathan's brother and successor Simon reaffirmed the alliance with Rome (14:24; 15:15–24).[433] This compelled

[429] This agreement of mutual military assistance is also found in the text of the decree as narrated in Josephus, *A.J.* 12.417.

[430] In effect, the Romans did not provide military assistance to Judas, who was defeated by Demetrius I and killed in battle soon after the conclusion of the treaty (1 Macc 8:31–9:18).

[431] This was a common diplomatic phrase for what usually, as in this case, ultimately became a patron-client relationship, in which *amicitia* was the diplomatic expression of reciprocal obligations. Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 7, points out that due to the pervasiveness of *amicitia* or φιλία in the Mediterranean world, the concept of friendship could carry many different interpretations and emphases. For a discussion of various alliance categories between the Romans and other states, see A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East: 168 B.C. to A.D. 1* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1984), 58–70. Although 1 Macc 8 is the clearest statement by non-Romans that at least theoretically the Jews too understood basic features of Roman diplomatic practice, it is apparent that they did not fully grasp the nuances of Roman diplomatic language. No military support was ever provided to the Jews in their wars with the Seleucids (see 1 Macc 12.24–13.30; cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 13.174–212). Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, 70–79, argues that there was no formal treaty between Rome and the Jews. But see also E. R. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (vol. 2; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 751.

[432] Cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 13.165, 170. Again, the Romans responded positively, but took no action when shortly after the alliance renewal, Jonathan was kidnapped and murdered by Trypho (1 Macc 12:46–13:23). E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations* (SJLA 20; Leiden: Brill, 1981), 7, points out that a treaty normally lapsed with the death of the ruler with whom it was made and needed renewal by his successor. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, 74–75, observers that in this case, the treaty was between the Roman and Jewish people and thus required no renewals. He recites the view of the regular renewals of the alliance by each successive Maccabean ruler as diplomatic strategy designed to remind the Romans of the Jewish need for protection and the Seleucid kings of the protected status of the Jews. His own explanation of the renewals argues for the absence of a formal treaty.

[433] Cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 13.227.

king Demetrius II, who learned that the Jews were addressed by the Romans as φίλοι καὶ σύμμαχοι καὶ ἀδελφοί, to treat Simon with respect (14:38–40).[434]

In sum, 1 Maccabees displays the admiration of Roman military might and portrays the Roman army as a powerful ally that could potentially be called upon in times of need to assist the Jews against their enemies. The book emphasizes that the alliance with Rome made the Jews known as "the friends of the Romans" and commanded respect toward them.[435]

B. The Roman Army in Jewish Prophetic Literature

The annexation of Syria in 64 B.C.E. by Pompey, who was campaigning in the East, brought neighboring Palestine into immediate proximity of Roman military presence.[436] With the creation of the new province of Syria the former role of the independent Jewish state as leverage over the Seleucids lost its validity for the Romans, whereas the dynastic feud between the descendants of the Maccabees, Hyrcanus II and his brother Aristobulus II posed a threat to the security of the Roman frontier.[437] According to Josephus, the contenders themselves invited Pompey to intervene, each

[434] Again, Rome did not intervene when Simon was murdered (1 Macc 16:11–17).

[435] 1 Maccabees points out that Roman friendship was an important and very useful weapon employed among the allies to intimidate rivals. Recourse to this secondary effect of Roman friendship was, in fact, a part of its lure, particularly among weaker kingdoms.

[436] Pompey's Eastern campaign against Mithridates VI of Pontus and Tigranes II of Armenia concluded the Third Mithridatic War fought by the Romans since 73 B.C.E. For discussion, see A. N. Sherwin-White, "Lucullus, Pompey and the East," in *The Last Age of The Roman Republic, 146–43 B.C.* (ed. J. A. Crook, Andrew Lintott, Elizabeth Rawson; vol. 9 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*; 2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 229–73; Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 16–21.

[437] The contenders fought each other for the high priesthood and kingship of Judaea since 67 B.C.E. Hyrcanus sought the protection of Aretas, the king of Nabatea, who had already expanded his power to the neighborhood of Damascus. In response, Aretas invaded Judaea, drove Aristobulus into Jerusalem, and besieged him in the temple stronghold (Josephus, *B.J.* 1.103–106). In 64 B.C.E., Aretas retreated to Transjordan.

sending a delegation in an attempt to win his support. Additionally, a deputation of over 200 leading citizens of Judaea denounced both of the rivals along with the very idea of secular kingship—the envoys appealed to the treaty that Rome concluded with Judas the Maccabee, in which no Jewish king was involved. Pompey requested the parties to wait on his settlement after the conclusion of his military expedition against the Nabatean king Aretas, who threatened the stability in Palestine and Syria.[438] The continuing intrigues of Aristobulus, who defied Pompey's instructions and mobilized his forces, drove Pompey to turn his army against him. Aristobulus withdrew his forces to Jerusalem, but soon submitted to Pompey with a promise to surrender the city. His party, however, continued the opposition, and while the supporters of Hyrcanus opened the gates to the Romans, the partisans of Aristobulus mobilized resistance in the fortified temple precinct. The temple fell to the army of Pompey in October of 63 after a siege of three months.[439] Following the victory, Pompey restored the government of Judaea to the cooperative Hyrcanus as high-priest and ethnarch, without the kingly title, thus meeting the wishes of those who appealed to the Maccabean treaty and objected to secular kinship. The land was reduced to its former limits by restoring to Syria districts annexed by the Maccabean rulers.[440]

It appears that Pompey accomplished two primary objectives in Palestine. First, he secured stability on the Roman frontier. He achieved this goal by terminating the civil war in Judaea, establishing a loyal ruler, and halting the aggressiveness of the Nabatean king. Second, Pompey restored to Syria—now a Roman province—the areas formerly

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[438] Josephus, *A.J.* 14.41; Diodorus, 40.2.

[439] Josephus, *A.J.* 14.54–72; *B.J.* 1.139–151; Dio 37.15.1–16.4 More details of Josephus's account of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem will be considered in the relevant section later in this chapter.

[440] Josephus, *A.J.* 14.73–76, *B.J.* 1.153–156, Dio 37.16.5.

acquired by the Maccabean rulers. Judaea, which apart from the supporters of Aristobulus in Jerusalem's temple, offered no armed resistance to the Romans, was left as a client state within its ethnic boundaries under its priestly ruler, subjected to the payment of a fixed tribute. However, in the eyes of the Jews, the Roman military intervention was a humiliating assault of a Gentile army on God's city, temple, and people, which signified the end of Maccabean freedom and the beginning of foreign control over the Jewish state. Consequently, the tone of subsequent Jewish reflection on Rome and its army is dramatically different from that of 1 Maccabees. This change of attitude can be seen in the Jewish prophetic writings reviewed below, which include the Dead Sea Scrolls, *Psalms of Solomon*, *Assumption of Moses*, *Sibylline Oracles*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and *Apocalypse of Abraham*.

i. Dead Sea Scrolls

Although the writings of the Qumran community never mention Rome explicitly, the *Kittim* found in some of the witnesses can be identified as the Romans. These sources include the *pesher* commentaries on the books of Habakkuk (1QpHab) and Nahum (4Q169), and the *War Scroll* (1QM).[441]

[441] Besides the three sources discussed in this section, the *Kittim* are also mentioned in 4Q247 (Pesher on the Apocalypse of Weeks), 4Q285 and 11Q14 (Sefer ha-Milhamah), 4Q161 (Pesher on Isaiah[a]). In 4Q247 and 4Q161, the *Kittim* refer to Hellenistic kingdoms, while in 4Q285 and 11Q14 the identity of the *Kittim* cannot be established with any certainty due to the ambiguous eschatological context of the references. For discussion, see Hanan Eshel, "The Kittim in the *War Scroll* and in the Pesharim," in *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kochba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 27–31 January 1999* (ed. David Goodblatt, Avital Pinnick, and Daniel R. Schwartz; STDJ 37; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 31–32, 37–41.

The preserved part of the *Pesher Habakkuk* (*ca*. mid-first century B.C.E.) elaborates on Habakkuk 1 and 2.[442] A significant section of the work deals almost exclusively with a foreign invasion of Palestine. The Chaldeans of Hab 1:6–11 here are identified with the army of the *Kittim*.[443] The comparison of this army with an eagle (1QpHab 3:8, 11–12), the symbol of the Roman legions, and the indication that the *Kittim* worship their standards (6:4), a practice of the Roman soldiers, strongly suggest that the army of the *Kittim* is the Roman army.[444] The witness emphasizes the power of the *Kittim* —their army is presented as numerous, swift, strong, fearsome, arrogant, and scornful of any military resistance. The *Kittim* are also immoral: they are coming to destroy and pillage, are premeditated for evil, treat other nations with treachery, intend to devour all nations, and murder young, old, women, children, and even infants without mercy (3:1–12; 4:5–8; 6:10–12). The invasion of the *Kittim* is presented as God's punishment caused by the sins of the corrupted religious leaders of Israel (9:1–7). There is no prophecy of divine punishment or destruction of the *Kittim* in the future.[445]

The references to kings Demetrius and Antiochus in the *Pesher Nahum* (*ca*. late

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[442] Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim: Qumran Interpretations of Biblical Books* (CBQMS 8; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1979), 11, suggests dating the source within a decade of Pompey's invasion. Schürer, *History*, 1:242 n. 30, summarizes the arguments for dating the scroll immediately following Pompey's invasion or preceding it. Schürer sides with the latter option, arguing that 1QpHab 2–6 depicts the *Kittim* as world conquerors preparing to invade the Jewish land, while the Jewish priests are still in charge in Jerusalem.

[443] The *Kittim* are mentioned in 1QpHab 2:12, 14; 3:4, 9; 4:5, 10; 6:1, 10; 9:7.

[444] Cf. Josephus, *B.J.* 6.316. See Kathleen M. Tyrer Atkinson, "The Historical Setting of the Habakkuk Commentary," *JSS* 4 (1959): 238–63, for discussion of the reference to worship to military standards in the Roman army.

[445] Schürer, *History*, 1:242 n. 30, observes the shift of the Jewish attitude toward the Romans in comparison with 1 Maccabees and suggests that 1QpHab refrains from passing judgment on the Romans because the Roman army is the tool of divine punishment of the wicked Hasmonean priests.

first century B.C.E.) indicate that the *Kittim* in this book also refers to the Romans.[446] This source does not make explicit its author's attitude to the *Kittim*, merely saying that they will be the first after a certain Antiochus (probably Antiochus IV) to conquer Jerusalem—a likely reference to the events of 63 B.C.E.[447] However, the author's negative view of the *Kittim* is apparent. Unlike the previous witness, this source presents the *Kittim* as an object of God's rebuke: God will judge the *Kittim* and will wipe them off the face of the earth (4Q169 f1 2:3–4).

The *War Scroll* (*ca*. first century B.C.E.–*ca.* 68 C.E.) describes the war of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness, a highly charged way of referring to the war between the faithful of Israel and their enemies.[448] The Sons of Light are assisted by the powers of light, justice, and the angels. At the head of the Sons of Darkness stands the nation of the *Kittim*, who are assisted by Belial and the powers of darkness and evil under his authority.[449] Describing a series of battles, the text goes over the details of battle arrays, weapons, and military maneuvers.[450] In the final battle the Sons of Light overcome the *Kittim* through direct divine intervention.

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[446] George J. Brooke, "The Kittim in the Qumran Pesharim," in *Images of Empire* (ed. Loveday Alexander; JSOTSup 122; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 138, specifies that this Demetrius is likely Demetrius III Eukerus (95–88 B.C.E.).

[447] According to 4Q169 f3 4i:2–3, the prophecy of Nah 2:11 refers to "Deme]trius, king of Greece, who sought to enter Jerusalem through the counsel of the Flattery-Seekers; [but it never fell into the] power of the kings of Greece from Antiochus until the appearance of the rulers of the Kittim; but afterwards it will be trampled."

[448] More precise dating of *War Scroll* is complicated by the ambiguity of the historical references and possible composite nature of the document. See discussion in Schürer, *History*, 3:398 n. 1, 401–2; Eshel, *Kittim*, 32–37.

[449] The *War Scroll* mentions the *Kittim* eighteen times: 1QM 1:2, 4, 6, 9, 12; 11:11; 15:2; 16:2, 5, 7, 8; 17:12, 14, 15; 18:2, 4; 19:10, 13.

[450] Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (trans. Batya and Chaim Rabin; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 114–97, provides an extensive comparison between the weapons, battle formations, and tactics described in the scroll and those of the

The *Kittim* in the *War Scroll* are usually identified with the Romans, although other views have also been offered.[451] According to the view favoring the reference of the *Kittim* as applying to the Romans, the scroll may reflect a tension that existed in Judaea in the first century C.E. and anticipate the war with Rome that eventually broke out in 66. The source aims at explaining the apparent invincibility of the Roman Empire by pointing out that Rome will be defeated eventually in the time appointed by God and through his decisive assistance.[452]

To summarize, all three of the above Qumran witnesses depict the Roman army as an extremely powerful but exceedingly immoral force. While some texts present the Roman army as an instrument used by God to punish the sinners in Israel (1QpHab), the others predict its condemnation and total destruction (4Q169, 1QM).

ii. *Psalms of Solomon*

A more explicit Jewish reaction to the Roman invasion is recorded in the *Psalms of Solomon* (*ca.* mid-first century B.C.E.–before 70 C.E.). Although none of the psalms

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Roman army and concludes that the *War Scroll* describes the Roman army of the second half of the first century B.C.E. This argument for precise identification of the army of the *Kittim* cannot be supported based on the available evidence on Roman military equipment. For a review of the current evidence, see M. C. Bishop and J. C. N. Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment: From the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome* (2d. ed.; Oxford: Oxbow, 2006). Yadin, *Scroll*, 4–5, also argues that the *War Scroll* was a military manual aimed at providing the members of the community with a set of regulations for conducting war according to both the rules of contemporary warfare and Jewish law. Jean Duhaime, "The War Scroll from Qumran and the Greco-Roman Tactical Treatises," *Revue de Qumrân* 13 (1988): 133–51, compares the *War Scroll* to Greco-Roman military manuals dating from about the same period and concludes in favor of a certain similarity. However, Duhaime admits that the question whether the *War Scroll* was actually intended as a treatise designed to direct an army in an actual war remains open. John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Routledge, 1997), 95–99, points out that the scroll exhibits a strong ritualistic character heavily dependent on biblical tradition.

[451] Schürer, *History*, 3:403 n.17. Eshel, *Kittim*, 32–37, argues that the *Kittim* in 1QM refers to the Seleucids. Collins, *Apocalypticism* 106–7, admits the possibility of a combination of several traditions referring to the Seleucids, Ptolemies, and Romans.

[452] 1QM 1:6–9; 17:13–18:5; cf. 11:12; 15:1–2; 16:3–9.

contains any personal names, the allusions to identifiable historical details in *Ps. Sol.* 2, 8, and 17 strongly suggest the connection to the period of Pompey's sack of Jerusalem.[453] The following section will explore the references to the Roman army in these psalms.[454]

Psalm of Solomon 2 begins with a description of the capture and desecration of Jerusalem's temple by a foreign enemy who broke down its walls with a battering ram and trampled the altar with their sandals (2:1–2).[455] The psalmist blames Jerusalem's priests for this calamity because they have profaned the sacrifices and defiled the sanctuary (2:3–5). Due to the sins of the Jerusalemites, God gave the city over to the foreign invaders (2:7–8). Because of their lawless actions, some Jerusalem dwellers were

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[453] So R. B. Wright, "Psalms of Solomon," *OTP* 2:640–41: a foreign conqueror came from the west (*Pss. Sol.* 17:2); he was welcomed into Jerusalem by a part of the leadership and the people (8:16–18), but encountered resistance from the others who sheltered in a fortified place; the conqueror broke the walls with siege machinery (2:1); following victory, the conqueror and his troops entered the sanctuary of the temple and desecrated it (2:2); afterwards, the conqueror went to Egypt, where he was assassinated at the seashore (2:26–27). The details of the siege will be discussed below. F. K. Movers, "Apokryphen-Literatur," in *Kirchen-Lexikon, oder Encyklopädie der katholischen Theologie und ihrer Hilfswissenschqften* (ed. H. J. Wetzer and B. Welte; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1847), 1:340, was the first to suggest that the entire corpus of *Psalms of Solomon* reflects the events of this period. As he points out, the earliest identifiable historical reference is to Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E., and the latest is to his death in 48 B.C.E. For an extensive list of scholars who date *Psalms of Solomon* to the period of Pompey's sack of Jerusalem, see Kenneth Atkinson, "Herod the Great, Sosius, and the Siege of Jerusalem (37 B.C.E.) in Psalm of Solomon 17," *NovT* 38.4 (1996): 313, n. 1. Wright, *OTP* 2:641, points out that the psalms with no historical allusions could have been written earlier or later, and the collection as a whole was composed at a later time. He also maintains that the absence of any references to the destruction of Jerusalem places the composition of the book in its final form prior to 70 C.E. For a concise review of the difficulty of more precise dating for the *Psalms of Solomon*, see Atkinson, *Herod*, 314, n. 2.

[454] Additionally, *Psalm of Solomon* 13 likely describes the situation in Jerusalem immediately following Pompey's conquest. Kenneth Atkinson, *I Cried to the Lord: A Study of the Psalms of Solomon's Historical Background and Social Setting* (SJSJ 84; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 88, 119–20, points out that many commentators identify the "wild animals" (v. 3) as the Romans. Atkinson argues that according to this interpretation, the "godless person" who is taken away into exile along with the sinners (v. 5) is Aristobulus and his supporters, and the allusion to "sinners' death" (v. 2) refers to the slaughter of Aristobulus's partisans following their siege in Jerusalem's temple.

[455] According to Josephus, Pompey assaulted the northern wall of the temple with a battering ram (*A.J.* 14.60–62; *B.J.* 1.145–147). The temple courts, except for the most outer one, were out of limits to Gentiles (Josephus, *A.J.* 15.417); see Elias J. Bickerman, "The Warning Inscriptions of Herod's Temple," *JQR* 37.4 (1947): 387–405. Additionally, the psalmist likely refers to entering the Holy of Holies by Pompey; cf. Josephus, *A.J.,* 14.72; *B.J.* 1.152.

taken into captivity (2:6).[456] The writer further emphasizes that Jerusalem was punished for the transgressions of its inhabitants (2:7–21).

While the first part of the psalm (2:1–21) deals with God's condemnation of the sins of the Jerusalemites and their punishment by the foreign invasion, its second portion (2:22–37) is concerned with the punishment of the invaders themselves. The writer accuses the foreign army of acting not out of zeal for righteousness, but out of vicious rage and lust for plunder (2:23–24). The army commander is singled out for his impious pride. He is compared with an arrogant dragon that exalted himself instead of honoring God (2:25, 28–29).[457] The author is beseeching God to deliver Jerusalem from the oppression of the foreign sinners and to punish their arrogant leader (2:1, 25). Pompey's death in 48 B.C.E is portrayed as God's response to this prayer: for his insolence, "the dragon" was pierced in Egypt, his body was carried about on the waves and was not honored by a proper burial (2:26–28, 31).[458] The fate of the foreign commander inspires the author to praise God's justice and to warn the world's leaders that they will also be judged in accordance with their actions (2:30–37).

Psalm of Solomon 8 should be interpreted in the same historical context as *Psalm of Solomon* 2. It opens with a description of an advancing foreign army compared to a hurricane and a raging fire sweeping through the desert (8:1–2). The author asserts that

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[456] Josephus, *A.J.* 14.79, reports that Pompey sent Aristobulus, along with his sons and daughters and many of his supporters, in chains to Rome to be led in the triumphal procession; cf. *B.J.* 1.154.

[457] The reference to the arrogant leader as a "dragon" (2:25) is similar to the combination of the dragon motif with the arrogant anti-God figure in Rev 12:7–9, where the term is applied to Satan.

[458] This description matches the details of Pompey's death as known from the Greco-Roman sources (Plutarch, *Pomp.* 79.3–80.2; Julius Caesar, *Bell. civ.* 3.104; Velleius Paterculus 2.5; Appian, *Hist. rom.* 2.12.85–86; Dio 42.4.4; 5.3,5). Following defeat in the battle of Pharsalus in 48 B.C.E., Pompey fled to Egypt and was slain with swords and daggers on his approach to the Alexandrean shore. His body was decapitated and left at the shore.

the foreign invasion was caused by the grave sins of Jerusalem's inhabitants, primarily the transgressions of Jerusalem's temple priests (8:3–13). The foreign army's commander is presented as the agent of divine justice whom God has brought "from the end of the earth" to assault the city (8:15).[459] The psalmist recounts how Pompey, who is led by God in safety, enters Jerusalem unopposed as a master of the house, slaughters his opponents, pours out their blood like polluted water, and leads their children into captivity (8:18–21). The Psalm neither prophesies the destruction of Rome nor does it contain an appeal to God's vengeance against the invader. Instead, it admits the justice of God's judgment and pleads for salvation from being completely destroyed by the Romans (8:30–32).

Psalm of Solomon 17 views the foreign invasion specifically as God's response to the illegitimate establishment of a non-Davidic monarchy by the Hasmonean rulers (17:4–9).[460] Although an agent of God's justice, the foreign conqueror is a lawless and arrogant man who laid waste to Jewish land, and whose army massacred young and old indiscriminately (17:11–17). The psalmist pleads for God to purge Jerusalem from Gentiles, to smash the arrogance of the sinners like a potter's jar, and to destroy the unlawful nations. He is confident that God will judge and condemn the Roman invaders (17:21–25).

To summarize, the *Psalms of Solomon* presents the Roman military invasion of 63 B.C.E. as God's punishment for the sins of Jewish religious and political leaders. One of the witnesses portrays the role of Pompey as an agent of divine judgment without

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[459] As Atkinson, *Psalms*, 59, points out, this description of Pompey's origins, from the "end of the earth," reuses the biblical depictions of Assyria (Isa. 5:26), Babylonia (Jer 6:22–23), and Persia (Isa 46:11). In Acts 1:8, the phrase possibly refers to Rome; see Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 206–7.

[460] Atkinson, *Herod*, 313–22, argues that *Pss. Sol*. 17 describes the siege of Jerusalem by Herod the Great and the Roman general Sosius in 37 B.C.E. (discussed below). The exact identity of the Roman general in the psalm is irrelevant for discerning the psalmist's attitude to the Roman army discussed here.

negative connotations, whereas others emphasize Pompey's arrogance and the wickedness of the Roman army in general, and express confidence in the divine destruction of the Roman invaders.

iii. *Assumption of Moses* 6–7

Although the bulk of this book, also known as *Testament of Moses*, describes the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes in the first half of the second century B.C.E., chapters 6 and 7 reflect on events that occurred after the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C.E. and, apparently, prior to 30 C.E.[461] The last identifiable event in the section speaks of a powerful ruler from the West, who comes to Palestine after Herod's death, burns a part of the temple, and conducts crucifixions around Jerusalem (*As. Mos.* 6:8–9). The passage refers to Roman military operations aimed at checking the disturbances in Judaea in 4 B.C.E. It alludes to the burning of a part of the temple in Jerusalem by the troops of Sabinus and to the subsequent crucifixion of the Jewish rebels by the soldiers of Varus.[462]

Although the text does not explicitly use negative language toward the Romans, anti-Roman hostility is apparent from the context. The placement of chapters 6 and 7 in the narrative relating to the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV extends the animosity from the Seleucids to the Romans. Additionally, a modification of 10:8, which originally could have prophesied about Israel treading on the necks of its enemies (cf.

[461] See J. Priest, "Testament of Moses," *OTP* 1:920–21, for discussion of various theories regarding the date of the source. The *terminus ante quem* for the section of chs. 6–7 is determined by the fact that after 30 C.E. the reigns of two of Herod's sons, Antipas and Philip, exceeded the length of Herod's reign of thirty four years, contrary to the prediction of *As. Mos.* 6:6–7.

[462] A discussion of these events as reported in Josephus follows.

Deut 33:29), specifically speaks of treading on *ceruices et alas aquilae*, "the necks and wings of an eagle," apparently alluding to the military symbol of the new enemy.[463]

iv. *Sibylline Oracles*

The present collection of the *Sibylline Oracles* consists of fourteen books, the latest of which could date to the mid-seventh century C.E.[464] The texts that refer to the Roman Empire within our period belong to books 1 through 5.

Books 1 and 2 comprise a single document that combines Jewish and Christian prophetic traditions within these oracles.[465] The Jewish stage of composition likely occurred between 30 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.[466] The witness presents the Roman Empire as the only power that God singled out for destruction: in the tenth generation God will destroy the glory of idols and "shake the people of seven-hilled Rome," burning their wealth in fire (*Sib. Or.* 2:18).[467] The apparent reason for the destruction of Rome is its idolatry.

Book 3 of the *Sibylline Oracles* is a composition of texts written by the pro-Ptolemaic circles of the Jewish Diaspora in Egypt in different historical periods. The book contains several references to Roman military exploits. The first reference to

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[463] See Adela Yarbro Collins, "Composition and Redaction of the Testament of Moses 10," *HTR* 69 (1976): 179–86, for a detailed discussion of the revision of the original verse in light of the events following the death of Herod the Great.

[464] Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature*, 193.

[465] See J. J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *OTP* 1:331–32.

[466] Collins, *OTP* 1:331, argues that since Rome is being identified with the only power to be destroyed (*Sib. Or.* 2:18), this suggests a date after Actium (31 B.C.E.), when Roman power in the East was consolidated. Also, since there is no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, the composition likely occurred before 70 C.E.

[467] Collins, *OTP* 1:345.

Roman conquests chronologically (vv. 175–193) comes from the main corpus of the book, which strongly endorses a Ptolemaic king as a savior who will end the period of war and initiate the age of peace.[468] Although this oracle predates our period, it is important as another Jewish reference to Rome in a military context prior to Pompey's sack of Jerusalem. Unlike 1 Maccabees, which celebrates Rome as a powerful ally of the Palestinian Jews in their war with the Seleucids, this oracle presents the view of the pro-Ptolemaic Jewish Diaspora and is highly critical of Roman intrusion into the affairs of the East. It denounces Rome as a mighty but immoral, insolent nation which afflicts others, covets wealth, and fills everything with evil.

The oracle against Rome (vv. 350–380) dates to the time shortly before the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E.[469] This oracle conveys the first of four proclamations of divine justice against the nations of the Gentiles (3:350–488) and proclaims the vengeance of Asia on Rome carried out by a certain female figure, presumably Cleopatra VII.[470] Although Rome will be punished for its luxurious and lawless life and excessive violence

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[468] The emphasis given to Roman outrages specifically in Macedonia (v. 190) suggests dating the oracle to the period after the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C.E., which concluded the Third Macedonian War and secured the Roman control over Macedonia. Collins, *OTP* 1:354–55, dates this oracle to the reign of Ptolemy Philometor in 163–145 B.C.E., who was known for his favorable attitude to the Jews in Egypt. In particular, the Jewish temple at Leontopolis was built during his reign (see Collins, *OTP* 1:355, n. 10; cf. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.29; *B.J.* 1.33; *A.J.* 13.62–63).

[469] Collins, *OTP* 1:358.

[470] So W. W. Tarn, "Alexander Helios and the Golden Age," *JRS* 22 (1932): 137–39; Collins, *OTP* 1:358; see John J. Collins, *The Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism* (SBLDS 13; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974), 57–61. Collins discusses and rejects the alternative to consider the oracle in the context of the propaganda of Mithridates (in this interpretation the female figure is Asia) on the grounds that the oracle predicts not only destruction but also regeneration of Rome and its participation in universal harmony, which, he argues, could have no place in the ideology of Mithridates.

(3:350–360), it will be restored (3:361) and will participate in the golden age to come (3:368–380).[471]

The following two books reflect on the Jewish War of 66–73 C.E. Book 4, written after 79 C.E., accuses the arrogant and ungodly Romans of laying waste to the Jewish land, murdering the innocent and the righteous, and destroying God's temple (4:115–118, 125–127).[472] Divine retribution comes in the form of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 C.E. (4:130–136).

Book 5 of the *Sibylline Oracles*, which was likely composed in late first–early second century C.E., delivers the harsh declamation against Rome.[473] The charge against Rome, motivated by the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army, is unparalleled in bitterness anywhere in the entire corpus of the *Sibylline Oracles*.[474] Rome is condemned for murdering faithful Jews (5:158–161) and is accused of immorality, injustice, sorcery, adultery, pederasty, pride, and love of violence (5:162–171). Even more pointedly, Rome is depicted as an adversary of God himself, and as such is destined for eternal destruction (5:171–176). Because the Romans refuse to live according to the law of God, they are destined to reside in Hades where God's law does not exist (5:177–178).

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[471] Although the section of 3:46–92 also contains oracles involving Rome, it does not offer a view on the Roman army and therefore is omitted from discussion. Collins, *OPT* 1:360–61, dates the oracle of vv. 46–62—which alludes to the battle of Actium and the second triumvirate of Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian—and the oracle of vv. 75–92 to the time shortly after the battle of Actium. He also argues that the oracle of vv. 63–74 likely alludes to Nero and was written after 70 C.E.; see Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 80–87.

[472] Collins, *OTP* 1:382.

[473] Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 94, points out that "the bitterness of complaint about the temple and the deeply pessimistic character of the book suggest that at least the central oracles contained in vv. 52–110, 111–178, 179–285, and 286–434 were written not long after the destruction of the temples in Jerusalem and in Leontopolis," that is, shortly after 73 C.E. The final edition of the book was composed, according to Collins, after the revolt of 115–117 C.E. but prior to the beginning of the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132 C.E.

[474] Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 78.

In sum, the above books of the *Sibylline Oracles* present a predominantly negative view of the Romans. The Roman army is an implicit but unambiguous culprit in the oracles against Rome: Book 3 rebukes the Romans for their violence against other nations, while Books 4 and 5 condemn them for the atrocities committed during the Jewish War of 66–73 C.E. The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Roman army inspired the portrayal of Rome as nothing less than an anti-God adversary, which is also the picture of Rome emerging from Jewish apocalyptic texts considered in the following section.

v. Jewish Apocalyptic Sources: *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and *Apocalypse of Abraham*

The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple by the Roman army in 70 C.E. is the subject of *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and *Apocalypse of Abraham*. While all three display similar features, the relationship between the first two is particularly close. Both sources use the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.E. as their setting and address the central question why God allowed the Gentiles to slaughter his people, destroy his city, and burn his temple. Employing the voices of Baruch, the scribe of the prophet Jeremiah, and Ezra, the scribe who returned the Torah to Jerusalem from Babylonian captivity, the books begin with mourning over the calamity and conclude with testimony to the ultimate destruction of the offender.

Chapters 3–14 of *4 Ezra* (ca. 95–100 C.E.) present a series of Ezra's visions of the end of the world.[475] The section begins with a lament for the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of those who perished in war. In response to his grievance that God has given the Jewish nation over to Gentiles (5:28–29), Ezra is reminded of the sinfulness of those who

[475] B. M. Metzger, "The Fourth Book of Ezra," *OTP* 1:517–20.

perished and is admonished to consider the future perspective (8:37–62). The following visions illuminate the destiny of the righteous and the wicked.

The vision of *4 Ezra* 11–12 is devoted to the fate of the Roman Empire. The exposition of the four kingdoms of Daniel 7 in this vision presents the last kingdom through the image of an eagle as a symbol of Rome (cf. 12:10ff.). Rome is the unmistakable object of the proclamation: the vision refers to twelve Roman rulers from Julius Caesar to Domitian, the Roman civil wars of 68–69 C.E. (12:18), and three Flavian emperors (11:4ff., 12:22–30).[476] The initial emphasis is on the seemingly unshakable power of the Romans—the eagle spreads his wings over the entire earth and rules over the world unopposed (11:5–6). But eventually the lion, which represents the Davidic Messiah of God, confronts the eagle and accuses him of ruling the earth with terror and oppression. The eagle, who has afflicted the meek, oppressed the peaceable, hated the righteous, loved liars, and destroyed those who did him no harm (11:37–42; 12:31–32) will be obliterated. His heads, which represent the Roman rulers, will disappear and his whole body, which symbolizes the Roman Empire, will be burnt (11:43–12:3).

The first portion of *2 Baruch* (ca. 100 C.E.) is also devoted to destruction of Jerusalem. Baruch learns that it was God who destroyed the city for its sins (chs. 1–8).[477] The fall of Jerusalem is interpreted as God's way of purifying his people and of preparing the nations for their destruction at the final judgment (13:8–12). Further, Baruch receives a vision that describes the fate of the Romans (chs. 36–40). As in *4 Ezra*, the vision

[476] This suggests a date near the end of the reign of Domitian; so Schürer, *History*, 3:236–39.

[477] A. F. J. Klijn, "2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch," *OTP* 1:616–17.

presents four kingdoms, of which the last is the most powerful and wicked. At the appointed time God's Messiah destroys the kingdom and executes its ruler.

The *Apocalypse of Abraham* (late first century C.E.) contains a vision of the destruction of Jerusalem and burning of the temple by hordes of Gentiles (chs. 27–29).[478] God explains to Abraham that the calamities were punishment for the cultic abominations performed in the temple (27:7). At the end of time, the descendants of Abraham will judge the impious and the wicked, and will destroy those who had destroyed them (29:14, 19).

In sum, the above apocalyptic works focus on the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman army in 70 C.E. These sources interpret the suffering of the Jewish people as God's punishment for their sins. They also reassure the reader that in the end the righteous Jews will be rewarded, whereas the immoral Romans will be destroyed.

vi. Summary

This section has considered a wide range of Jewish literary sources encompassing a period of about 150 years (from the mid-first century B.C.E. through the early second century C.E.) and belonging to various genres. Similar to 1 Maccabees, these sources emphasize the might and military skill of the Roman army, but the tone of emphasis changes drastically. Whether the writings address Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem (the Dead Sea Scrolls and *Psalms of Solomon*), the War of Varus of 4 C.E. (*Assumption of Moses*), the Jewish War of 66–73 C.E. (*Sib. Or.* 4 and 5, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*), or the Roman conquests in general (*Sib. Or.* 1–3), they portray the Roman army as an evil power. While the witnesses often interpret the suffering of the Jewish

[478] R. Rubinkiewicz, "Apocalypse of Abraham," *OTP* 1:683.

people at the hands of the Roman invaders as God's punishment for their sins, the writings focus the reader's attention on the future divine judgment that will reward the righteous and will condemn and destroy the wicked Romans.

C. The Roman Army in the Works of Philo

Philo (ca. 20 B.C.E.–ca. 50 C.E.) was a prominent member of the Jewish community of Alexandria, the single largest Diaspora community of the period. Philo is known for his voluminous writings, most of which are philosophical and exegetical in nature. The references to the Roman army, however, are limited to only two of his works, which stand out from the Philonic corpus as historical treatises. These writings, *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, relate historical events surrounding the afflictions of the Jews during the Principate of Gaius Caligula. The first describes the anti-Jewish riots that occurred in Alexandria in the summer of 38 C.E. under the Roman prefect Flaccus. The second focuses on the Jewish delegation to Rome in the winter of 39–40 that was occasioned by Caligula's attempt to install his statue in the Jerusalem temple.[479] Since Philo personally witnessed the persecution of the Alexandrian Jews and was elected to lead the Jewish delegation to Caligula, his accounts are based on data known to him firsthand.[480]

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[479] For discussion of the dates of the Jewish embassy to Rome, see E. Mary Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini, Legatio ad Gaium* (2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 47–50.

[480] Philo gives no details of the socio-political situation in Alexandria that led to the assault of its Jewish inhabitants. *Legat.* 15–20 attributes the Jewish pogroms in the city solely to Caligula's pursuit of deification. Philo asserts that the Emperor grew angry with the Jews because they alone refused to recognize him as a god. According to Philo, the Alexandrian Greeks used Caligula's displeasure with the Jews as a pretext to release their own long-standing hatred for the Jews and initiate the hostilities against them. *Flacc*. 1–24 provides a different take on the cause of the pogroms. The attitude of the prefect Flaccus, who in his first five years in office proved himself as an able governor, changed when Caligula succeeded Tiberius in 37. Flaccus was afraid of Caligula's persecution because he had supported Caligula's rival for succession and played an active role in the prosecution of Caligula's mother, Agrippina. The anti-Jewish party of the Alexandrian Greeks persuaded Flaccus to secure their aid in winning Caligula's favor by

The passages of the *Legatio* relevant to the Roman army will be considered later in the chapter in conjunction with the parallel accounts in Josephus. The references to the Roman army in *Flaccum* are limited to three episodes. In the first, Philo describes the atrocities committed against thirty-eight members of the Jewish council. On Flaccus's orders, the elders were thrown into jail and later, as part of the festivities carried out on Caligula's birthday, were led through the streets to the theater to be stripped and flogged for the amusement of the Greek crowds. The beating was so severe that some of the elders died.[481] Although Philo does not explicitly mention the army's involvement in this episode, it is readily discernable. Since the prefect himself ordered the arrests and the flogging, it must have been the Roman soldiers who carried them out. The second episode reports that following the order of Flaccus, the centurion Castus, with a group of soldiers, searched the Jewish houses for arms—as Philo insists, in vain. In the course of the search the soldiers detained a number of Jewish women, who were then given the choice between eating pork or being tortured.[482] The third episode describes the arrest of

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supporting their actions against the Jews in the city. *P.Lond*. 1912 (=*CPJ* 153), which is a letter of Claudius dated November 41 to the inhabitants of Alexandria, sheds more light on the cause of the pogroms. The Emperor urges the Alexandrian Greeks to behave kindly toward their Jewish neighbors and to respect their observance of their religious customs—the privilege confirmed by Augustus and now by Claudius. At the same time, Claudius warns the Jews not to strive for the same citizenship privileges as the Greeks have, since, as the letter asserts, the Jews live in a city that is not their own. Thus, it appears from the letter that the Jews sought to expand their privileges that they enjoyed under the Roman protection, and pursued admission to Greek citizenship. Smallwood, *Legatio*, 3–11, suggests an additional possible cause of the disturbances. She maintains that the hostility between the Greek and the Jewish communities in Alexandria began with the Roman annexation of Egypt. The Jews supported the Roman army in Alexandria in 55 B.C.E., when Aulus Gabinius reinstated the banished Ptolemy XII Auletes, in 48–47 B.C.E., when the Jews sent relief to besieged Julius Caesar, and possibly in 30 B.C.E., when Octavian pursued Antony and Cleopatra to Egypt. According to Smallwood, the Greeks resented the annexation of the city by the Romans and, therefore, their Jewish supporters.

[481] *Flacc.* 73–75.

[482] *Flacc.* 86–94. Smallwood, *Legatio*, 22, connects the search for weapons with the previously described arrests of the thirty-eight Jewish elders. She argues that since it was Flaccus and not the Greeks who made the arrests, the arrests were not without warrant and could have been prompted by the results of the search for weapons.

Flaccus following the disturbances, which was performed by a detachment of soldiers sent from Rome by Caligula under the command of the centurion Bassus.[483]

These brief episodes supply valuable evidence relating to the Roman army's duties when it was not in battle. They also reveal common perceptions about the soldiers's character and provide insight into the status of the centurion's office. Each episode demonstrates that the army was employed as a police force to perform arrests, conduct raids, and carry out punitive measures. Evidently, the performance of such duties shaped civilian perceptions of the Roman army. The second account illustrates these perceptions—apparently, a soldier entering women's quarters during the raid for arms in the Jewish houses was considered to be an even worse intruder than a mere stranger would have been:

> …their women, who were always kept in seclusion and did not even appear at the house-door, and their unmarried daughters, who were confined to the women's quarter, women who for modesty's sake shunned the eyes of men, even their closest relatives, now became exposed to people who were not just unfamiliar men but terrifying soldiers at that.[484]

In this account the soldiers are depicted as violent, possibly immoral, men who terrorize their victims.

The third account underscores the significance of the centurion's office, specifically as the venue for distributing legal justice in the provinces. The Emperor himself entrusted the centurion Bassus with a highly important mission of displacing a provincial governor, who in this particular case commanded two legions stationed in

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[483] *Flacc.* 109–115.

[484] *Flacc.* 89. The translation is by Pieter W. van der Horst*, Philo's Flaccus, the First Pogrom: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series 2; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 70. For discussion of the relevant phrase, τότε οὐ μόνον ἀσυνήθεσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ στρατιωτικὸν δέος ἐπανατεινομένοις ἐμφανεῖς ἐγένοντο, see Horst, *Flaccus*, 179–80.

Egypt. Bassus completed this mission in an effective and proficient way. It is noteworthy that in the course of the mission, the centurion secured the assistance of a higher-ranking military official, a legionary prefect. The prefect's unconditional cooperation was expected, since in this case the centurion acted as a representative of higher authorities. This passage in Philo is the best available source of the period for the early functioning of the imperial court as a legal court of final jurisdiction. It demonstrates that, even in the case of the legal functions of the distant and civilian imperial court, the centurion was the agent of local action connecting Rome and the provinces. The case of Bassus provides another example of the routine use of the army's structure in the provinces to execute political and legal policies and decisions.

As shown previously, non-literary sources augment our knowledge of such administrative practices involving military personnel. The previous chapter discussed the sources shedding light on the Roman army's involvement in the administration of Egypt, Achaea, Asia Minor, Syria, and Britain. The following section focuses on the surviving relevant non-literary sources from Palestine.

III. Non-literary Sources

The first known petition to a centurion in Palestine, or Coele Syria as it was known at that time, is dated to 243 C.E.[485] In this document, a Jewish woman named Bathsabbatha from the village of Magdala of Sphorakene petitioned Julius Marinus, the centurion in charge of public order in the region, concerning the murder of her brother and the withholding of her property. The woman presented a legionary and a veteran as

[485] *P.Euphr*. 5; see Judith Evans Grubbs, *Women and the Law in the Roman Empire: A Sourcebook on Marriage, Divorce and Widowhood* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 69–70.

her witnesses and sought the centurion's subscription or endorsement, which would have enabled her to forward her accusation to higher authorities. The centurion added his subscription, in Latin. Although the petition is considerably later than the period under discussion here, the practice is attested for various provinces in the Empire within our period and must have also existed in Roman Palestine of the first century C.E.[486] Centurions who served in Egypt—the main source of the relevant evidence—have also served in other provinces: the army as an institution did not differ much throughout the Empire, and both individual centurions and entire military units were transferred from province to province. Moreover, in the military provinces prior to Hadrian, the Roman army was the major source that supplied the provincial governor with administrative staff.[487] In the areas that garrisoned troops nearly every Roman administrative official served in the army. Thus, as in the provinces considered in the previous chapter so in the first century Judaea, Roman centurions were deeply involved in civilian matters.

The available evidence supports the above observation. A document of 124 C.E., which comes from the Archive of Babatha, a Jewish woman who lived in a village on the southern shore of the Dead Sea in a newly established Roman province of Arabia, presents the legal case of Babatha's dispute with the guardians of her orphan son, Yeshua. Since the document is an extract from the minutes of the city council of Petra translated into Greek from Latin, it demonstrates that, although Jews had Jewish courts available to consider their civil cases, they could resort to the Roman court.[488] Additionally, a

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[486] Alston, *Soldier*, 86–96. See Chapter 2 for discussion of the evidence in Egypt and Britain.

[487] See Chapter 1 for discussion of the role of the Roman army in administration.

[488] Naphtali Lewis et al., *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters* (JDS; Israel Exploration Society; Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Jerusalem: Shrine of the Book, 1989); Hannah

regulation of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah dated to the end of the first century C.E. forbids Jews to have recourse to Roman courts, thus indicating the possibility for such action.[489]

Another document from the Archive of Babatha attests a business transaction between a Jewish civilian and a Roman centurion. Since the salary of a centurion amounted to several thousand *denarii* a year—at least fifteen times the salary of an ordinarly legionary—he could be expected to have money available for an investment.[490] The account reports that on 6 May 124, the centurion Magonius Valens of a Thracian cohort stationed south of the Dead Sea, made an emergency loan to a Jew named Judah, Babatha's second husband.[491]

To summarize, non-literary sources from Palestine reveal that Jewish civilians took at least some types of legal cases to the Roman court.[492] The evidence demonstrates that Roman centurions played an important role in the local administration and were involved in litigation in the local communities in Palestine as they were in other parts of the Empire. The latter document from the Archive of Babatha further reveals that

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Cotton, "The Guardianship of Jesus Son of Babatha: Roman and Local Law in the Province of Arabia," *JRS* 83 (1993): 94–108.

[489] Alfredo Mordechai Rabello, "Jewish and Roman Jurisdiction," in *An Introduction to the History and Sources of Jewish Law* (ed. Neil S. Hect et al; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 144–48.

[490] For the salary of a centurion see nn. 83, 118.

[491] Lewis, *Documents,* 42–46. Lewis observes that besides its obvious value as a snapshot of a mundane interaction between a Roman centurion and a Jewish civilian, the document has a feature in its text that may suggest a possible case of extortion. The amount of the loan was originally written as forty *denarii*; then the word "forty" was crossed and the word "sixty" was written above, in between the lines. This prompts the suspicion that in addition to the specified interest rate of twelve percent per annum, the borrower was compelled to sign the note for sixty *denarii*, but received only forty.

[492] The cases that pose a financial interest to the Roman government could be required to be adjudicated before Roman official. This practice was known throughout the Empire, although usually only the laws themselves are available, since papyrus records of particular cases have seldom survived outside of Egypt.

centurions were integrated into the fabric of the local society and were able to provide not only legal but also financial assistance to their Jewish neighbors.

IV. The Roman Army in Talmudic Sources

Although Talmudic sources date to a later period, they contain traditions from the end of the first century C.E. The legal rulings and anecdotal material that the sources contain reveal aspects of daily life of Jewish community, including its interactions with the Roman military, both negative and positive. Thus, a second-century *halakhah* rule from the Mishnah reads, "[When] a patrol of gentiles enter a city in times of peace open wine-jars are forbidden, closed ones are allowed. [When it happens] in times of war both are allowed because there is no time for libation."[493] This regulation demonstrates that Roman patrols could disrupt the life of the Jewish population as a matter of course. Another passage from the Mishnah addresses the same issue in the context of harsh realities of warfare: "All the wives of priests in a city captured by siege are disqualified from the priesthood" for the reason that "[in wartime troops] have no time for libations; but they do have time for rape."[494] The witnesses also show that even in the time of peace, Roman soldiers could be expected to abuse the local population. A passage from the Tosefta, which dates to the beginning of the second century C.E., reads:

> The story is told of Simeon of Timnah who did not come to the schoolhouse on the nights of the festival. R. Judah ben Babba met him at the hour of early morning prayer, and said to him: Why did you not come to the schoolhouse last

[493] *m. 'Abod. Zar.* 6. The translation is given according to Isaac, *Limits*, 115. In other words, the rule prohibits wine sampled by a Gentile for fear that he might have also used it for a libation to a pagan god.

[494] *m. Ketub.* 27a. The translation is given according to S. Safrai "The Relations Between the Roman Army and the Jews of Eretz Yisrael after the Destruction of the Second Temple," in *Roman Frontier Studies 1967. The Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress Held at Tel Aviv* (ed. S. Applebaum; Tel-Aviv: Students' Organization of Tel Aviv University, 1971), 225.

> night? He replied, I found a duty to perform. A gentile patrol entered the town and I was afraid they were going to create trouble for the townspeople, so we slaughtered a calf for them and gave it to them to eat.[495]

However, side by side with the passages that reflect on abuses inflicted by Roman soldiers, we find testimonies of good relations that existed between the Roman military and Jewish civilians. A ruling from the time of the destruction of the temple presents a case when Roman soldiers offered assistance in putting out a fire:

> A fire broke out on the Sabbath in the yard of Rabbi Joseph ben Simai of Sikhin and the garrison of the *castra* of Sepphoris came to put it out, but he would not permit them and a cloud came down and extinguished it. And the sages said that there was no need (to prohibit them); nevertheless at the end of the Sabbath he sent a *sela'* to each of them and 50 dinars to their Hipparchus.[496]

According to the *halakhah*, a Jew should not ask a Gentile for help on the Sabbath, but if the Gentile comes of his own accord, his help was permitted. In the present case, the rabbi adopted the strict interpretation of the rule and refused assistance, even though the Romans came on their own initiative. Nevertheless, the rabbi still showed his gratitude for the kind gesture and sent four *denarii* for each of the soldiers and fifty *denarii* for the commander of their cavalry unit.[497]

In sum, the Talmudic sources complement the impression gained from the non-literary evidence. They reflect that Jewish civilians experienced instances of abuse from the hands of Roman soldiers, possibly connected to an obligation of the civilian population to provide soldiers on duty with accommodation and supplies. Considering that soldiers likely were either unfamiliar with or not inclined to account for Jewish

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[495] *t. Betzah* 11. The translation is given according to Safrai, *Relations*, 225.

[496] *t. Shabb.,* 13.9; *t. Ned.* 6.38d. The translation is given according to Safrai, *Relations*, 226.

[497] Safrai, *Relations*, 226.

religious laws—especially taking into account that the same units patrolled neighboring non-Jewish settlements where such regulations did not exist—these instances of ignoring Jewish religious rules were expected. On the other hand, the sources also demonstrate that the Roman military was integrated into the life of the Jewish community and could provide assistance in times of need.

V. The Roman Army in the Works of Josephus

Josephus (ca. 37–ca. 100 C.E.), an ethnic Jew and a priest from Jerusalem, is an extensive source on the Roman army.[498] His *Jewish War* and the *Jewish Antiquities* present a wealth of relevant material, covering the period from Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. through the Jewish War of 66–73 C.E. The testimony of Josephus is valuable since he was an eyewitness to the Roman campaign in Palestine and had access to Roman records pertinent to the war. Josephus had been in direct contact with the Roman army since the very beginning of the Jewish War, when in 66 the Jerusalem leaders put him in charge of the rebel force in Galilee. After the Jewish resistance in Galilee had been crushed, Josephus, captured by the Romans, managed to win the favor of the *Flavii*, and then accompanied the Roman army through the entire course of the Jewish campaign.[499] During the war, Josephus acquired extensive knowledge of the Roman military system and personnel, both through witnessing many of the events that he describes and by consulting the diaries of Vespasian and Titus, as well as Roman

[498] Josephus, *B.J.* 1.3.

[499] Josephus claims that he won forgiveness and then freedom by prophesying that Vespasian would become Emperor. Suetonius, *Vesp.* 5.6, Appian, *Hist. rom.* 17, and Dio 46.1, also refer to Josephus's prediction.

archival records.[500] He expressly employs this knowledge in his writing, for one of the explicit aims of his account in *War* is a detailed description of the Roman army as involved in the Jewish military campaign, including its size, composition, tactics, and efficiency.[501] Since Josephus and Luke wrote in the same period and refer to the events that happened within the same time frame and in the same geographical area, Josephus's depiction of the Roman army is particularly important for analyzing Luke's narrative.[502]

Josephus's interest in the Roman army comes from both his stated purpose to elucidate the events of the Jewish War and his unspoken agenda to reconcile his loyalty to his Roman patrons with his loyalty to his Jewish heritage. Josephus wrote as a client of the Flavian emperors, whose ascent to power was owed to the Roman soldiers, and whose imperial prestige was grounded in their success in restoring peace to the Empire—an achievement greatly emphasized by imperial propaganda.[503] Also, Josephus wrote as a

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[500] *B.J.* 1.1–3; *A.J.* 1.4; 14.185–189, 265–267; 16.161, 164–178; *C.Ap.* 1.47–56; *Vita* 342, 358.

[501] *B.J.* 1.21–22.

[502] The *War* was likely written within the same decade that Luke composed Luke-Acts. Books 1–6 are commonly dated to ca. 75–81 C.E., and book 7 to the reign of Domitian (81–96). For a discussion of dating, see Shaye J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome: His Vita and Development as a Historian* (CSCT 8; Leiden: Brill, 1979), 84–90. Commenting on *Vita* 359–361 and *C. Ap.* 1:50–51, Cohen points out that Josephus likely presented to Vespasian, who died on June 23, 79, only a portion of his work. He argues that since it is Titus who is the focus of attention in the work, the final version of books 1–6 was completed during his reign, June 79–September 81**.** The prominence accorded to Domitian in Book 7 suggests its dating to Domitian's reign. *Antiquities* has a precise date in the thirteenth year of Domitian's reign and the fifty-sixth year of Josephus's life, i.e., 93–94 (*A.J.* 20:267).

[503] Suetonius, *Vesp.*1.1, states that the Flavians restored peace and security in the Empire, thus pointing out the importance of the suppression of the revolt in Judaea. Josephus, *B.J.* 7.158, makes a similar proclamation. The examples of imperial propaganda stressing the importance of this military achievement abound. Following the war, Vespasian replaced the annual contribution formerly paid by the male Jews between the ages of twenty and fifty to the Jerusalem temple—now destroyed by the Romans—by a permanent *fiscus Iudaicus*, an annual levy of two *denarii* to be paid by all Jews of the Empire from the age of three to support the cult and the rebuilding of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, thus emphasizing the victory of Jupiter over the Jewish god (*B.J.* 7.218; Dio 66.7.2; for discussion and primary sources referring to both levies, see Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, 371–85). The Roman Colosseum, begun by Vespasian in 72 and finished by Titus in 80, was built *ex manubiis*—from the spoils of war, *CIL* 6.40454a = *AE* 1995, 111b. For discussion, see Fergus Millar, "Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (ed. Jonathan Edmondson, Steve Mason, James

Jew, whose people, lands, and religious heritage were devastated by the very army that exalted his patrons. As we turn to the relevant passages in Josephus, we will see how this conflicting agenda shapes his presentation of the Roman army.

Josephus's treatment of the Roman army begins with the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 63. Following a three-month siege of the supporters of Aristobulus on the Temple Mount, the Romans forced their way into the temple.[504] Josephus's account provides a witness to the heroism of Roman centurions, who first scaled the walls and, joined by their soldiers, eliminated Jewish resistance.[505] The attackers reportedly massacred about 12,000 Jews, including the priests who were serving at the altar.[506] Josephus blames the supporters of Hyrcanus, not the Romans, for the most of the slaughter, and Aristobulus and Hyrcanus for the entire disaster.[507]

In 37 B.C.E., the Roman army besieged and took Jerusalem the second time. This time, Gaius Sosius, the recently appointed *legatus* of Syria, assisted Herod the Great with the Roman army under his command in Herod's war against Antigonus.[508] The Parthian

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Rives; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 118–19. In particular, some of the spoils mentioned by Josephus in his account of the triumph in *B.J.* 7.142–147, were depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome. The inscription on the Arch proclaimed that Titus "subdued the race of the Jews and destroyed the city of Jerusalem, which by all generals, kings, or races previous to himself had either been attacked in vain or not even attempted at all" (*ILS* 264 = *CIL* 6.944; the translation from Millar, *Monuments*, 120). The coins issued by every Flavian Emperor, including Domitian who did not participate in the Judaean campaign, were inscribed with the words *Iudaea Capta*, thus publicizing the military achievement of the *Flavii* throughout the Empire.

[504] *B.J.* 1.145–151; *A.J.* 14.61–64; cf. Dio 37.16.1–4.

[505] *B.J.* 1.149; *A.J.* 14.69. The previous chapter demonstrated that the bravery of centurions displayed on the battlefield was a continuous literary motif since Polybius, especially evident in the works of Julius Caesar.

[506] It will become evident that Josephus displays a consistent tendency to inflate the number of casualties for dramatic effect.

[507] *B.J.* 1.150–151; *A.J.* 14.67–71, 77.

[508] *B.J.* 1.327; *A.J.* 14.447.

conquest of Syria in 40 B.C.E. destabilized the Roman Eastern frontier and demonstrated the necessity of an efficient pro-Roman ruler in Palestine: Hyrcanus, formerly left in power as an ethnarch by Pompey, was taken by the Parthians to Babylonia, whereas Antigonus, the younger son of Aristobulus, allied with the Parthians to gain power in Judaea.[509] The Roman Senate, acting on the request of the *triumviri* Octavian and Antony, recognized Herod, who was appointed by Antony as a tetrarch of Judaea in 42 B.C.E., as *rex sociusque et amicus populi Romani*, "king, and an ally, and a friend of the Roman people."[510] The king, however, had yet to conquer his kingdom. Unlike a century earlier in the time of the Maccabees, Rome now had an official alliance with a client king—one who was fully aware of his status in the eyes of the Romans—and direct interest in restoring the Roman influence in the territory bordering the Roman province of Syria.[511] Therefore, the Roman army sent into the region on account of the Parthian invasion was bound to provide military assistance to Herod. Once P. Ventidius Bassus, who was appointed by Antony as the *legatus of* Syria and charged with the task of waging war against the Parthians, drove the enemy out of Syria beyond Euphrates, Antony ordered Ventidius and then his successor Sosius to help Herod in the war against Antigonus.[512]

The combined forces of Sosius and Herod comprised a sizable army, which consisted of six Roman legions, 15,000 soldiers of Herod, 6,000 of cavalry, and 8,000 of

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[509] *B.J.* 1.273

[510] *B.J.* 1.244, 282–285; *A.J.* 14.381–385; Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.9; Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2, 46.

[511] On the nature of the Roman alliance with the Jews under the Maccabees see nn. 431, 432.

[512] Dio 48.39.3–41.4.

the Syrian *auxilia*, numbering about 50,000 troops in total.[513] The siege went on for five months until, as Josephus reports, Jerusalem fell on the same day as Pompey's victory twenty-seven years earlier. The similarities between these two accounts of the conquests of Jerusalem in 63 and 37 B.C.E. provide a vivid example of Josephus's use of literary *topoi* in both displaying the bravery of the centurions on the battlefield and in exculpating the Roman army from liability in afflicting casualties upon the Jewish population.[514] Later in his speech at the walls of besieged Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Josephus will blame both of the cases of Roman invasion—as well as the current war—on faulty Jewish leadership, and the fall of Jerusalem on the sins of the Jewish people against their God.[515]

The account of Herod's subsequent reign in Judaea makes no mention of the Roman army's involvement in the affairs of his kingdom. Although a Roman legion was reportedly stationed in Jerusalem for a period of time after the capture of the city in 37 B. C.E.—likely, both to protect and to supervise the newly installed client king—there is no record of the legion's participation in Herod's affairs, including the time when Herod conducted a war with the Nabateans in 32/1 B.C.E. [516] Likely, it was his ability and value as a client king capable of securing the Roman frontier that inspired Augustus, despite

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[513] See an analysis of the Herodian army and the Roman forces at the siege of Jerusalem in Israel Shatzman, *The Armies of the Hasmonaeans and Herod: From Hellenistic to Roman Frameworks* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 150–69.

[514] *B.J.* 1.351–352; *A.J.* 14.476–480. As was the case in 63 B.C.E., Roman centurions are again the first Roman soldiers on the wall; just as the supporters of Hyrcanus massacred thousands of supporters of Aristobulus, now the soldiers of Herod strive to slaughter everyone of the opposing party with no regard to gender or age.

[515] *B.J.* 5.398.

[516] *A.J.* 15.71–73, 108–160; *B.J.* 1.334–385. The legion probably left to support Antony against Octavian, most likely prior to the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E.

Herod's former alliance with Antony, to confirm Herod's kingship in 30 B.C.E.[517]

While Herod managed to deal with the internal and external threats on his own, the disturbances, which ensued in Palestine following his death in 4 B.C.E., escalated to a full-scale war and called for extensive Roman intervention to restore the stability in the region.[518] To restore order in Palestine, Publius Quinctilius Varus, the legate of Syria at the time, had to mobilize a sizeable army of all three legions garrisoned in Syria at the time with the addition of three cavalry *alae* and numerous allied troops.[519] After Varus suppressed the initial uprising, Sabinus, the procurator of Syria, appeared in Judaea with the intention of appraising the property left by Herod.[520] His actions stirred up another

[517] *A.J.* 15.183–197; *B.J.* 1.386–393. Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 57, points out that Herod was not the only king to be pardoned by Augustus, and that on the whole, Romans treated client kings who fought for their opponents in civil war with lenience. For instance, according to *Bell. alex.* 67–68, Julius Caesar forgave Deiotarus of Galatia, who supported Pompey against him. As Deiotarus pointed out in his defense, he had no choice in the matter since he had to obey the Roman commander over his region and could not be a judge in Roman political affairs. The same was applicable to Herod.

[518] Upon Herod's death, the members of Herod's family made a journey to Rome—some to confirm the appointments of Herod's latest will, some to contest them. A Jewish delegation also went to plead that no descendant of Herod should be appointed king (*A.J.* 17.219–227, 300ff.; *B.J.* 2.14–22, 80ff.). Augustus's ruling suggests a compromise to afford a degree of response to all parties. In particular, Archelaus was to inherit the largest part of Herod's kingdom, but without the royal title. This decision could have been influenced by the appeal of the Jewish delegation. It should be noted that in 63 B.C.E. Pompey seems to have responded in a similar manner to the Jewish delegation's appeal to discontinue the kingship.

[519] *B.J.* 2.66–68. Although it is customary to refer to the war of 66–73 as the first Jewish War, *B.J.* 2.64 already applies the term to the conflict of 4 B.C.E.

[520] It seems that the procurator Sabinus, who was in charge of Augustus's finances in Syria, anticipated that the Emperor would assume rights over Herod's property. The actions of Sabinus could have been prompted by the fact that Herod's will made Augustus and members of his family recipients of a portion of Herod's assets (*B.J.* 2.100; *A.J.* 17.323). Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, 143–44, names other instances when the imperial family was included in wills of client kings. As Thomas S. Burns, *Rome and the Barbarians, 100 B.C.–A.D. 400* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 146, points out, in the culture where the patron-client relationship formed the basis of the social mechanics, the allied kings were clients of their patron, the emperor, and thus were in a sense a part of the imperial household.

conflict in Jerusalem.[521] As the legion left in the city by Varus took the upper hand in a heated battle with the Jewish rebels in the temple, the soldiers celebrated their success by plundering the temple treasure.[522] The rioters regrouped and besieged the legion and 3,000 auxiliary soldiers from the Sebastean troops of Herod in the royal palace.[523] The disturbances spread throughout Palestine, including the capture of Herod's arsenal at Sepphoris and a daring attack on a Roman century near Ammaus that resulted in the loss of half a century and the centurion.[524]

Varus embarked upon a punitive expedition with the remaining two Syrian legions, four *alae* of cavalry, and a significant number of allied troops. Sepphorus was burnt and its inhabitants enslaved. Ammaus was also incinerated, although its inhabitants were apparently spared. As the army proceeded toward Jerusalem, the allied Arab forces sent by the Nabatean king Aretas, acting out their hatred for Herod, devastated the Jewish countryside and persecuted the Jews regardless of their involvement in the revolt. The

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[521] Whereas *B.J.* 2.40–41 simply states that Varus stationed the legion in Jerusalem to avoid the possibility of another uprising, the parallel account in *A.J.* 17.250–253 reports that Varus brought the legion from Syria to suppress a major Jewish tumult following the departure of Archelaus to Rome.

[522] According to *B.J.* 2.50, Roman soldiers plundered about 400 talents, of which Sabinus collected what was left. The account of *A.J.* 17.264 differs—the solders seized a considerable part of the temple treasure, while Sabinus personally appropriated 400 talents. Steve Mason, *Judean War 2* (Flavius Josephus: Translation And Commentary 1b; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 34, calculates that since a talent was worth 6,000 drachmas and a legionary's annual pay comprised 225 *denarii* (and less for an auxiliary), a single talent would have been more than a legionary's total gross pay for an entire career of twenty five years. To put the plunder in a perspective, Gessius Florus's expropriation of only 17 talents for imperial use (*B.J.* 2.293) led to a riot (as discussed further in the chapter).

[523] On the composition of the army of Herod, see Shatzman, *The Armies of the Hasmonaeans and Herod*, 163, 170–205. The numerous accounts of the involvement of the Sebastene-Caesarean cohorts in the ongoing hostility between Judaeans and Samaritans are discussed further in this chapter.

[524] *B.J.* 2.55–65; *A.J.* 17.269–285. Other disturbances included the rise of 2,000 Idumaeans, the former soldiers of Herod; the devastation of the Peraean estates by a certain Simon, a former slave of Herod and self-proclaimed king; and the killings of the Romans and royalists by a group of militants led by a shepherd, another contender for the throne. Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.9, singles out Simon as the sole instigator of the Judaean revolt at the time of Varus.

Arabs were eventually dismissed by Varus as unbecoming the image of a Roman ally. As the Jerusalem rioters dispersed upon the army's approach, Varus's troops pursued them and, as was Rome's general punishment for those who rebelled against Roman rule everywhere, crucified about 2,000 of the insurgents—those who were, according to Josephus, the most culpable.

In this portrayal of the army during the disturbances of 4 B.C.E., the behavior of the Roman soldiers is determined to a significant degree by the conduct of their leaders. Sabinus is presented as an incompetent and corrupt official, who uses the legion left by Varus to oppress the Jews and to plunder the temple treasure, personally taking most of it. On the contrary, Varus controls his army as a competent general. The army does not harm the town of Samaria, because it did not participate in the revolt.[525] The inhabitants of Sepphoris are punished for their involvement with the rebels, but the inhabitants of Ammaus, who did not participate in the attack on the Roman century, are let go before their city is burnt.[526] Among the Jerusalem rebels, Varus allegedly crucifies only those who were the most responsible for the disturbances. Here Josephus's intention to reconcile his image of Varus's clemency and justice with the crucifixions of the thousands of rioters is obvious, since it is implausible that all the 2,000 crucified were the ringleaders as Josephus suggests.[527] Varus's soldiers reflect the virtues of their general: they do not oppress the Jews indiscriminately, regardless of their involvement in the

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[525] *B.J.* 2.69.

[526] Although the citizens of Ammaus were not held liable for the attack, Varus could not leave the crime without any response and thus burned the town as a punishment.

[527] The actual number of the executed could have been different. Josephus could have lowered the number of the victims of Varus's punitive action.

revolt, showing discipline and restraint in the sharp contrast to the uncontrolled passions displayed by the Arab allies.[528]

The next reference to the Roman army in Josephus comes from the narration of the administration of Pontius Pilate (ca. 26–36 C.E.). In 6 C.E., following the complaints made by a Jewish delegation to Augustus, Archelaus was banished.[529] His portion of the former Herod's kingdom—Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea—was placed under direct Roman rule.[530] The territory was organized under an administrator of equestrian rank with the title of *praefectus*.[531] Contrary to Tacitus's laconic report of the lack of

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[528] The unsavory exposition of the Arab allies here anticipates the account of *B.J.* 5.550–556 (discussed below), which depicts the atrocities committed by the Arab *auxilia* during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

[529] *B.J.* 2.111; *A.J.* 17.342; Strabo, *Geogr.* 16.2.46; Dio 55.27.6. According to the passage in *Antiquities*, Archelaus ruled with excessive severity. *B.J.* 2.118 reports that the deposition of Archelaus and the transfer of the administration to Rome led to disturbances. The relevant accounts in Josephus, however, contain no references to the Roman army, and therefore are omitted from the discussion.

[530] According to *B.J.* 2.117, Judaea became a new Roman province. However, in *A.J.* 17.355 and 18.1–2 Josephus, in contradiction to his claim in *B.J.* 2.117 and in agreement with Tacitus, who in *Hist*. 5.9 refers to 44 as the year when Judaea first became a separate province, asserts that the former territory of Archelaus was appended to the existing province of Syria. Mason, *War*, 78, argues that the subordinate status of Judaea is confirmed by the census of Publius Sulpicius Quirinius reported in *A.J.* 18.2 (and connected with the birth of Jesus by Luke 2:1–2; cf. Acts 5:37): Quirinius, who arrived in Syria as the imperial legate, conducted a census both in his province and in a newly annexed territory of Judaea. Hannah M. Cotton, "Some Aspects of the Roman Administration of Judaea/Syria-Palaestina," in *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserzeitlichen Provinzen vom 1. Bis 3. Jahrhundert* (ed. W. Eck; Schriften des Historischen Kollegs Kolloquien 42; Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), 77–78, suggests another reason to believe that Judaea was not an autonomous province before 44: the fact that in *B.J.* 2.117 and *A.J.*18.2 Josephus feels the need to specify that the emperor has vested Coponius with the authority to carry out capital punishment presupposes that Coponius was not an independent governor. Otherwise he would have had the full authority over his province by default. Mason, *War*, 79, suggests that Josephus depicts Judaea as a separate province in *War* (and not in *Antiquities*) in order to present the allegedly incompetent equestrian governors of Judaea as the cause of rising tensions leading to the revolt without involving the imperial legates of Syria.

[531] According to *B.J.* 2.117, the equestrian Coponius was sent to govern Judaea as a ἐπίτροπος, which is the standard Greek term for the Latin *procurator*; see Mason, *Greek Terms*, 48. In *B.J.* 2.169, Josephus applies the same title of procurator to Pilate. It appears, however, that prior to 44 C.E. an equestrian governor in Judaea held a title of *praefectus*, Greek ἔπαρχος—see Mason, *Greek Terms*, 45; A. H. M. Jones, *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), 115–25; Schürer, *History*, 1:358. This has been confirmed by the inscription of Pontius Pilate found at Caesarea, which reads in the relevant part *[Pon]tius Pilatus [Praef]ectus Iuda[ea]e*.; see A. Frova, "L'iscrizione di Ponzio Pilato a Cesarea," *Rendiconti Istituto Lombardo, Accademia di Scienze e Lettere* 95 (1961), 419–34. For

disturbance in Palestine through the reign of Tiberius, Josephus records three instances of unrest during the ten years of Pilate's term in the office of the prefect. Each case of disturbances is marked by the involvement of Roman troops mobilized to restore order.[532]

The first episode concerns the Roman military standards, *signa*, which Pilate introduced into Jerusalem at the beginning of his term. The *signa* came to the city along with a military unit transferred from Caesarea for the winter and had embossments of Caesar attached to them.[533] According to Josephus, the Jews considered the introduction of such images into Jerusalem to be incompatible with their laws, and the fact that Pilate introduced the standards into the city during the night suggests that he knew that they would cause adverse reaction of the Jewish population.[534] As the tension and outrage

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interpretations of the *tiberieum* structure bearing this inscription, see Géza Alföldy, "Pontius Pilatus und das Tiberieum von Caesarea Maritima," *SCI* 18 (1999): 85–108. Here and elsewhere Josephus is imprecise in his use of the terminology: he uses both ἔπαρχος (prefect) and ἐπίτροπος (procurator) interchangeably of Cuspius Fadus, Festus, and Albinus (*B.J.* 2.220; 271–273; 6.303; *A.J.* 20.197). The famous passage of Tacitus, *Ann.*15.44, which refers to the execution of Christ, also applies the title of *procurator* to Pilate, as does Philo, *Legat.* 299 (ἐπίτροπος). It is possible that the writers applied their contemporary terminology to the earlier office.

[532] Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9, *sub Tiberio quies*.

[533] *B.J.* 2.169–174; *A.J.*18.55–59; cf. Philo, *Legat.* 299–305. Roman military standards differed in their types and functions. The main standard of a legion was the *aquila,* an eagle mounted on a pole and carried by the legion's *aquilifer.* Each legion had one *aquila*. It is clear that the *aquila* is not under discussion in this account, since it neither bore an image of Caesar nor was it available to auxiliary units under Pilate's command. Further, every century, whether of a legion or of an auxiliary cohort, had its own standard, the *signum*, which was carried by its *signifier.* The shaft of such a standard could bear several metal objects, which often included discs—*phalerae*. The *phalerae* could be aniconic discs with a simple concentric circle design or could have embossed images, including those of the emperor or of the members of the imperial family. Finally, a type of standard, the *imago*, specifically served the purpose of bearing an image of the emperor mounted on a pole and carried by an *imaginifer*. For the coins, images, and archeological artifacts pertaining to *aquilae*, *imagines*, and *signa* with both aniconic and iconic *phalerae* see Kai Michael Töpfer, *Signa Militaria: Die römischen Feldzeichen in der Republik und im Prinzipat* (Monographien des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums 91; Mainz, Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2011), Tafeln 1–151. The account of *A.J.*18.55 specifies that the troops brought προτομὰς Καίσαρος αἳ ταῖς σημαίαις προσῆσαν—"embossments of Caesar connected to the standards." Whereas the *imagines* were standards in themselves, the centurial *signa* had the images *attached* to them. Therefore, the standards in Josephus apparently represent the centurial *signa*, which bore *phalerae* with the imperial images. Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.41 (the assassination of Galba in 69 C.E.) and 4.62 (the rebellion of Civilis in 69–70 C.E.) provides examples of removing the imperial images from the *signa*.

[534] It is not clear which laws were violated by such action. The commandments that forbade

escalated, Jewish multitudes rushed to Caesarea and petitioned Pilate to withdraw the standards. Removing the *signa* from the city would mean removing the military units, which possessed them, and Pilate declined.[535] The Jews then went on a passive strike by remaining prostrate on the ground for five days.[536] On the sixth day, Pilate employed his soldiers to resolve the matter. Having summoned the Jewish crowds to a stadium where he set up his judgment seat, allegedly for his ruling on the matter, Pilate gave the soldiers a signal to surround the petitioners. The sudden appearance of the military force in a battle formation three-ranks deep put the Jews in the state of shock. Building on this first impression, Pilate threatened to cut the Jews to pieces if protesting continued, and, to show the seriousness of his intention, nodded to the soldiers to bare their swords.[537] In

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making of images for worship—such as Exod 20:4–6; Deut 4:16, 23, 25: 27:15 (cf. Judg 17–18; Ps 106:19; Isa 44:9–20; 48:5; Jer 10:14; Nah 1:14) could have been implied here. Mason, *War,* 142, points out that neither the Bible nor the Talmud limits the prohibition of images to the city of Jerusalem. Carl H. Kraeling, "The Episode of the Roman Standards at Jerusalem," *HTR* 35 (1942): 280, suggests that the real problem may have been the introduction of the iconic images into the Antonia, which, in the eyes of the Jews, would have compromised the sanctity of the priestly garments stored there. Although this is a possibility, the text does not indicate that was the case. Besides, the instances of objections to the images on the *signa* were not limited to Jerusalem. According to *A.J.* 18.121–122, in 37 the Jewish leaders objected to the plans of Lucius Vitellius to cross Judaea with two legions on his way to Nabatea on the grounds that "it was contrary to their tradition to allow images, of which there were many attached to the military standards, to be brought upon their soil." Philo, *Legat*. 290–306, complicates the issue by indicating that Jewish objections were not limited to iconic images. In his account, the Jews resented aniconic votive shields, which Pilate set up in honor of Tiberius in the palace of Herod at Jerusalem. *Legat.* 306 reports that the shields had no image or anything else that was forbidden, except the necessary inscription. Helen K. Bond, *Pontius Pilate in History and Interpretation* (SNTSM 100; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 37–39, points out that the problem must have been with the honorific inscription and suggests that it could refer to the Emperor by his full title, *Caesar divi Augusti filius* (also attested on the silver denarii issued under Tiberius in the form of *TI CAESAR DIVI AVG F*).

[535] The account suggests that the auxiliary units stationed in Jerusalem previously did not have *signa* with such iconic *phalerae*. It should be noted that two legions were previously stationed in Jerusalem: one after 37 B.C.E. and another in 4 B.C.E., as discussed above. A legion, when at full strength, had 60 centuries and thus 60 standards. Josephus does not note any objections to the legionary *signa*, even though at least some of the total 120 *signa* likely had iconic *phalerae*. The silence of Josephus on that account could be explained by his desire to focus on the equestrian governors, not senior legion commanders, as the culprits of the rising tensions. It is also possible that the Jews were bolder before Pilate than they were before a commander of a legion.

[536] *B.J.* 2.170–171; *A.J.* 18.57.

[537] *B.J.* 2.172–173; *A.J.* 18.57–58. Mason, *War*, 144, observes that "by having ordinary provincials

response, the Jews fell to the ground and bared their necks ready to be massacred but determined not to give up on upholding their law. Astonished, Pilate issued an order to remove the offensive standards from Jerusalem.[538]

Following the incident with the *signa*, Josephus reports that Pilate immediately provoked a fresh uproar.[539] This time the disturbance concerned Pilate's decision to use the funds out of the temple treasury for building aqueducts to supply Jerusalem with water. When the prefect appeared in Jerusalem, Jewish crowds surrounded his judgment seat and expressed their dissatisfaction by angrily yelling at him.[540] On Pilate's signal, his soldiers, who had concealed their arms under civilian clothes and had secretly infiltrated the crowds, beat the protesters with sticks.[541] In the resulting struggle, many Jews died,

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suddenly face a professional military column (φάλαγξ) in battle formation (cf. 5.131 for a 3-deep legionary column) and following a precisely executed plan, Josephus heightens the power differential and terror of the episode." Mason also points out that the threat to slaughter the Jews if they would not accept images of Caesar anticipates the episode of Caligula's statue (cf. *B.J.* 2.185).

[538] *B.J.* 2.174; *A.J.* 18.59. In *A.J.* 18.121–122, Josephus implicitly contrasts Pilate's disregard for Jewish religion with the sympathetic behavior of the Syrian legate Vitellius, who on Josephus's account accommodated the request of a Jewish delegation and re-routed his legions in order to avoid bringing the iconic standards on Jewish soil. Similar consideration for Jewish religious feelings is shown by the next Syrian legate, Publius Petronius, in the following story of Caligula's attempt to install his statue in the Jerusalem's temple. Thus, Josephus's literary strategy reveals his continuous effort to release the higher Roman officials from involvement in escalating the Jewish tensions leading to revolt, putting all the blame on equestrian governors.

[539] *B.J.* 2.175–177; *A.J.* 18.60–62.

[540] The account of *B.J.* 2.175–177 specifies neither the location of Pilate's tribunal-platform nor the number of the Jewish protestors. Therefore, it is possible that the platform was set up in Pilate's audience chamber. If that was the case, then the Jews apparently had free access to the audience chamber, where normally the Roman governor had few if any soldiers present, as this was the central place to conduct his civil functions. The presence of the soldiers in disguise in Pilate's civil court would then illustrate Pilate's dubious character. The parallel account in *A.J.* 18.60–62 speaks of myriads (tens of thousands) of Jews assembled before Pilate, which could not happen if the seat was set up in an audience chamber.

[541] *B.J.* 2.176; *A.J.* 18.61. Pilate's order to use sticks instead of swords indicates his concern to avoid unnecessary bloodshed.

whether on account of the beating or being trampled by the fleeing crowd.[542] In the parallel account the soldiers hit the Jews much more severely than Pilate had commanded and indiscriminately beat those who participated in the riot and those who did not, killing a great number of people.[543]

The third account of Pilate's employing the army against the locals is recorded only in the *Antiquities*.[544] As a considerable number of armed Samaritans marched to Mount Gerizim, allegedly in search of the sacred vessels supposedly hidden there by Moses, Pilate sent cavalry and heavy infantry to intercept the armed procession. This time Josephus does not accuse the troops of being overly aggressive: the soldiers killed some of the Samaritans in a pitched battle and put the others to flight. Some of those who fled were caught and executed on Pilate's order. Following the incident, the Samaritan council forwarded a complaint to the legate of Syria Vitellius. The Samaritans accused Pilate of attacking those who had no thought of revolting against Rome but, in their words, were only fleeing from Pilate's oppression.[545] On Vitellius's order, Pilate went to Rome to answer the accusations before Tiberius, but reached the city only after the Emperor had died.[546]

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[542] *B.J.* 2.177.

[543] *A.J.* 18.61–62. This version is not readily compatible with the account in *War*. In *Antiquities*, Pilate's soldiers quietly surround the Judaeans—even though, given "the myriads" of the protesters reportedly present, that would not be possible—whereas in *War* the soldiers mix with the crowds.

[544] *A.J.* 18.85–89.

[545] That is, according to Josephus, the Samaritan leaders lied to the legate.

[546] According to this account, Pilate's replacement appears to have lain within the discretion of the Syrian legate. This may be taken as evidence in favor of the supposition that Judaea was under the jurisdiction of Syria, rather than a separate province. It has to be noted, however, that Syrian legates interfered in the affairs of Judaea both prior to 44 and after (*B.J.* 2.185, 239–244, 280, 333, 499–555; *A.J.* 20.7, 129–133).

To summarize, Josephus's portrayal of Roman troops in the above episodes illustrates a major function of the provincial units in enforcing the order in the province. Josephus's treatment of Roman soldiers in the first two episodes serves his intention to portray the prefect's insensitivity to his subjects. Although Josephus neither offers explicit comments about Pilate's character, nor does he make express allegations against him, he nevertheless reveals Pilate's character through the above cases from Pilate's administration. These cases emphasize—as is typical of the genre that Josephus shares with the Roman historians—the relationship between unfortunate outcomes, unsatisfactory leadership, and poor characters in command.[547] The discrepancies between the parallel accounts in *War* and *Antiquities*, as well as the contradictions within the stories, strongly suggest that at least some of the details constitute Josephus's literary invention specifically designed to emphasize flaws in Pilate's administration. Pilate's lack of consideration of the Jewish religion results in disturbances, which the soldiers have to suppress. As was the case with the soldiers of Varus, the soldiers of Pilate also reflect on the moral qualities of their commander: the episode as described in *Antiquities* emphasizes the brutality of the Caesarean troops. It will become apparent that the anti-Jewish sentiment of the Caesarean units is a recurring theme in Josephus and is presented by him as one of the main causes of the Jewish War.[548]

An incident in Samaria is treated differently. As prefect, Pilate could not ignore a gathering of armed people, for bearing arms was forbidden for anyone but soldiers. His

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[547] Philo, *Legat.* 302, is more explicit in his unflattering characterization of Pilate: he accuses Pilate of corruption, insolence, rapine, cruelty, insulting people, and executing those who were untried and not condemned.

[548] Cf. *A.J.* 19.356–366; 20.176.

actions in this case do not exceed the limits of necessity. Pilate sent the troops specifically to check the progress of an armed gathering. The military intervention does not appear to be overly severe, especially considering that the Samaritans offered armed resistance to the Romans. Although some Samaritans were killed in the battle, the majority was apparently dispersed. Of those captured, Pilate executed only the leaders, which was an expected retribution measure taken to restore the stability in the region. The absence of the usual negative attitude toward Pilate and his soldiers in Josephus's exposition of this episode can be explained by Josephus's apparent intense animosity against the Samaritans seen elsewhere in his account.

The accounts of disturbances under Pilate also serve in Josephus's plot to demonstrate that passive resistance, especially against an unfit ruler, wins the day, whereas a more violent uprising against Roman rule results in harsh Roman military response, disastrous for the Jews regardless of their personal involvement and culpability, or lack thereof. The following account of Caligula's statue and the first two episodes of disturbances under Cumanus illustrate the same principle: a non-violent approach leads to the desired result, whereas a violent uproar ends in bloodshed and failure.

The account of the events surrounding Caligula's effort to place his statue in the guise of Jupiter in the Jerusalem temple presents a case of considerable unrest in Palestine with involvement of a significant Roman military force.[549] Josephus's carefully crafted introduction to the episode presented in *War* begins with the reference to

[549] *B.J.* 2.184–203; *A.J.* 18.256–309. Apart from Josephus, the account is reported in detail in Philo, *Legat.* 188–348, and is mentioned briefly by Tacitus, *Hist.*5.9. Although the account of *War* speaks of multiple statues, all the other sources indicate a single colossal statue. For reconstruction of the events, see Smallwood, *Legatio*, 31–36, 267–325.

Caligula's persecution of the Roman nobility.[550] Building on the contemporary Roman elite's unfavorable impression of Caligula's reign evidenced in the works of Seneca, Suetonius, and Dio, Josephus aims to elicit sympathy from the Roman audience to the Jewish case.[551] The parallel and more complex account in *Antiquities* reveals that Caligula decided to install the statue to teach Jews a lesson after he learned that they had dishonored him by refusing to display his images or swear oaths to him.[552] Following Caligula's orders, Publius Petronius, who had replaced Vitellius as legate of Syria around 39, marched with a substantial military contingent to Palestine. The size of the army, which comprised several legions and numerous *auxilia,* suggests that the Romans expected strong Jewish opposition to this mission.[553] As the army approached, fear spread among the Jewish population. According to Josephus, multitudes of Jews, including women and children, begged Petronius to compel the Emperor to reconsider his intention and avoid sacrificing the entire people, who would have to die in the face of such a grave violation of their ancestral laws rather than allowing it to take place.[554] After intensive

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[550] *B.J.* 2.184.

[551] Modern scholarship, e.g., J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *The Emperor Gaius (Caligula)* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934); Antony A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Corruption of Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Donna W. Hurley, *An Historical and Historiographical Commentary on Suetonius' Vita of C. Caligula* (American Classical Studies 32; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); D. Wardle, *Suetonius' Vita of Caligula: A Commentary* (Brussels: Latomus, 1994), is reevaluating the overly negative depictions of Caligula as products of a hostile Roman elite's perspective.

[552] *A.J.* 18.256–309. Philo, *Legat*. 199–203 (cf. 201), admits that the cause for Caligula's decision was generated by the aggressive action of the Jews of Jamnia, who tore down an altar that was erected by the local Greeks, apparently in honor of the Emperor. It seems, therefore, that Caligula's action was a response to an insurgency capped by a personal insult.

[553] *B.J.* 2.186 reports that Petronius brought three Roman legions, whereas *A.J.* 18.262 speaks of two. Philo *Legat.* 207, supports the latter account, noting that Caligula sent into Judaea half of the force assigned to protect the border along the Euphrates from the Parthian army, that is, two legions.

[554] Again, Josephus speaks of "tens of thousands" of Jews for dramatic effect, further enhanced by the reference to women and children. Contrary to Josephus's presentation of the Jewish crowds as being peaceful, Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.9, remarks that the Jews were armed. Smallwood, *Legatio*, 275, suggests that,

negotiations and inner struggle, sympathetic Petronius agreed to petition Caligula and withdrew with the army back to Antioch. The Emperor did not welcome the delay and sent a death note to the legate, but the letter with the news of Caligula's own death came first.[555]

This account presents the Roman army as a daunting power employed to deter the Jewish population from thwarting the wishes of Caesar. Although a dangerous and potentially deadly force, the army here is not depicted as an evil in itself. Josephus's portrayal of the army echoes his depiction of the principal characters: when a delusional *princeps* mandates a military operation, the army advances, instilling fear and preparing to unleash its brutal power; when the general, moved by pity for the Jews and by desire to spare the many lives that would be lost in war, aborts the mission, the army withdraws to its quarters inflicting no harm.

An episode that occurred in Caesarea and Sebaste following the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44 is reported only in *Antiquities*.[556] The local soldiers contributed to the festivities initiated by the non-Jewish population on account of the death of the king by setting the images of Agrippa's daughters on the rooftops of brothels and imitating sexual intercourse with them. This behavior appalled Claudius himself. The Emperor intended to punish the offenders by transferring their entire units to Pontus and replacing them with proportionally equivalent detachments from the troops stationed in Syria. However, a deputation sent by the offending soldiers managed to appease him, and the decision was

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although Josephus, who agrees with Philo in this respect, had reasons to present the Jews as being peaceful, it is likely that Tacitus erroneously assumed armed resistance in light of the later Jewish War.

[555] The parallel account in *A.J.* 18.256–309 is longer and more elaborate.

[556] Agrippa reigned only three years—his successful and, according to Josephus, popular reign was abruptly ended by a sudden terminal illness in 44 (*A.J.* 19.343–352; Acts 12:20–23).

reversed.[557] This episode is yet another instance in which Josephus depicts the Caesarean troops in a negative light.

Following Agrippa's death, Claudius returned the territories of his kingdom to direct Roman administration.[558] In the *War,* the first two procurators of the returned territory, Cuspius Fadus (44–46) and Tiberius Iulius Alexander (46–48), are credited with keeping the nation at peace.[559] The parallel account in *Antiquities* reports the disturbances in the province and shows the army's involvement in the peacekeeping efforts. Under Fadus, the troops cleared Idumaea and Judaea from banditry and eliminated what appears to be a revolutionary movement led by Theudas.[560] The execution of two sons of Judas the Galilean—the leader in the revolts of 4 and 6 C.E.—suggests the possibility of armed opposition to Roman rule under Tiberius Alexander.[561]

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[557] *A.J.* 19.356–366.

[558] In *B.J.* 2.220 and *A.J.* 19.360–363, Josephus reports: "Claudius again made the kingdoms a province." Since *B.J.* 2.117 presents the beginning of direct Roman administration in 6 C.E. as a creation of a new province, Josephus's remark here implies a simple reversion to that status. As discussed above, the evidence suggests that in 6–41 Judaea was rather a prefecture annexed to Syria, as Josephus also implies in *Antiquities* in agreement with Tacitus, *Hist*. 5.9. Cotton, *Roman Administration*, 75–91, following Tacitus, sees the reversion of the territories of Agrippa I to Roman direct administration as the beginning of full provincial status of Judaea. In support of her argument, Cotton points out that in 44 the territory in question was significantly larger that that of 6 and that under Claudius equestrian procurators appear as provincial governors elsewhere in the Empire, including Raetia, Noricum, Thrace, Mauretania Caesariensis and Tingitana.

[559] *B.J.* 2.271.

[560] *A.J.* 20.5, 97–99. For analysis of Theudas' uprising see R. A. Horsley and J. S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), 164–67.

[561] *A.J.* 20.102; see the discussion in Shimon Applebaum, "The Zealots: The Case for Revaluation," *JRS* 61 (1971): 160–61. Tiberius Alexander later served as the prefect of Egypt in 66–70 occupying the highest post available to an equestrian. On July 1, 69, he persuaded his legions to switch allegiance to Vespasian (*B.J.* 4.616–618, Suetonius, *Vesp*. 6; Tacitus, *Hist*. 2.79). The example of his legions was followed by other eastern and northern legions, which enabled Vespasian's advancement to power. According to Josephus, Tiberius Alexander served as a military advisor of Titus and a commander of his army during the Jewish campaign (*B.J.* 5.45–46).

The situation in Judaea deteriorated considerably under the governorship of the next procurator, Ventidius Cumanus (48–52). The first of the three reported tumults was instigated by a Roman soldier during the celebration of the Passover in Jerusalem.[562] A soldier of the Jerusalem cohort, which was positioned on the colonnade of the temple to maintain order during the festival, pulled up his tunic, turned his rear to the Jews, and produced a sound in keeping with his posture.[563] The Jewish crowd did not take it lightly. Some of the enraged yelled at Cumanus, demanding to punish the offender, while others pelted the soldiers with rocks. Alarmed by the escalating disorder, Cumanus called for reinforcements. As scores of Roman soldiers poured onto the colonnades, the crowds panicked and, trying to escape out of the temple through the narrow gates, trampled tens of thousands to death.[564]

Immediately, Josephus supplies another example of military insolence.[565] Following the robbery of an imperial slave on the road from Emmaus to Jerusalem, Cumanus punished the inhabitants of the area for their inaction toward the bandits by sending soldiers to plunder the surrounding villages and to arrest their elders.[566] During

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[562] *B.J.* 2.224–227; *A.J.* 20.106–112.

[563] On the Jerusalem cohort see Chapter 1. *A.J.* 20.108 says that the soldier uncovered his genitals, but does not mention farting.

[564] *B.J.* 2.227 reports 30,000 dead. Although Josephus claims that the population during Passover approached three million due to vast numbers of pilgrims (*B.J.* 6.422–28), that figure is impossible. Mason, *War*, 187, points out that based on the physical constraints of space within and around the ancient walls, the reported numbers of casualties are massive relative to the estimated population of the city, even at festival times (estimated at 60,000–150,000). The lower number of 20,000 casualties reported in the parallel account of *Ant* 20.112 confirms that the numbers reported by Josephus are imprecise. Indeed, in the Greek literary tradition "myriad" (usually translated as 10,000) is used as a literary device to express an "uncountable number."

[565] *B.J.* 2.228–231; *A.J.* 20.113–117.

[566] *A.J.* 20.114. According to *B.J.* 2.229, the soldiers were only ordered to bring detainees from the villages.

the raid, one of the soldiers ripped and burnt a Torah scroll.[567] Outraged by the sacrilege, Jewish multitudes rushed to Caesarea and pleaded with Cumanus to punish the offender. The procurator decided it was best to comply, then ordered the soldier to be paraded through the Jewish crowds to his execution.

A final episode deals with the clash between the Jews and the Samaritans.[568] As Josephus reports, Cumanus's failure to prosecute the Samaritans responsible for the murder of a Jewish pilgrim prompted the Jews to take the matter into their own hands.[569] Jewish crowds from Galilee and Jerusalem rushed to Samaria and, assisted by an infamous bandit Eleazar, plundered and burned Samaritan border villages, slaughtering their inhabitants. In response to the raid, Cumanus mobilized the Sebastene auxiliary units from Caesarea.[570] The troops quickly halted the incursion by killing a number of the raiders and placing others in custody.[571] Following Roman military intervention, most of the remaining Jewish insurgents disbanded to avoid a Roman punitive expedition against Jerusalem. Others turned to banditry, presumably under the leadership of Eleazar, and continued to plunder the countryside.

Following the incident, the Samaritan and Jewish delegations appealed to Ummidius Quadratus, the legate of Syria. The Samaritans asked the legate to punish

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[567] *A.J.* 20.115 does not mention fire, but reports that the soldier shouted blasphemies and profanities while tearing the scroll apart.

[568] *B.J.* 2.232–246; *A.J.* 20.118–135. On the animosity between Jews and Samaritans, see *A.J.* 9.290–291; 1 Macc 3:10; Luke 9:51–55; 10:29–37; John 4:9; 8:48. Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.54, indicates that this particular episode was widely known.

[569] According to *A.J.* 20.118–119, multiple Galilean pilgrims were killed. According to *A.J.* 20.119, Cumanus did not act because the Samaritans bribed him.

[570] *B.J.* 2.236 speaks only of one cavalry *ala*, while according to *A.J.* 20.122, Cumanus also took four infantry cohorts and armed the Samaritans.

[571] The detainees were later crucified by Quadratus.

those who ravaged their villages, whereas the Jews blamed the disturbances on Cumanus's failure to address the initial crime. Quadratus remitted the matter to the Emperor. On his orders, the leading representatives of the Jewish and Samaritan delegations, Cumanus, and a certain tribune Celer—apparently the leader of the military operation against the Jewish raiders—travelled to Rome to present an account at the imperial court. Claudius sided with the Jews.[572] According to Josephus, the Samaritan delegation was executed, Cumanus exiled, and Celer sent back to Jerusalem in chains. There the tribune was handed over to the Jews, dragged through the city, and beheaded.[573]

The aforementioned episodes from Cumanus's administration blame the disturbances on two individual Roman soldiers.[574] In the first case, Cumanus took measures to protect his troops from the attack of the Jewish rioters. Besides, the Jerusalem cohort did not actually attack the Jewish crowds—it was the fear of the attack that led the crowds to stampede and numerous casualties. In the second episode, the army is portrayed as fulfilling its responsibility of fighting banditry in the province. The punitive plundering and arrests appear to be expected in such an instance and therefore did not cause civil unrest. It was the individual soldier's sacrilege that ignited Jewish outrage, and the execution of the offender proved to be sufficient to prevent a potential

[572] *B.J.* 2.245 mentions the execution of only three of the most eminent members of the Samaritan delegation. Given the general animosity against the Samaritans displayed by Josephus, as well as the discrepancy between the parallel accounts in *War* and *Antiquities*, the execution of the Samaritan leadership by Claudius could be Josephus's literary invention.

[573] *B.J.* 2.246 adds torture prior to the execution.

[574] *A.J.* 20.112.

riot.[575] These two accounts underscore the lesson for Josephus's readers already made evident in the first two episodes of disturbance under Pilate and in the account of the reaction to the setting up of Caligula's statue—violent uprising brings Roman military response and Jewish deaths, whereas peaceful supplication may achieve the desired result.

In the third account, the procurator's inability to punish the Samaritan culprits and his reliance on the Sebastenian troops from Caesarea in stopping the Jewish insurgency gets him into trouble. This is another instance in an ongoing chain of episodes accusing the Caesarean auxiliaries of inflicting violence against Jews on behalf of the non-Jewish population. The harsh sentence meted out to the tribune Celer and his humiliating execution underscore his grievous culpability in the conflict and, in a broader context, the wisdom of pursuing redress of grievances through legal channels rather than rebellion. Josephus's portrayal of the humiliation and execution of a Roman officer to appease the Jewish crowds indicates his effort to emphasize the emperor's concern with maintaining peace in Judaea. This is another example of a trend seen in Josephus, beginning with his account of the governorship of Pilate, namely, to blame the disturbances on lower equestrian administrators and to show the concern for peace and order displayed by higher Roman leaders, such as the Syrian legates and the emperor himself—with the exception of Gaius Caligula, whom Josephus, given the negative attitude of his audience to that Emperor, did not have to like.

The following account of Judaean affairs under the procurator Marcus Antonius Felix (52–59/60) is marked in the narrative by a number of consecutive and progressively dangerous cases of civil disturbances. In several instances Josephus reveals the

[575] *A.J.* 20.117.

involvement of the Roman army in maintaining order. First, Felix captured the infamous bandit Eleazar, who had ravaged the countryside for decades, as well as many members of his band.[576] Whereas Eleazar and other leaders were sent to Rome, common bandits were crucified on the spot.[577] Although the narrative does not mention Roman troops directly, it was certainly the army that purged the countryside of banditry. Later on, Josephus speaks of "deceivers" who agitated the crowds with revolutionary ideas and led the multitudes out of Jerusalem into the desert in pursuit of freedom.[578] The Roman cavalry and heavy infantry dispatched by Felix halted the brewing upheaval. Next, a certain Egyptian, professing to be a prophet, assembled a considerable number of armed followers on the Mount of Olives in a position favorable for carrying out an attack on Jerusalem.[579] Felix pre-empted the assault by sending Roman heavy infantry against the insurgents.[580] In the ensuing battle, many of the rebels were killed or captured and the rest were scattered. As Josephus points out toward the end of this section of his narrative, even though the Romans were able to deal with the reported upheavals successfully,

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[576] *B.J.* 2.253.

[577] *A.J.* 20.160–161 adds that along with bandits, Felix captured and put to death many impostors, who agitated the crowds.

[578] *B.J.* 2.258–260; *A.J.* 20.167–168. *B.J.* 2.254–257 and *A.J.* 20.162–166 speak of the *sicarii*—a terrorist group engaged in assassination of prominent figures in Jerusalem. *A.J.* 20.165–166 asserts that it was the iniquity of the killings performed by the *sicarii* in the temple that caused God to abandon the city and bring the Romans to purge Jerusalem through fire and the Jewish nation through suffering.

[579] Mason, *War*, 214 observes that the Mt. of Olives later became the base of the *legio X Fretensis* as it prepared to capture the city (*B.J.* 5.70, 135, 504; 6.157).

[580] *B.J.* 2.261 reports that the number of the followers comprised 30,000, while *A.J.* 20.169 suggests a considerably smaller following: the soldiers of Felix killed 400 and captured 200 rebels. Acts 21:38 speaks of 4,000 insurgents. This is another example showing that Josephus's numbers are inconsistent and often inflated.

revolutionary agitation and violence continued throughout all Judaea due to the united efforts of the religious "enchanters" and the bandits.[581]

The above accounts in Josephus are followed by an episode of "a different kind of disturbance," one involving soldiers stationed at Caesarea.[582] The Jewish population of the city had formed a faction against its non-Jewish inhabitants and had initiated a campaign to reclaim Caesarea as a Jewish city.[583] The rivalry escalated to an armed conflict, and while the Jews surpassed their adversaries in numbers, the non-Jewish Caesareans secured the support of the Caesarean soldiers. Despite the efforts of auxiliary prefects to check the tumult by arresting and punishing the most belligerent, violence intensified. In one particular instance, the Jews, who took the upper hand in a fight, defied Felix's warning and refused to stand down. Felix mustered the soldiers, who killed many of the rioters and then plundered their property.[584]

To summarize, Josephus compliments Felix's ability to manage the province.[585] The army under Felix proves effective in purging the countryside of banditry and in halting multiple cases of disorder. In the Caesarean incident, Josephus blames its Jewish inhabitants for bringing Roman military action upon themselves.

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[581] *B.J.* 2.264–265; *A.J.* 20.172.

[582] *B.J.* 2.266–270. Josephus implies that this event dates to the end of Felix's tenure, probably between 57 and 60.

[583] In describing the non-Jews of Caesarea as Syrians (also *Vita* 52–53, 59), Josephus employs a broader term for the peoples of the region. The term "Greeks" used in *B.J.* 2.265, 267–268, 284–285, apparently refers to their cultural identity.

[584] *B.J.* 2.270, 284; *A.J.* 20.177.

[585] Here Josephus differs from Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.9.3, who gives a different perspective on Felix's administration: "[Felix] practiced every kind of cruelty and lust, wielding the power of a king with all the instincts of a slave"; cf. *Ann.* 12.54.1–4.

Porcius Festus (59/60–62) is the last procurator whom Josephus credits with using Roman forces effectively to maintain order in Judaea, whether in disposing of bandits or in dealing with those who acted against Roman rule. The next two procurators, Lucceius Albinus (62–64) and especially Gessius Florus (64–66), are portrayed as corrupt governors who neglected their obligation to maintain tranquility in the province and oppressed the Jewish population.[586] Josephus emphatically blames Florus, the procurator of Judaea through the beginning of the Jewish War, for forcing the Jews to revolt, and he portrays the army as a major force in the chain of events leading to war.[587] According to Josephus, the disturbances began after Florus requisitioned seventeen talents from the Jerusalem temple, allegedly for the imperial treasury.[588] Some of the Jerusalem Jews, who were already disconcerted by the escalation of the Caesarean crisis, disparaged and mocked the procurator for his avarice.[589] Florus responded by summoning units of infantry and cavalry from Caesarea for a punitive expedition.[590] A delegation of concerned Jews came out to meet the troops in supplication, but Florus, determined to avenge the insults, sent a centurion with a cavalry detachment to disperse them before they could express their submissiveness. On the next day, the procurator summoned the

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[586] On Albinus, see *B.J.* 2.272–273; *A.J.* 20.197–215. The former passage mentions plundering of the Jewish homes, likely done by soldiers. The latter credits Albinus with getting rid of many of the *sicarii* and other criminals worthy of the death sentence, but accuses him of releasing many robbers for bribes.

[587] *B.J.* 2.293; *A.J.* 20.257; cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.10.

[588] It seems that Florus collected unpaid tax revenue: although Josephus does not mention here that the Jews owned taxes to Rome, *B.J.* 2.403–407 makes it apparent.

[589] *B.J.* 2.293–295. According to Josephus, Florus used the name of Caesar to pocket the money, while the Jews cried out to Caesar to save them from the tyranny of the evil procurator. This is another instance in Josephus where he blames the disturbances on a corrupt local governor while making sure that the emperor is uninvolved and, in this particular instance, is called on as a savior.

[590] *B.J.* 2.296–305.

Jewish leaders before his tribunal and demanded that they hand over those who had insulted him.[591] When the leaders failed to comply, Florus proceeded with punitive action by dispatching his soldiers to plunder a part of the city and to kill whomever they might come across.[592] The soldiers did more than what was ordered:

> The troops, whose lust for booty was thus backed by their general's order, not only plundered the quarter which they were sent to attack, but plunged into every house and slaughtered the inmates. There ensued a stampede through the narrow alleys, massacre of all who were caught, every variety of pillage; many of the peaceable citizens were arrested and brought before Florus, who had them first scourged and then crucified. The total number of that day's victims, including women and children, for even infancy received no quarter, amounted to about three thousand six hundred.[593]

According to Josephus, the victims of the flogging and crucifixion included Jewish nationals who were Roman citizens of the equestrian order. This, in his words, was unprecedented and raised the savagery of the Romans to a new level.[594]

Eager to smash all remaining opposition, Florus summoned two more cohorts from Caesarea.[595] As the troops were approaching Jerusalem, he orchestrated another confrontation. Having requested the Jews to prove their submissiveness by greeting the arriving soldiers, the procurator instructed the troops to ignore the salutations. Anticipating that popular discontent would result from the prescribed rudeness of the

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[591] Mason, *War*, 242, notes that this scene, set around the governor's tribunal-platform, recalls the episodes of protests under Pilate (*B.J.* 2.172, 175–176).

[592] *B.J.* 2.297–300.

[593] *B.J.* 2.305–307 (Thackeray, LCL). Some manuscripts give the number as 630; see Mason, *War*, 246. At any rate, since Josephus demonstrates the tendency to inflate the numbers for dramatic effect, no number can be taken as a precise count.

[594] *B.J.* 2.308.

[595] Taking into account one cohort continuously stationed in Jerusalem and two cohorts brought from Caesarea earlier, the Roman military presence in Jerusalem would now increase to five cohorts, which at full strength numbered about 2,400 soldiers (more if some of the cohorts were *cohortes miliaria*).

soldiers, Florus ordered the troops to prosecute any instance of derision. The mousetrap worked flawlessly. As the Romans ignored the greetings, the insurgents scorned Florus, thus providing the needed pretext for the troops to unleash the planned violence. The infantry surrounded the crowds and beat them with sticks, and the cavalry chased those who fled and trampled them.[596] Many Jews fell victim under the blows of the soldiers, and their fleeing countrymen trampled many more to death.

To summarize, Josephus portrays Florus as the major perpetrator of Jewish dissatisfaction leading to the revolt. The account of the crucifixions of the Jews in Jerusalem makes Florus uniquely responsible for provoking the uprising. Josephus makes a point that the Judaeans respected all other Roman leaders except Florus because of his barbaric treatment of the Jewish people.[597] Thus, the account of Florus's administration is a major building block in Josephus's construction of his apology for the Jewish revolt: on the Roman side, the revolt was provoked by inefficient and insensitive equestrian administrators, whereas the higher Roman officials were not liable; on the Jewish side, the revolt was sustained by certain Jewish factions, whereas the Jewish nation as a whole was not culpable.

As usual, Josephus's portrayal of the soldiers reflects his portrayal of their commander. Directed by the corrupt procurator, the Caesarean cohorts, already marked throughout the narrative for their anti-Jewish sentiment, display an unusual level of avarice, cruelty, and brutality. However, a careful reading of the account suggests that

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[596] *B.J.* 2.315–328. It appears that Florus, who, according to Josephus envisioned and in fact provoked the battery, equipped the soldiers with sticks in advance to avoid excessive bloodshed among the Jewish population. It is also possible that this detail is a literary feature designed to recall the disturbances under another unfit governor, namely Pilate, who also had his soldiers surround the Judaeans and beat them with sticks (2.176).

[597] *B.J.* 2.340.

Josephus's rendering of the disturbances in Jerusalem was not entirely objective. Although he repeatedly emphasizes the peacefulness of the Jerusalem population with the exception of a few troublemakers, the number of troops that Florus had to bring to the city indicates the need to deal with an uprising of considerable scale. The account reveals that neither the two additional Caesarean cohorts, entering the city from the north, nor Florus and two Caesarean cohorts, attacking simultaneously from the royal palace in the west, were able to break through to the temple and relieve the Jerusalem cohort in the Antonia.[598] It is obvious that the Romans met strong resistance of much of the Jerusalem population—a fact Josephus attempts to conceal—which could explain the brutality of the military response.

As the riot in Jerusalem escalated, king Agrippa II attempted to dissuade the insurgents from making war against the invincible Roman army.[599] In his speech allegedly given after the cessation of sacrifices for the emperor following the disturbances under Florus, Agrippa makes the point that nearly every nation in the inhabited world succumbs to Roman arms. He observes that even a small number of Roman legions is sufficient to control the enormous Empire and keep the vast lands formerly known for their fierce warriors in submission.[600] Since it is essential for Josephus's Agrippa to create an illusion of stability everywhere except Judaea, Agrippa conveniently does not mention numerous disturbances that occurred in the Empire in the

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[598] *B.J.* 2.328–333; see Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, 188.

[599] *B.J.* 2.345–404. *B.J.* 2.390. Through the mouth of Agrippa, Josephus asserts both the valor and virtue of Roman military power. For a study of the speeches in *War*, see Pere Villalba i Vareda, *The Historical Method of Flavius Josephus* (Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums 19; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 89–102; and Mason, *War*, 265–68.

[600] *B.J.* 2.345, 362, 380, 388.

first century, including the rebellions in Thrace (13–10 B.C.E.), Pannonia (6–9 C.E.), Germany (9), Africa (17–24 and 45–46), the revolts of the Aedui and Treveri in Gaul (21), an uprising in Britain under Caratacus and then Boudicca (48–61), and the ongoing tensions with Parthia over Armenia before Corbulo's settlement of 63.[601] As Agrippa points out further in the speech, the Roman hegemony would not be possible without God's approval, and therefore the Jews should not seek God's help against the Romans.[602]

Unsuccessful in his attempt to deter the rebels by words, Agrippa switched to action and, following the request of the peace-minded Jerusalem nobility, sent a force of 2,000 cavalry against the insurgents.[603] That proved insufficient and the rebels gained control over the city, including the fortress of Antonia. Whereas Agrippa's troops were allowed to leave Jerusalem, the Roman cohort of Antonia, who had surrendered with the promise of their lives, was massacred.[604] The aggression of the rebels in Jerusalem provoked anti-Jewish reactions in Caesarea and other areas with mixed populations of Jews and non-Jews, including Alexandria. According to Josephus, two Roman legions garrisoned there along with 2,000 Libyan auxiliaries marched against the Jewish

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[601] Mason, *War*, 267.

[602] Divine support of Roman supremacy is a recurrent theme in Josephus; cf. *B.J.* 3.293, 351, 404, 494; 4.297, 323, 366, 370; 5.2, 19, 39, 278, 343, 367–368, 378, 396; 6.38–39, 101, 110, 250, 371, 399, 401, 433; 7.32–34, 319. The conviction that the Romans are ordained by God to rule is also recorded in the Babylonian Talmud *(b. 'Abod. Zar.* 18a) and attributed to the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt. See N.R.M. de Lange, "Jewish Attitudes to the Roman Empire," in *Imperialism in the Ancient World* (ed. P.D.A. Garnsey and C.R. Whittaker; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 268; Tessa Rajak, "*Friends, Romans, Subjects: Agrippa's Speech in Josephus's Jewish War*," in *Images of Empire* (ed. Loveday Alexander; JSOTSup 122; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 132–33.

[603] *B.J.* 2.421. By this time, the rebels already infiltrated and seized Masada, having killed its Roman guards (*B.J.* 2.408).

[604] *B.J.* 2.430–454.

insurgents of Alexandria with orders to eliminate the rebels and to plunder and burn their houses.[605] During the punitive raid, the soldiers accompanied by Alexandria's non-Jewish population reportedly slaughtered 50,000 Jews, including the elderly and infants. While not trying to conceal the brutality of the troops, Josephus clearly blames the Jewish rioters themselves for the calamities that befell the Jewish population of the city.[606] He emphasizes the efforts of Tiberius Alexander, the prefect of Egypt, to pacify the insurgents. It was only after Tiberius's attempts to reason with the rebels had failed that he resorted to military action to prevent the escalation of the riot. In this incident, Josephus juxtaposes the disciplined army with the unruly Alexandrian mob: on the one hand, the soldiers stopped the slaughter at a mere gesture from the prefect; on the other, the Alexandrians could not be dragged away even from the dead bodies because of their hatred for the Jews.

Following the incident in Alexandria, Cestius Gallus, the legate of Syria, moved against the Jerusalem rebels with a sizeable army consisting of the *legio XII Fulminata*, legionary *vexillationes*, auxiliary troops, and contingents provided by allied kings and Gentile-populated cities in the region.[607] The campaign failed. According to Josephus, when the Romans were on the verge of taking Jerusalem, Gallus suddenly decided to withdraw and in retreat suffered considerable losses.[608] Josephus explains the calamity that befell the army of Gallus as a part of God's plan to prevent the early end of the war

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[605] These legions were *III Cyrenaica* and *XXII Deiotariana.*

[606] *B.J.* 2.489–498.

[607] *B.J.* 2.499–502.

[608] *B.J.* 2.527–555. On the whole campaign, see Mordechai Gichon, "Cestius Gallus's Campaign in Judaea," *PEQ* 113 (1981): 39–62.

and to ensure severe punishment for the sins of the Jews.[609]

The narrative of the military campaign of Vespasian and Titus routinely emphasizes the professionalism and valor of the Roman army—not so much, as Josephus asserts, to praise the Romans, but rather to comfort those conquered and to deter them from further revolts.[610] Josephus highlights the military discipline of the Roman soldiers as a primary source of their unbeatable strength. He observes that the Roman troops perform their drills daily and with the same diligence and vigor as required in battle: "Their exercises are bloodless battles, and their battles are bloody exercises."[611] Josephus argues that the ensuing military skill and firmness of spirit of the Roman soldier overcomes any disorder, fear, or fatigue of combat. He insists that it is not by a mere gift of fortune that the Romans acquired their vast Empire. Their good fortune is rather the result of their courage, discipline, and fortitude. In other words, the grandeur of the Roman Empire testifies to the supremacy of its conquerors.[612]

Several accounts of personal bravery displayed by the Romans illustrate this point. Titus himself is presented as the personification of a great Roman warrior.[613] He was the first to scale the walls of Jotapata.[614] He personally led the courageous charge against the Jewish defenders of Tarichaeae through the Sea of Galilee, was the first to enter the city,

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[609] *B.J.* 2.539.

[610] *B.J.* 3.108.

[611] *B.J.* 3.75

[612] *B.J.* 2.577; 3.71–75, 101–107, 479; 5.310.

[613] For discussion of the military image of Titus in the official propaganda see n. 503.

[614] *B.J.* 3.324.

and instilled terror among the Jewish defenders by the boldness of his undertaking.[615] Near Jerusalem, when Titus was cut off with a small body of horsemen from the main contingent, he bravely fought his way through the midst of the numerous enemy, leading his men safely back to the camp.[616] Josephus underscores the mythological flavor of the account, reporting that Titus enjoyed divine protection from the enemy's projectiles and, although wearing no armor, escaped unharmed. Shortly thereafter, Titus allegedly rescued the entire *legio X* from destruction, holding off the charging enemy only with a few supporters until the fleeing soldiers, motivated by his courage and determination, returned to the fight.[617]

Inspired by the exceptional heroism and valor of Titus, who according to Josephus was present at every fight, the soldiers offered their own examples of bravery. During a missile exchange with the rebels, the equestrian Longinus leapt into the midst of the Jewish warriors, broke their ranks, killed two, and returned to his lines unwounded.[618] The Syrian auxiliary Sabinus, known for his heroic spirit, led an attack on Jerusalem's wall, scaled it under a shower of missiles falling from above, and put its defenders to flight.[619] The centurion Julianus, famous for his military skill, physical strength, and courage, singlehandedly fought off the charge of a group of the Jewish warriors and chased them across the temple court, killing those he caught.[620] This heroic act of the

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[615] *B.J.* 3.485–502.

[616] *B.J.* 5.58–66.

[617] *B.J.* 5.81–97.

[618] *B.J.* 5.312–314.

[619] *B.J.* 6.54–66.

[620] *B.J.* 6.81–90.

centurion, who died in the attack due to an accident, won him fame as a great warrior in both the Roman and Jewish camps.

The accounts of Sabinus and Julianus display strong similarities. Both warriors singlehandedly put to flight numerous enemies and both fall due to a misfortune. In both instances, the fleeing Jews turn back to a loud noise produced by the fall, realize that they are dealing with a single man, and attack the fallen hero from all sides. Although overwhelmed with the attackers, both Sabinus and Julianus still manage to wound many of the enemy before they are eventually killed. These two very similar stories reveal that in Josephus, episodes of bravery on the battlefield are not factual reports in every detail. These examples of valor displayed by the soldiers of Titus are reminiscent of, and may be directly inspired by, the heroic acts of the soldiers of Julius Caesar described in his *Commentarii.* As in Caesar, the brave deeds of the Roman soldiers in Josephus serve the purpose of demonstrating the bond between the army and its general.[621] As Josephus reports, following the victory Titus commended and rewarded his soldiers for their great devotion, achievements, discipline, and courage.[622]

Josephus makes it clear that the Roman military campaign in Judaea had God's approval and support, and that the Roman army was God's punishing hand against Jewish insurgents.[623] He justifies switching his allegiance to the Romans as a ministry to God, who "left Jerusalem and settled in Italy."[624] According to his testimony, Vespasian and

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[621] On the popularity and rapport of Vespasian and Titus with their troops, also see Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.5.1; 5.1.1; Suetonius, *Tit.* 5.2.

[622] *B.J.* 7.5–16.

[623] *B.J.* 6.110, 250.

[624] *B.J.* 3.354; cf. 5.367.

Titus acknowledged God's providence through their military success.[625] Josephus presents a former high-priest Ananus commending the Romans for respecting the Jewish temple and upholding the Jewish laws, and castigating the Jewish rebels for subverting their laws and polluting the temple with the blood of their countrymen.[626] Later, Josephus portrays himself and Titus making similar accusations against the Jewish revolutionaries.[627]

Consequently, it is the Jewish rebels who initiated and prolonged the war with Rome, and whom Josephus makes liable for the sufferings of the Jews that accompanied Roman invasion.[628] The earlier discussion revealed that plundering and destruction of Jewish homes was a predictable punitive response: the soldiers of Cumanus plundered Jewish villages for their association with the bandits, Felix sent his troops to plunder and burn the property of the Caesarean rioters, and Florus dispatched the cohorts to plunder Jewish homes for insulting his authority. Now the army of Vespasian and Titus plunders and burns on its way to Jerusalem according to the "law of war." Josephus reports that from the onset of the invasion, the country overflowed with blood and fire. The people of Gadara, Japha, Jotapata, and Gerasa were hunted down, massacred regardless of age or

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[625] *B.J.* 3.144; 4.366–370, 622; cf. 7.82, 318–319.

[626] *B.J.* 4.181–184; cf. 5.257; 6.110. Ananus's claim that the Romans had never before violated Jewish religious observances is an exaggeration, since in 63 B.C.E. the soldiers of Pompey entered the temple courts that were out of limits to Gentiles, whereas Pompey had entered, and thus defiled, the Holy of Holies (*B.J.* 1.152–153).

[627] *B.J.* 5.124–128; 362–374.

[628] Cf. *B.J.* 3.293; 6.353.

enslaved, whereas their towns and the nearby villages were incinerated.[629] The atrocities committed by Roman troops during the siege of Jerusalem are also blamed on the Jewish rebels. Aggravated by prolonged resistance of the Jewish defenders, Roman soldiers daily captured hundreds of those trying to escape from the city because of the famine, tortured them, and then crucified their dead bodies in various postures in full view of the city walls.[630] Although the number of the crucified was so great that "space could not be found for the crosses nor crosses for the bodies," Titus allowed the crucifixions to continue in the hope of inducing the defenders to surrender and thus save the city from total destruction. Another account reports that the Arabian and Syrian auxiliaries dissected nearly 2,000 of the Jewish deserters in one night in search of gold that some of the Jews were thought to have concealed by swallowing.[631] In this story, Josephus continues the theme of juxtaposition of the uncontrollable passions and anti-Jewishness displayed by the foreign auxilia with the discipline and restraint of the Romans— the Arab and Syrian βάρβαροι, as Josephus calls them, covertly continued this grisly enterprise even under the threat of capital punishment, since their love of gain was stronger than their fear.[632] But the major blame for Jewish sufferings here as elsewhere lies with the Jewish insurgents. As Josephus points out at the conclusion of this episode, this tragedy was a result of God's condemnation of the Jewish leaders, whom Josephus makes ultimately responsible for the calamities of the war.

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[629] *B.J.* 3.62–63, 132–134, 293–305, 329–338; 4.488–489. The passage of *B.J.* 4.92 illustrates the rules of the law of war: Titus offered the town of Gischala to surrender since he knew that if he took it by force, its inhabitants would be slain by the soldiers without mercy.

[630] *B.J.* 5.449–451.

[631] *B.J.* 5.548–561.

[632] This language exposes Josephus's intention to portray the Syrian and Arab troops, whom he blames for the sufferings of the Jews, as non-Roman.

To summarize, the Roman army in Josephus is the army responsible for winning the Jewish War. This puts Josephus's depiction of the army in a particular perspective. For Josephus, the Roman army is the army of the Flavian emperors, the generals who led the Jewish campaign. Since he writes as a client of the Flavian dynasty, his portrayal of the army is shaped by his loyalty to his patrons and the need to create an account that they approve. But for Josephus the Jew, the Roman army is also the army that subdued his people, devastated his country, and destroyed the center of his religion. Josephus's portrayal of the army is also a test of his loyalty toward his people and his faith. In this way Josephus surmounts the challenge of staying loyal both to the conquerors and the conquered, to Rome and to Jerusalem. He seeks to accomplish this through affirmation of several particular aspects in regard to the Roman army. First, he highlights the military superiority of the Roman army. Second, he avoids blaming the Roman soldiers for Jewish suffering. Third, he speaks of the Roman army as a tool in hands of higher powers—of its commanders and ultimately of God.

The Roman army in Josephus is the army that conquered the known world. Speaking from personal experience, acquired while accompanying the army during the Jewish campaign, and from his knowledge of history, Josephus emphasizes the skill, the might, the discipline, and the valor of Roman soldiers. In this way he can both honor his patrons by presenting their army as the best in the world, and vindicate the Jews from their defeat in the war, since there is no shame in being bested by the best.[633] In particular, Josephus's description of the Jewish military campaign elevates the prestige of his patrons—Vespasian and especially Titus, whose valor sets the example of personal bravery, and whose presence inspires his soldiers to heroic exploits. The accounts of

[633] Cf. *B.J.* 1.7–8.

military successes of the Roman army and the acts of personal bravery of Roman soldiers, performed in imitation of and devotion to their *imperator*, vividly display, sometimes at the expense of objectivity, the Emperor's rapport with his troops, highlight his military genius and achievement, and buttress his public image. The acts of heroism and bravery of the Roman soldiers, which Josephus witnessed during the siege of Jerusalem, complement the examples from the past wars of Pompey and Sabinus. Roman centurions are conspicuous figures in each of the accounts.

Josephus displays a strong effort to exonerate the Roman army from liability in the suffering of the Jews. These acts are blamed on the foreign troops, on the misbehavior of individual soldiers, on incompetent army commanders, and most of all, on the Jewish rebels, whose factional wars led to transgressions of God's law.

Roman military principles of order, discipline, and restraint are contrasted to the barbaric passions evident in the behavior of anti-Jewish allies and *auxilia*. The legionaries of Varus show judgment and restraint in punitive expeditions against the insurgents, while the troops of the Arab king, whose hatred for the deceased Herod translated into an indiscriminate persecution of the Jewish population, are expelled from the army for behavior unbecoming Roman allies. The discipline of the Alexandrian legions, which ceased slaughtering the Jews immediately at the order of the prefect, is contrasted with the hatred-driven and uncontrollable thirst for Jewish blood displayed by the Alexandrian mob. The restraint of Titus's legionaries is juxtaposed with the avarice displayed by the Syrian and Arab auxiliaries during the siege of Jerusalem, who continued their hunt for gold in the entrails of their Jewish captives even under the threat of the capital punishment. The Caesarean cohorts, already noted for their anti-Jewish

sentiment in the account of the revolts following the death of Herod the Great, are in the center of the ongoing harassment of the Jewish population through the beginning of the war in 66.

In Josephus, the army is a tool in the hands of its leaders. Depending on a particular commander's aptitude, moral qualities, and agenda, the army can be used to benefit the civilians or harm them. The very legion that Varus brings to restore order in Jerusalem is employed by Sabinus to spark another revolt. Driven by orders of the maniacal Caligula, the Syrian legions advance, ready to crush the Jewish opposition, but are withdrawn by a sensible legate and return to their quarters without inflicting harm. Josephus compliments some governors of Judaea for using the troops effectively to rid the land of banditry and to suppress dangerous revolutionary movements, while he castigates others for using the army to avariciously oppress the civilians.

But regardless of the qualities or agenda of particular commanders, Josephus always portrays the army as an instrument to inflict punishment against those who are deemed—whether fairly or not—responsible for undermining the established authority of Rome. As Josephus emphasizes repeatedly, opposition to Roman order always brings a harsh military response that is disastrous for the Jews regardless of their personal culpability. The suffering of the Jews associated with the Roman invasion is blamed on warring factions of Jewish leaders and Jewish insurgents, and ultimately on the sins of the Jews against God.

VI. Conclusion

The assessment of the Jewish sources demonstrates that relevant Jewish literary witnesses unanimously—albeit in differing overtones—speak of the Roman army as an

invincible force. Notably, although the Roman army in Josephus is often the army stationed in Syria, the motif of Eastern corruption and the resulting laxity of the Eastern troops found in the writings of Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, and Fronto is completely absent from Josephus.[634] The well-established *topoi* of the corrupting influence of the East that characterizes the Eastern army in the Roman sources is not on Josephus's literary agenda. His depiction of the Eastern troops derives from his personal knowledge. For Josephus, it was the Eastern army that represented the might of the Empire and the army that won the Jewish War. Moreover, Josephus was in a sense indebted to the Eastern troops for his success in the house of the *Flavii*—it was the Eastern legions that first proclaimed Vespasian the Emperor, thus validating Josephus's own prediction. The analysis of the Greco-Roman sources in the previous chapter revealed that the author's personal military experience and his firsthand knowledge of the soldiers translated into a more positive portrayal of the army. This observation is confirmed in the works of Josephus and will be further tested in the discussion of Luke-Acts.

The works of Josephus, who justifies his change of allegiance from the Jewish insurgents to the Romans as God's call to prophetic ministry, share certain features with other Jewish prophetic works.[635] All these works present the Roman army as an agent of divine justice and interpret the suffering of the Jewish people at the hands of Roman soldiers as God's punishment of the Jews for their sins. Their moral assessment of the army, however, differs drastically. The prophetic witnesses denounce the army for its

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[634] Throughout his account, Josephus extends his accolades to the Roman military skill and discipline to the Syrian contingent. The calamity that befell *legio XII Fulminata* in 66 is explained by the sudden and unfounded decision of Gaius Cestius Gallus to retreat, and ultimately as a part of God's plan to prevent the early end of the war.

[635] *B.J.* 3.354.

excessive immorality, arrogance, and violence, and proclaim that like the ungodly empires of the past, God will eventually condemn and destroy the Roman Empire along with its army. Such denunciation and vilification of the Roman army is not found in Josephus. Although he shows that Roman soldiers can be insulting, brutal, vulgar, and greedy, he makes an effort to exonerate Roman troops from liability in the suffering of the Jewish population.[636] The war and the calamities that befall the Jewish population are blamed on anti-Jewish Roman allies or *auxilia*, isolated instances of misbehavior by individual Roman soldiers, the incompetency of particular Roman administrators, factionist Jewish leaders, and ultimately the sins of the Jewish people against God. Josephus makes a particular point that the Roman army has not been destroyed under the walls of Jerusalem like the Assyrian army had been in the past, because God is on the side of the Romans, and that the Roman army's campaign against Jewish rebels has God's full approval, support, and guidance. This view of the Roman army as an instrument employed by God for execution of the divine plan will be considered further in the discussion of Luke-Acts.

Both Philo and Josephus present the army as a tool in the hands of its leaders.[637] Depending on a particular commander's aptitude, moral qualities, and agenda, the army can be seen benefiting the civilians or harassing and persecuting them. In Josephus, the character of the military commander shapes the behavior of his troops. The cruelty of Pilate and Florus stimulates brutality in their soldiers, whereas the leadership qualities and military virtues of Vespasian, and especially Titus, inspire their soldiers to heroic

[636] As noted, Philo, *Flacc.* 86–94, also may be taken to imply that the figure of a soldier was associated with violence, terror, and, possibly, immorality.

[637] In Josephus, the ultimate leader of the Roman army against the Jewish rebels is God.

actions. The examples of valor, such as those that Longinus, Sabinus, and Julianus demonstrated during the siege of Jerusalem, are reminiscent of the heroic acts of Julius Caesar's soldiers described in his *Commentarii*. Josephus narrates the heroic acts of the Roman soldiers to personalize his argument for the invincibility of the Romans, to illustrate God's action carried out through the hands of the Roman soldiers, and to demonstrate the bond between the army and its commander, most prominently Titus, thus elevating the public image of the latter. Notably, as in the works of the Greco-Roman authors, so also in the works of Josephus, centurions provide conspicuous examples of bravery on the battlefield. This demonstrates that the figure of the Roman centurion in battle had become an established literary *topos* that was habitually associated with courageous character, leadership, and achievement. This observation will be brought into the discussion of the image of the Roman centurion in Luke-Acts.

Philo and non-literary sources offer insight into the centurion's functions apart from his military duties. Philo's account of Flaccus's arrest demonstrates the significance of the centurion's office: the Emperor personally entrusts the centurion with an important mission of arresting a provincial governor who commanded two legions, and gives the centurion the authority to command the assistance of a higher-ranking military officer. In this passage Philo provides a vivid example of the centurion's role as an agent for carrying out Roman justice locally in a province. Surviving non-literary evidence for Palestine provides further evidence of the eminent status of the centurion within the fabric of local society and gives examples of his assistance to civilians in times of legal and financial need. It will be shown that this role of the centurion is particularly relevant to the account of Luke-Acts.

Chapter 4: The Roman Military in Luke-Acts

I. The Purpose and Scope of this Chapter

The present chapter examines Luke's portrayal of the Roman army in general and Roman centurions in particular in the narrative of Luke-Acts. In the Gospel, the accounts that involve Roman military personnel include the activity of John the Baptist in Luke 3, the story of Jesus and the centurion in Luke 7, Jesus's prophecies against Jerusalem and the temple in Luke 13, 19, 21, and 23, and the Passion Narrative of Luke 23. In Acts, they include the story of the centurion Cornelius in Acts 10–11, the account of Paul in Roman custody contained in Acts 21–23, and the voyage of Paul to Rome in Acts 27. Since the accounts of Luke 7 and Acts 10–11 provide the most significant data for discerning the role of the centurion in Luke-Acts, they will be the focus of more detailed analysis in the second half of the chapter. The first half will consider the rest of the passages in the order of their appearance in the narrative. In conclusion, the chapter will discuss the distinctive features of the depiction of the Roman military in Luke-Acts and the role that the Roman centurions play in Luke's narrative design. It will be demonstrated that 1) Luke's depiction of the Roman army is distinctively positive and that 2) at key points in Luke-Acts, the Roman centurion plays the role of the prototypical Gentile coming to Christ, foreshadowing the following mission of expansion of the Christian gospel from Palestine throughout the Empire and to its capital.

II. The Roman Army in the Gospel of Luke

A. The Soldiers and John the Baptist (Luke 3:14)

The first reference to the soldiers within Luke-Acts occurs in Luke 3:14 and is unique to Luke's Gospel. The soldiers, along with tax collectors, appear within the audience of John the Baptist, who preaches the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins along the Jordan River in Judaea.[638] The message of John's sermon implies that by bringing fruits worthy of repentance, the listeners can improve their standing with God. The soldiers follow up with the question, "what should we do?" and receive John's admonition to refrain from extorting money by threats or false accusation (μηδένα διασείσητε μηδὲ συκοφαντήσητε) and be satisfied with their wages.[639]

This demand reveals Luke's knowledge of the abuses typically linked with the Roman military.[640] Luke, however, does not dwell on them at any length. The point of the admonition is repentance. According to John the Baptist, even such proverbial abusers as tax-collectors and soldiers can be forgiven their former trespasses and be saved from the certain doom, which otherwise would be an inevitable outcome of God's coming judgment.

Luke does not specify the identity of the soldiers. Potentially, they could have been the soldiers of Herod Antipas, who ruled in Galilee and Peraea, the region bordering

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[638] Luke 3:3 places John's preaching in the region of the Jordan, but the parallels of Mark 1:5 and Matt 3:7 specify that it happened in Judaea.

[639] The verb διασείω, literally "to shake violently," means "to extort money by force or threat of violence" (BDAG, 236). POxy 240.5, an Oxhyrynchus papyrus of 37 C.E., uses the word in conjunction with "soldier": διασεσεισμένῳ ὑπὸ στρατιώτου. The second verb, συκοφαντέω, here means "to put pressure on someone for personal gain, shake down" (BDAG, 955).

[640] Serving as the police in the region, the soldiers would be in the position to abuse their power and engage in the said vices, as some of the witnesses discussed in the previous chapters demonstrate.

the Jordan River, or the soldiers of the Jewish temple guard (cf. Luke 22:52).[641] Indeed, it is apparent from John's warning of Luke 3:8, μὴ ἄρξησθε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ, that his audience included the descendants of Abraham. It does not necessarily mean, however, that the entire gathering consisted of ethnic Jews. The passage of Luke 3:7–14 breaks John's audience into three distinctive groups: the crowds (3:7, 10–11), the tax collectors (3:12–13), and the soldiers (3:14). The entire passage of 3:7–11 deals specifically with the crowds who, therefore, are the descendants of Abraham. The tax collectors and the soldiers appear after this passage and are treated separately. There is no indication in the text that the tax collectors or the soldiers were Jewish. The very fact that they were not included in the above portion dealing with those claiming Abrahamic descent implies that they could not make that claim. The wider context also seems to indicate the presence of Gentiles. Building on the prophecy of Simeon concerning a "light of revelation for the Gentiles" (2:32), John quotes Isaiah 40, making the point that "all flesh," Gentiles included, will see "the salvation of God" (3:6).

Furthermore, there are reasons to believe that the soldiers were Roman. Since 6 C.E., Judaea was under the direct rule of Rome, and it was the Roman army that enforced order and engaged in administrative duties in the region.[642] Also, the narrative of the repentant, baptism-seeking soldiers in Luke 3 is the first account in the sequence of positive depictions of military personnel in Luke-Acts, including the centurion of Capernaum (Luke 7:1–10), the centurion at the cross (Luke 23:47), the centurion and the

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[641] According to Luke 3:1, the baptisms happened ἐν ἔτει δὲ πεντεκαιδεκάτῳ τῆς ἡγεμονίας Τιβερίου Καίσαρος. Dating from 14 C.E., the 15th year of his rule would place Luke's reference in 28–29 C.E. According to Josephus, *B.J.* 2.94, Herod Antipas, referred to as Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, in Luke 3:1, ruled Galilee until 39 C.E.

[642] Luke 3:1 names Pontius Pilate as the ruler of Judaea.

soldiers of Acts 10, the tribune of Acts 23, and the centurion of Acts 27. Since these military figures are Roman, it is likely that Luke is speaking about Roman soldiers here as well.[643]

In sum, the soldiers of Luke 3:14 are among the first Gentiles who are shown to have made a positive response to the gospel message delivered through the preaching of John the Baptist.[644] As these soldiers are likely Roman, they are the first personages in the Lukan sequence of Roman military figures who exemplify the expected Gentile response to the gospel. The next such figure in this sequence, the centurion of Luke 7:1–10, will be discussed later in the chapter.

B. The Roman Army in the Prophecies Against Jerusalem and Its Temple (Luke 13, 19, 21, 23)

Every Synoptic Gospel alludes to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 C.E.[645] Luke's treatment of the event is, however, distinct. His narrative differs from other gospels by the number of prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem, by their content, and by their interpretation. The following section addresses these peculiarities.

Several passages referring to God's judgment against Jerusalem are unique to the Gospel of Luke. The warning of Luke 13:1–5 implies that all the inhabitants of Jerusalem deserve annihilation if they fail to repent. The lament of Luke 19:41–44 speaks of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem for its inability to perceive the time of the divine

[643] See pp. 201-2 for the argument that in the literary context of Luke-Acts the centurion of Luke 7 was Roman.

[644] Luke 7:29–30 strongly suggests that the soldiers were baptized. The positive portrayal of the soldiers in this account also makes it more likely that the soldiers were Roman and not Herodian; see p. 202.

[645] Mark 13:1–37; Matt 24:1–51; Luke 21:5–36.

visitation in the person of God's prophet: the city will be entirely surrounded by the fortified military camps of the enemy and then completely raised to the ground. The expression παρεμβαλοῦσιν οἱ ἐχθροί σου χάρακά σοι, "your enemies will surround you by a palisade" (19:43), is a likely reference to the siege works constructed by the soldiers of Titus at the Jerusalem walls in 70 C.E.[646]

When Luke shares an account alluding to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem with the other synoptic gospel writers, his editorial work reveals his intent to provide clear references to the Roman army of the Jewish campaign and present it as the agent of God's justice that fulfills the predictions of the past.[647] Luke's language in chapter 21 differs from the parallel accounts of Mark 13 and Matthew 24 in a way that makes Luke's reference to the events of the Jewish war far more explicit. In one instance, Luke replaces ἀκοὰς πολέμων, "rumors of war" (Mark 13:7; cf. Matthew 24:6) with ἀκαταστασίας, "insurrections" (Luke 21:9), making a reference to the Jewish revolt as the event preceding the war.[648] In another, Luke speaks of Jerusalem as κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων (21:20). The expression can be translated as "surrounded by camps," "surrounded by troops" or, given the use of "foot soldiers" in the Greek, more likely as

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[646] The palisade can also refer to the wall built around an enemy's encampments used in a long siege against a city. See BDAG, 775; also Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (SP 3; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 298–99; cf. Isaiah 29:3, Ezekiel 4:2; 21:22; 26:8. Luke's specific language here differs from a generic lament over Jerusalem he shares with Matthew elsewhere, apparently employing a common tradition (Luke 13:34–35; Matt 23:37–39). G. W. H. Lampe, "A.D. 70 in Christian Reflection," in *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (ed. Ernst Bammel and C. F. D. Moule; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 164, suggests that since this passage in the warning "your house is left to you (desolate)" (Luke 13:35) echoes Jeremiah 22:5, it may refer to the destruction of the temple and the city.

[647] The implicit references to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in other Synoptic Gospels can be found in Mark 13:7 and Matt 24:7 (cf. Luke 21:9; the references to war between the nations); Mark 13:17–20; Matt 24:19–22 (cf. Luke 21:22–23; the references to the horrors of the siege). See Chapter 3 for discussion of the gruesome details of the siege in Josephus.

[648] Johnson, *Luke*, 321, suggests that Luke could have made a reference to the turbulence of the imperial court after Nero.

"surrounded by legions," which in all probability is a reference to the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman army.[649] Finally, only Luke makes a statement that following the siege, the Jews will fall by the sword and will be taken captives into every nation (21:24), which again describes the actual events following the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans.[650]

Uniquely among the Synoptic writers, Luke 21 interprets the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple using the language of the old prophets of Israel. Thus, he describes these events as ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως, "days of punishment" (21:22) referring to the prophecy of God's punishment of the wicked Israel in Deuteronomy 32:35, whereas his depiction of Jerusalem as "trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (21:24) is the fulfillment of the prediction of Zachariah 12:3.[651]

The final prophecy in Luke's Gospel that alludes to the siege of Jerusalem occurs in Luke 23:27–31, within the Passion Narrative. This prophecy is given by Jesus on his way to the cross and is directed against the Jewish leaders. Because the leaders condemned God's prophet to death, the population of Jerusalem, especially women and children, will face the consequences of God's disfavor in the sufferings of the siege and following destruction.

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[649] The word στρατόπεδον literally means "camp" and is used in Greco-Roman literature to designate a body of troops or, more specifically, a Roman legion (e.g., Polyb. 1.16.2; 1.26.5; Dio 38.46.3; 55.23.2; 71.2.1). See Mason, *Greek Terms*, 81, 164; BDAG, 948. The parallel version in Matthew speaks οἱ ἀετοί, "the eagles" (Matt 24:28; this reference is echoed in Luke 17:37), which may be an allusion to the Roman army. Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another: Studies in the Significance of the Fall of Jerusalem in the Synoptic Gospels* (NovTSup 23; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 351, points out that the reference is made specifically to eagles, not vultures (γύψ), although the Aramaic—if it was the original—could be interpreted either way.

[650] Josephus, *B.J.* 5.516–518; 6.414–419 provides a description of the events referred to by Luke.

[651] The theme of God's punishment meted out against Jerusalem and its temple is prevalent in the Hebrew Bible; cf. Jer 7:14–26, 30–34; 16:1–9; 17:27; 19:10–15; Mic 3:12; Zeph 1:4–13. Chapter 3 discussed Josephus's interpretation of the events as God's punishment for the sins of the Jews. For examples of such interpretation among the early Christian writers, see Justin, *Dial.* 16.92, 110, 115; Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.* 13.

To summarize, the Gospel of Luke stands out among other gospels by the number of predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem, by the clarity of its allusions to the Roman military in the prophecies, and by its depiction of the event as the fulfillment of ancient prophecies about God's punishment of the Jews for their transgressions. This manifests Luke's interest in portraying the Roman army as the agent of divine retribution for the transgressions of the Jewish people, fulfilling the predictions of the prophets of old.

C. Roman Military in the Passion Narrative (Luke 23)

A comparison of Luke's Passion Narrative with the parallel accounts of other evangelists reveals Luke's particular stance on the degree and the character of the involvement of the Roman troops in Jesus's pre-execution sufferings and his crucifixion. Matthew and Mark report that the Roman soldiers first flogged Jesus and then humiliated him by clothing him in "royal" garb, crowning him with thorns, mocking him as "king of the Jews," and beating him on the head (Mark 15:15–20; Matthew 27:26–31; cf. John 19:1–3). Luke, however, replaces φραγελλόω (Mark 15:15; Matthew 27:26) with παιδεύω (Luke 23:16, 22). Flagellation was carried out with a *flagellum*, a whip often knotted with sharp bone and metal objects, and resulted in great pain and body injury to the victim.[652] Luke speaks of a lighter corrective measure. His language is ambiguous, since παιδεύω means "to give a lesson" and can have more than one meaning.[653] A sort of a cautionary beating could have been implied, but this punishment would not be as severe

[652] See BDAG, 1064 (see also φραγέλλιον on the description of the flagellum).

[653] BDAG, 749. John 19:1 has μαστιγόω, a punishment that may be equivalent to either one found in the Synoptic Gospels; see BDAG, 620.

as flagellation.[654] Further, Luke altogether excludes the dramatic scene of humiliation and physical abuse of Jesus by the Roman soldiers in the *praetorium*. Whereas all other gospels narrate the scene in vivid detail, Luke transfers the incident from the Roman *praetorium* to Herod's court. In Luke, it is Herod and his soldiers who treat Jesus with contempt and mock him (Luke 23:11).

In terms of the composition of the text, Luke's omission of the account of the Romans mocking and humiliating of Jesus, graphically portrayed in the other Gospels, has the effect of making the Jews, not the Romans, appear as those who take Jesus away to his execution. In the other Synoptic Gospels, it is clearly the Roman soldiers who, after mocking Jesus, led him out to crucify him.[655] In Luke, those who lead Jesus away (ἀπήγαγον αὐτόν; Luke 23:26) and crucified him (ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν; Luke 23:33) are those who shouted out, demanding to crucify Jesus (Luke 23:18, 21, 23), and who are identified as τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τόν λαόν, "the chief priests, the leaders, and the [Jewish] people" (23:13). This makes Luke's narrative strikingly different from the parallel gospel accounts, where the Roman soldiers are clearly the sole perpetrators of the execution.[656]

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[654] A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (The Sarum Lectures 1960–1961; Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 27–28. Luke could have referred to the type of a light disciplinary beating known as *admonitio/castigatio*. See Brian Rapske, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (vol 3 of *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*; ed. B.W. Winter; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 124. It is unclear, whether Pilate carried it out, since the Jews refused his suggestion to limit the punishment to this corrective measure.

[655] Mark 15:20: καὶ ὅτε ἐνέπαιξαν αὐτῷ...ἐξάγουσιν αὐτόν, and Matt 27:31: καὶ ὅτε ἐνέπαιξαν αὐτῷ...ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σταυρῶσαι.

[656] In this instance, the Gospel of John displays similarity with the Lukan account: the αὐτοῖς of John 19:16 are "the chief priests" of John 19:15; see Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1480. Fitzmyer notes that in Acts 3:13–14, Luke emphasizes the responsibility of the Jewish people as a whole in crucifying Jesus, which becomes the basis for their stated need to repent.

Eventually, the soldiers briefly emerge at the crucifixion scene in Luke (23:36–37, 47). Here Luke follows tradition and reports an instance of mockery of Jesus by the soldiers at the cross, which consists of offering him a drink and challenging him to save himself.[657] This is the first time in Luke's account of the crucifixion that we learn that the Roman soldiers were actually involved in the execution. Even at this stage, the Jewish leaders are still the leading actors—they originate the derisive challenge to save himself (23:35), which is repeated first by the soldiers and then by one of the two criminals crucified next to Jesus (23:39). Significantly, the representatives of the latter two groups (the other criminal in Luke 23:40–41 and the centurion in 23:47) later affirm Jesus's innocence, whereas the Jewish leaders remain unabated in their disparagement of the crucified.

The declaration of Jesus as δίκαιος by the Roman centurion (Luke 23:47) is unique to Luke.[658] The word δίκαιος can be interpreted as both "innocent" and "righteous."[659] The first meaning fits well within the immediate context: the affirmation of Jesus's innocence is a central theme of the Passion narrative in Luke's Gospel.[660] Luke

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[657] Johnson, *Luke*, 377, observes that the offering of the sour wine, ὄξος, by the soldiers forms an allusion to LXX Psalm 68:22. Paul W. Walaskay, *"And So We Came to Rome": The Political Perspective of St. Luke* (SNTSMS 49; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 45, argues that the soldiers at the cross in Luke are not necessarily Roman, but could be either the temple guard or Herod's guard. The identification of the soldiers as clearly Roman in the parallel accounts and the presence of a centurion at the scene make this argument implausible.

[658] The parallel accounts of Mark 15:39 and Matt 27:54 have the centurion declare Jesus υἱὸς θεοῦ, "son of God."

[659] So Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1505. Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian: Writing the "Acts of the Apostles*" (SNTSMS 121; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 69–70, suggests that the ambiguity of the interpretation permitted Luke "to place the death of Jesus in both the Hellenistic tradition of the innocent martyr and in the Jewish tradition of the suffering righteous one," thus allowing the meaning of the death of Jesus to be appreciated by both the Greek and the Jewish audience.

[660] For a discussion of the rendering of the word as "innocent," see G. D. Kilpatrick, "A Theme of the Lucan Passion Story and Luke xxiii. 47," *JTS* 43 (1942): 34–36; Wilfrid J. Harrington, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Chapman, 1968), 268; Frederick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age*

has repeatedly emphasized the innocence of Jesus through the words of Pilate (23:4, 14, 22), Herod (23:15), and one of the crucified bandits (23:41). Now the centurion has the final say on the matter. Since it was the Roman centurion who was known to adjudicate provincial legal cases, this pronouncement functions as a formal verdict on the case in agreement with the previous finding of the prefect.[661]

In the second meaning of the word, the centurion declared Jesus "righteous."[662] The proclamation of Jesus as "the righteous one" will be an important theme in Acts (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14). Glorifying God and declaring Jesus as the righteous one of God, this centurion, along with the centurion of Luke 7, represents the Gentiles who affirm what the unbelieving Jews refused to accept.[663]

In sum, Luke modifies the Passion narrative so that the involvement of the Roman soldiers in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus is minimal.[664] By doing so, Luke exculpates

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According to St. Luke: A Commentary on the Third Gospel (St. Louis: Clayton, 1972), 242; Fitzmyer, *Luke,* 1520.

[661] See Chapters 2 and 3 for involvement of centurions into provincial legal matters.

[662] For the translation of the word as "righteous" see Robert J. Karris, "Luke 23:47 and the Lucan View of Jesus' Death," *JBL* 105 (1986): 66; Green, *Luke*, 826–27; Johnson, *Luke*, 382, 384. Cf. Luke 7:29-30, where all the people and the tax-collectors recognize the righteousness (ἐδικαίωσαν) of God by accepting John the Baptist as a prophetic figure, unlike the group of the Pharisees and the lawyers. The language of Luke 7:29-30 implies that the soldiers of Luke 3:14 were among those who were baptized by John and who recognized God's righteousness through accepting John as God's prophet.

[663] Luke's statement that the centurion ἐδόξαζεν τὸν θεὸν does not need to signify the centurion's involvement with Jewish religion in any extent greater than mere veneration of a local deity. Roman soldiers and higher-ranking officers habitually turned to the local gods in their area of deployment for protection. Stoll, *Religions*, 464–66, lists examples of venerating local deities in different parts of the Empire, including Syria and Palestine. In the setting of Luke-Acts, however, this glorification should be interpreted as a literary feature particular to Luke's intent of using centurions in the key stages of development of Gentile Christianity.

[664] The passages of Matt 27:62–66; 28:4, 11–15 contain references to the guards at the tomb of Jesus, who could have been Roman soldiers. Pilate's response to the request of the Jewish leaders to post the guard at the tomb, ἔχετε κουστωδίαν (27:65), can be interpreted as either "take a guard," which would imply that Pilate provided a Roman guard, or "you have a guard," meaning that the leaders had their own guard. Support for the view that the guard was Roman comes from the use of the Latin loanword κουστωδία for the guard and from the observation that the guard was answerable to Pilate (28:14). The

the Roman military from the suffering and death of Jesus, thereby transferring the blame onto the Jewish people, especially the Jewish leaders. The centurion at the cross serves as another link in a chain of Roman military figures, specifically centurions, seen at different stages of the Christian movement among the Gentiles, including the centurion of Luke 7, who has shown faith not found in Israel, and the centurion of Acts 10, the first Gentile convert to Christ and whose conversion launched the Christian mission among the Gentiles from Palestine to Rome.

III. The Roman Army in the Acts of the Apostles

A. Paul in the Protective Roman Custody (Acts 21–23)

In this section, the Roman troops stationed in Jerusalem repeatedly save Paul's life.[665] In Acts 21:31–35, the rapid dispatch (cf. ἐξαυτῆς, 21:32) of the soldiers and centurions of the Jerusalem cohort quartered in the fortress Antonia rescues Paul from being lynched by the infuriated Jewish mob in the temple.[666] Claudius Lysias, the tribune of the cohort, shows kindness to Paul permitting him to address the crowds (21:40). When the crowds become enraged again, the tribune puts Paul under the protection of Roman custody (22:23–24). Having learned that Paul was a Roman citizen, a centurion of the cohort and then the tribune abort interrogation by whipping to comply with the

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parallel account in *Gos. Pet.* 28–34, where Pilate sends a centurion named Petronius and some soldiers to guard the tomb, certainly refers to Roman soldiers. The portrayal of the soldiers in Matt 27 is hardly complimentary. After the tomb was found empty, they accepted the bribe from the Jewish leaders and lied about what happened.

[665] Johnson, *Acts*, 382, observes that from this point on in the narrative, Paul will be in nearly constant contact with the Roman military.

[666] Josephus, *B.J.* 5.238–247, reports that the Antonia was connected with the temple area by two staircases and that the two towers at the south and east of the Antonia overlooked the entire area.

Roman law.[667] In Acts 23:10, the tribune again sends soldiers to protect Paul from the members of the Jewish council. In Acts 23:12–35, the tribune thwarts the Jewish plot to assassinate Paul, secretly transferring him from Jerusalem to Caesarea under the protection of a formidable military force and supplying a letter to the procurator, which contrary to the Jewish accusations, attests to Paul's innocence from anything deserving imprisonment or death (23:29). Two centurions lead the guarding company of cavalry and infantry, escorting Paul safely to the destination.[668] Unknowingly (but Paul and the reader are aware; cf. 23:11), by transferring Paul to Caesarea, the Roman troops advance God's plan of bringing Paul to Rome.

In sum, this section portrays Roman soldiers providing order, justice, and protection in striking contrast to the mob rule and murderous plotting of the Jews. Additionally, by safely delivering Paul to Caesarea, the Roman army serves as God's instrument in advancing the divine messenger on his way to Rome.

B. The Roman Military and Paul on a Voyage to Rome (Acts 27)

In this chapter, the Roman military unit under the command of the centurion Julius delivers Paul to Rome.[669] The narrative reports several instances of mutually beneficial interaction between Paul and the Roman soldiers during the trip and repeatedly displays the benevolent attitude of the centurion to Paul. From the beginning of the voyage, Julius treats Paul kindly (φιλανθρώπως), allowing the prisoner to visit his friends and receive needed care (27:3). Although Julius disregards Paul's prophecy about the

[667] The interrogation was to be conducted with a μάστιξ, 22:24; cf. μαστιγόω of John 19:1.

[668] For the discussion of the Roman troops in this account, see pp. 49-50.

[669] For the discussion of *cohors Augusta*, see pp. 50-52.

dangers of continuing the voyage, he hardly can be blamed for heeding the professional opinion of the captain and the owner of the ship rather than warnings of a prisoner (27:9–11).[670] When the ship gets into a violent storm, the centurion and the soldiers follow Paul's warning and prevent the crew from escaping, thus saving the ship (27:31–32). Paul consoles and reassures those aboard, including the Roman military, and he leads them in partaking of bread (27:33–37).[671] The following incident emphasizes the centurion's kindness to Paul. As the ship is about to run aground, the soldiers wanted to kill all the prisoners so that none of them could escape. However, the centurion, determined to save Paul's life, forbids the execution (27:42–43).[672] In the end, everyone arrives safely, thus fulfilling the prophetic vision that Paul had received earlier (27:24; 44).[673]

In sum, the Roman centurion shows kindness to Paul from the beginning of the voyage to its end. In particular, the centurion makes a special effort to save Paul's life, even at the risk of putting his own life on the line should any of the prisoners escape. Paul, in turn, on several occasions collaborates with the centurion in saving the ship. The

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[670] Several commentators note the instance of Acts 27:11, where the centurion neglected Paul's advice to refrain from sailing and instead listened to the pilot and the owner of the ship. Justin R. Howell, "The Imperial Authority and Benefaction of Centurions and Acts 10:34–43: A Response to C. Kavin Rowe," *JSNT* 31.1 (2008), 40, n. 39, suggests that the centurion's behavior could be "Luke's subtle way of invoking the *topos* of the greedy centurion." This suggestion is implausible, since Luke-Acts portrays centurions, including Julius, in a positive light.

[671] The account resembles the narration of the Lord Supper in Luke 22:19 (καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν): Paul took the bread (λαβὼν ἄρτον), gave thanks to God (εὐχαρίστησεν τῷ θεῷ), broke it, and began to eat (κλάσας ἤρξατο ἐσθίειν). Johnson, *Acts*, 455, points out that the real point of the gesture is contained in the phrase ἐνώπιον πάντων, "in front of them all," which presents Paul as giving an example which all, including the Romans, could imitate.

[672] *Cod. justin.* 9.4.4, states that soldiers responsible for prisoners could face capital punishment if the prisoners escaped. The soldiers of Herod Agrippa in Acts 12:19 are dealt with severely when Peter escapes from prison.

[673] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP 5; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 456. Walaskay, *Political Perspective*, 62: As Christ saved (διασῴζω, Luke 7:3) the servant of the centurion, now the centurion saves (διασῴζω, Acts 27:43) the servant of Christ, thereby aiding in expansion of Paul's mission to the imperial capital.

account shows God's messenger and a Roman centurion in a symbiotic relationship that ensures everyone's salvation and the fulfillment of the divine prophecy. Yet again we see the Roman military advancing God's plan of bringing the gospel message to Rome.

The centurion Julius is the last in the chain of centurions in Luke-Acts, who played a role in representing Gentile believers and advancing Luke's story of the expansion of the gospel's message throughout Palestine and beyond, all the way to the capital of the Empire itself. The most significant military figures in this story are the centurions of Luke 7 and Acts 10.

IV. The Figure of the Centurion in Luke 7 and Acts 10

A. Jesus and the Centurion (Luke 7:1–10)

The healing of the centurion's slave in Luke 7:1–10 is the first miracle that Jesus performs after his Sermon on the Plain (6:17–49).[674] A version of the story is found in Matthew 8:5–13. The absence of the miracle in the Gospel of Mark means that Luke and Matthew in this case employed a different common source, so-called Q.[675] Generally speaking, Luke's account of the miracle is similar to Matthew's version. In both gospels, the centurion needs Jesus to heal his slave and, emphasizing his unworthiness to accept Jesus under his roof, insists that Jesus performs the healing at a distance.[676] Jesus praises

[674] Matthew reports the healing of a leper between his Sermon on the Mount and the centurion *pericope*.

[675] Uwe Wegner, *Der Hauptmann von Kafarnaum (Mt 7,28a; 8,5–10.13 par Lk 7,1–10): Ein Beitrag zur Q-Forschung* (WUNT 2.14; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1985), provides a detailed analysis and reconstruction of the Q version of the story.

[676] The story of John 4:46–54, a healing of a son of a βασιλικός, "royal official," has certain similarities to the stories of the healing of centurion's servant in Matthew and Luke, and likely derived from the same tradition. The sick person in John's story also lives in Capernaum; he is a member of the household of an important official; he is about to die (cf. Luke 7:2); the official asks Jesus for a healing; and the healing is done at a distance. The differences are that John's account does not have a centurion (although the "royal official" could have been a centurion, see below); the official has a son, not a slave,

the centurion's faith, ranking it above the faith of his countrymen, and heals the slave.[677] Nevertheless, as the following discourse will demonstrate, certain significant differences between the accounts in Matthew and Luke reveal Luke's redaction of the story in keeping with his literary goal in Luke-Acts.

Following the Sermon on the Plain, Jesus comes to Capernaum, formerly the center of his Galilean ministry (7:1).[678] Here, Capernaum is a point in Jesus's larger itinerary on his path of performing miracles and preaching (cf. 7:11; 8:1). The centurion (7:2) could have been a leader of a detachment of troops on a mission of upholding the order, collecting taxes, or any other of the tasks that were known to be undertaken by the military.[679] The centurion was a Gentile (7:5, 9), who historically could have belonged to either the Roman army or the troops of the Galilean client king Herod Antipas.[680] The

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who is ill; he meets Jesus in Cana, not in Capernaum; he, in contrast to the centurion in Matthew and Luke, begs Jesus to come to his house to heal his son; and it is through Jesus's own initiative that the healing occurs at a distance.

[677] The term δοῦλος occurs in vv. 2, 3, 8, and 10, whereas v. 7 has παῖς, which was also a common term for a slave; see BDAG, 750. Matthew's version of the story consistently uses παῖς (D has παῖς in Luke 7:2, probably a harmonization with 7:8 or Matthew). Since παῖς can also mean a "son," it can explain the use of υἱός in John and is, therefore, likely the term used in the original source. Luke 7:2 adds that the slave was valuable. Theodore W. Jennings and Tat-Siong Benny Liew, "Mistaken Identities but Model Faith: Rereading the Centurion, the Chap, and the Christ in Matt 8:5–13," *JBL* 123 (2004): 467–94, argue that Luke refers to a sexual slave. However, the exact function of the slave is not a concern of Luke's story, and it will not be discussed here. Luke also reports that the slave was about to die (so does John 4:47), whereas Matt 8:6 describes him as a "paralytic."

[678] Luke 4:23, 31–44; cf. Mark 2:1; Matt 4:12–13. In Luke 4:23, the readers learn for the first time that Jesus had already performed miracles in Capernaum, although the narrator chooses not to relate them directly. Then in 4:31–40 Luke reports healings in Capernaum: Jesus heals a man of an unclean demon in the Capernaum synagogue (31–37); Peter's mother-in-law of a high fever (38–39); and any people who were sick with various kinds of diseases (40–41). These reports prepare readers sufficiently for the centurion's knowledge of Jesus and his healing activities (7:3). David B. Gowler, "Text, Culture, and Ideology in Luke 7:1–10: A Dialogic Reading," in *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (ed. David B. Gowler, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson; New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), 102, note the strategic placement of the story of the centurion right after the Sermon on the Plain, which illustrates the character of true disciples, whose words and actions coalesce.

[679] A textual variant in Matt 8:8 has χιλίαρχος, a tribune (the Old Syriac version and Eusebius). The support of the witnesses for the "centurion" is overwhelming. See Chapters 1-3 for the involvement of the centurions into the life of their surrounding civilian communities.

[680] Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*, 124, asserts that this centurion could not have been a Roman

literary context, however, favors one option over the other. The discussion of Luke 23 showed Luke's intent to present Roman military more positively in comparison with other gospel writers, in particular at the expense of the troops of Herod Antipas. Therefore, it is more likely that the praiseworthy centurion in this account is associated with the Romans and not with the Herodians. Moreover, the following analysis will show that the centurion of Luke 7 is foreshadowing the centurion of Acts 10, and since the latter is undoubtedly Roman, the former is likely to be Roman as well.

Unlike Matthew, Luke excludes any direct interaction between the Gentile centurion and the Jewish prophet Jesus. Sensitive to Jewish customs, Luke's centurion refrains from approaching Jesus personally.[681] In Luke, the Jewish elders— the leaders of the local community—speak on the centurion's behalf (7:3).[682] They present the

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officer because Galilee was not under Roman jurisdiction until the death of Agrippa I in 44 C.E. Therefore, he argues, the centurion, although clearly a Gentile, was an officer in the army of Herod Antipas. Gerhard Schneider, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas: Kapitel 1–10* (Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 3/1; Würzburg: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh und Echter Verlag, 1977), 165, also supports this view. Martin Goodman, *State and Society in Roman Galilee, A.D.* 132–212 (2d ed.; Portland, Oreg.: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), 142, n. 136, argues that this centurion is more likely to be a Herodian than a Roman soldier, since no Roman troops would have been based in Galilee. However, the centurion could have been a leader of a detachment of the Roman troops on a mission (see n. 142), since the instances of Roman troops deployed in the domain of a client king were not unknown; see n. 159. Walaskay, *Political Perspective*, 33–34, asserts that the officer was undoubtedly Roman, arguing in particular that Herod Antipas would had inherited the military organization of Herod the Great, the former ruler of Galilee, who used Roman officers in his army (*B.J.* 2.52).

[681] Wegner, *Hauptmann*, 238–55, argues that the story found in Q did not have either this or the other (7:6, see below) delegations. He concludes that Luke's account of the delegations comes from a different source, a certain Jewish-Christian expansion of the "delegation-less" Q *pericope*. A. Dauer, *Johannes und Lukas: Untersuchungen zu den johanneisch-lukanischen Parallel-Perikopen Joh 4,46–54/Lk 7,1–10–Joh 12,1–8/Lk 7,36–50; 10,38–42–Joh 20,19–29/Lk 24,36–49* (FB 50; Würzburg: Echter, 1984), 39–125, argues that Luke's account of both delegations mainly comes from Q, whereas Matthew has abbreviated the source. Robert A. J. Gagnon, "Luke's Motives for Redaction in the Account of the Double Delegation in Luke 7:1–10" *NovT* 36 (1994), 123–24, lists other proponents of the view that Matthew deleted the two delegations from his account and notes a popular variant of this view— the second delegation of friends is Lukan redaction, whereas the first delegation was already mentioned in Q. Gagnon further argues that in view of their function in the larger context of Luke-Acts, both delegations are a product of Lucan redaction.

[682] Johnson, *Luke*, 117, points out that the elders here are not the "elders of the people," the members of the Sanhedrin, who caused problems for Jesus and the first Christians (Luke 9:22; 20:1; 22:52;

centurion as the benefactor of the Jewish community: "he loves" (ἀγαπᾷ) the Jewish people and had expressed his love through a specific act of benevolence by building them a synagogue (7:5).[683] As grateful clients who accepted the benefaction, the elders express the appreciation of the centurion by the Jewish community and commend him as one who "is worthy" (ἄξιός ἐστιν) to be granted this favor from a Jewish healer (7:4).[684]

The Greek and Roman inscriptional evidence confirms that Roman centurions possessed high social status in the provinces and served as benefactors to their local communities. An inscription from *Gallia Transpadana* dated to the early first century C.E. honors Aulus Virgius Marsus, the *primus pilus* of *legio III Gallica*, as a benefactor for granting "five silver statues of the emperors and 10,000 sesterces to the inhabitants of the district of Anninus."[685] Another inscription from the same region dated to the later part of the first century C.E. commemorates Gaius Valerius Clemens, also a *primus pilus*, who served during the Jewish war under Vespasian, as *patronus coloniae*, and the one who at the dedication of his statues as a horseman and an infantryman gave oil to the people of both sexes.[686] Of particular interest is the evidence that presents a centurion as a

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Acts 4:5, 8, 23; 25:15).

[683] The elders commend the centurion as the one who ἀγαπᾷ γὰρ τὸ ἔθνος ἡμῶν, "loves our nation." Josephus, *C. Ap*. 2.43, uses similar words of Alexander the Great in a similar context of a military official who exhibited a favorable attitude toward the Jewish people: ἐτίμα γὰρ ἡμῶν τὸ ἔθνος, "he honored our nation."

[684] See Gowler, *Text,* 111; John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20* (WBC 35a; Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1989), 318–19. Johnson, *Luke*, 117, suggests that the verse presents the centurion as a "God-fearing" Gentile.

[685] *AE* 1978, 286.

[686] *ILS* 2544. Later witnesses provide more such references. For instance, *ILS* 2081, an inscription of the second century C.E. from Umbria in Italy mentions that the *primus pilus* Gaius Arrius Clemens held the titles of *patronus municipii*, "patron of the town," and *curator rei publicae*, the "curator of the community." *ILS* 2666, an inscription dated to the first half of the second century C.E., reports that a centurion of *legio II Traiana Fortis* gave a banquet and 4,000 sesterces to the inhabitants of Alexandria at

builder of a local sanctuary. An inscription at the temple at Askalon dated to the second half of the first century C.E., on behalf of the council and the people honors Aulus Instuleius Tenax, a centurion of *legio X Fretensis*, who also served in the Jewish campaign, for his kindness to the town during its reconstruction after the Jewish war.[687] Another inscription dated to 191 C.E. testifies that the centurion Julius Germanus of *legio III Gallica* built *Tychaion* of Aere, a town about thirty miles south of Damascus. The inscription gives the centurion high honorary titles of "the benefactor and founder of Aere" (ὁ εὐεργέτης Αἰρησίων καὶ κτίστης).[688] In the first few centuries of the Common Era, this language was frequently applied to local dignitaries and imperial functionaries.[689] In this example, as well as in Luke 7, the centurion likely held an office in the imperial administration and thus wore both hats. Examples from Talmudic tradition also refer to the Roman military officers as patrons of Jewish individuals and communities, whereas the inscriptions of the period contain references to building of Jewish synagogues by Gentiles.[690]

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the dedication of his statue.

[687] D. G. Hogarth, "Greek Inscriptions from Askalon," *PEF* 54 (1922): 22. Hogarth reports that this was the same centurion, who on March 16, 65 C.E. scratched his name on the base of the statue of vocal Memnon at Thebes and declaring that he heard its voice. According to *CIL* 3.30, Tenax had achieved the rank of *primus pilus* with *legio XII Fulminata* in 65 C.E.

[688] *IGR* 3.1128. Stoll, *Religions*, 467, observes that the members of the military and civilian communities in the garrison towns of the Near East customarily attended the same temples, whereas in Egypt military camps even comprised temples already in existence and thus had soldiers integrated into cultic life of the local society.

[689] Arthur Darby Nock, "*Soter* and *Euergetes*," in *Essays on Religion and theAncient World* (ed. Zeph Stewart; Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 2:727–28.

[690] Ze'ev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 347–48; Goodman, *State and Society*, 142–44. *OGIS* 96 and 129 record a building of a προσευχή, a Jewish place of prayer, by Gentiles. *MAMA* 6:264 (*CIJ* 766) provides an example of a Gentile woman Julia Severa of Akmonia in Phrygia, who built a synagogue. Goodman, *State and Society*, 144, points to the rabbinic sources that express a view of Roman centurions as very wealthy people. For discussion of centurions' remuneration, see nn. 83, 118.

The second delegation of φίλοι, "friends," (7:6) is also unique to Luke's account. Although the friends are the centurion's messengers, they communicate his words directly as if the centurion himself does the speaking. In the speech, the centurion addresses Jesus as κύριε, Lord (also in Matthew 8:5). This can be understood simply as a sign of respect. However, the following emphasis on the centurion's unworthiness—underlined by Luke's careful word order—and the centurion's recognition of Jesus's supreme authority (7:8) suggest a profession of faith, as indeed Jesus acknowledges (7:9).[691]

There is an obvious contrast between the former exaltation of the centurion by the Jewish elders and the present self-affirmation of his unworthiness: οὗ γὰρ ἱκανός εἰμι ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην μου εἰσέλθῃς, "for I am not worthy for you to enter under my roof" (7:6).[692] The context suggests that the centurion's words οὗ γὰρ ἱκανός εἰμι specifically refer to his Gentile status and reflect his sensitivity to Jewish law, which restricted Jewish association with Gentiles.[693] In this interpretation, the words ἵνα ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην μου εἰσέλθης point to the specific prohibition disallowing Jews to enter Gentile homes (cf. Acts 10:28–29). In the opening clause of the next verse, διὸ οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἠξίωσα πρὸς σὲ ἐλθεῖν, "therefore, I neither considered myself worthy to come to you" (7:7), which is also particular to Luke, the centurion elaborates on the former proclamation of his

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[691] Johnson, *Luke*, 117.

[692] Gagnon, *Double Delegation*, 140. Gagnon notes a similar contrast that occurs in the story of centurion Cornelius of Acts 10. The Angel proclaims that Cornelius's prayers have been acknowledged by God (Acts 10:4, 31), and his messengers testify of his righteousness, which is confirmed by the Jews (10:22). Nevertheless, Cornelius prostrates himself before Peter (10:25).

[693] The word order in Luke 7:6, οὐ γὰρ ἱκανός (the reverse order of Matthew's text), lays additional emphasis on the centurion's assertion of unworthiness.

unworthiness to receive Jesus in his house, now presenting himself as being unfit even to approach Jesus. This Lukan insertion reinforces the notion of the centurion's humility and sensitivity to Jewish customs.[694]

In the broader context of Luke-Acts, the meaning of Luke's editorial modification in Luke 7:6–7 is illustrated by the statement made by Peter in the house of another centurion: ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὡς ἀθέμιτόν ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ Ἰουδαίῳ κολλᾶσθαι ἢ προσέρχεσθαι ἀλλοφύλῳ, "you yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jewish man to associate with or to visit a foreigner" (Acts 10:28). In view of this prohibition, it has been suggested that Luke's exclusion of any direct interaction between the centurion and Jesus through the introduction of two delegations relieves Jesus from any suspicion of visiting a house of a Gentile. Instead, it is argued, such an encounter with a Gentile is reserved for Peter, who, after receiving the vision that those previously rendered unclean are now cleansed by God, enters into the house of another centurion to bring the gospel of salvation to his household (Acts 10).[695]

It has to be noted, however, that in this story Jesus did not reveal any concern about violating Jewish customs, since he readily consented to visit the centurion's house (ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἐπορεύετο σὺν αὐτοῖς) and already was well on his way there (οὐ μακρὰν ἀπέχοντος ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας) when he was stopped by the second delegation (7:6). We cannot be certain if the Lukan Jesus ever had concern for keeping that specific law. But if

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[694] Addressing the question why Luke did not choose to convey the message of 7:6–8 through the first delegation of the Jewish elders, Nolland, *Luke*, 324, n. 4, suggests that "the double delegation protects the uniqueness of the centurion's faith...which would not be the case if the Jewish elders were responsible for the combined message." Gagnon, *Double Delegation*, 139, observes that "having the Jewish elders argue for his worthiness while at the same time conveying the centurion's own self-assessment of unworthiness (even if the worthiness is for healing and the unworthiness for visitation) would be confusing."

[695] So Nolland, *Luke*, 316–17.

he did, the commendation of the centurion by the Jewish elders as a benefactor of the Jewish people appears to be sufficient to overcome the legal restriction in the eyes of Jesus. In any case, the centurion's assertion of his unworthiness to meet Jesus despite the fact that Jesus already consented to visit his house serves to underscore the centurion's humbleness.[696]

The centurion's profession of his unworthiness to receive Jesus in his house sets up the next scene as it leads to the centurion's expression of his conviction that Jesus has the authority to heal remotely by merely saying a word (7:7b–8).[697] Speaking a word in an imperative would be a command, and the text makes it clear that giving a command is implied. Luke's centurion knows well what it means to be simultaneously under authority and in a position to give orders—the centurion is "stationed" (τασσόμενος) "under authority" (ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν) and has "soldiers" (στρατιώτας) and slaves under him, to whom he gives orders, and those orders are followed.[698] That is, the centurion could exercise authority over his subordinates because of his position in the military hierarchical structure, to which he was assigned by the higher authority of his superiors.

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[696] Gagnon, *Double Delegation*, 144, argues that the primary reason for splitting up the messages among two delegation was Luke's desire to show that Jesus was willing to enter the house of Gentile and thus to support Luke's message in favor of the evangelization of the Gentiles promoted in Acts. According to Gagnon, "the intervention of the Jewish elders on behalf of the centurion underscores the compatibility of the Gentile mission with the Jewish heritage on the basis of the pro-Jewish attitude of Gentile converts to the Christian faith."

[697] Only here in Luke's account is the term παῖς, "servant," used for the slave. In the words of the centurion, the change of terms distinguishes between the dying slave who was precious and the slave referred to in illustration of the centurion's authority.

[698] G. Zuntz, "The 'Centurion' of Capernaum and his Authority (Matt. VIII 5–13)," *JTS* 46 (1945): 183-86, argues that in Matt 5:9, the textual variant in the Old Syriac version points to the original Greek ἐν ἐξουσίαν, which would render the clause as "I am a man having authority." Zuntz's argument is not only untenable in view of the overwhelming textual evidence disproving his case, but also unnecessary, since the passage makes perfect sense as it stands in Greek.

The centurion has authority because he himself is under authority.[699] By this discourse into the structure of his chain of command, the centurion reveals his recognition of the reality that Jesus also occupies a position of authority, but in a hierarchy of a different kind. The following words of the centurion are an argument from lesser to greater: if the command of the centurion is executed, more so the word of the κύριος will be (cf. 7:6).[700] Through the expression of the centurion's confidence in Jesus's supreme authority over the powers responsible for his slave's illness, Luke highlights Jesus's status as the divine emissary—as God's word can heal, so can the word of Jesus.[701]

The centurion's faith in Jesus as a messenger of God elicits Jesus's amazement and his highest commendation—the faith displayed by the Gentile centurion surpassed the response of faith that Jesus was able to elicit in Israel, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὗρον (7:9).[702] The concluding report of healing is anticlimactic—Luke simply mentions that the returning delegation found the slave in good health (7:10). The point of the passage is clearly not the miracle of healing from a distance, but the

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[699] Paul S. Minear, *To Heal and to Reveal: The Prophetic Vocation According to Luke* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1976), 16–18, provides a structural analysis of the centurion's understanding of the role of authority in this context.

[700] Schneider, *Lukas*, 166. That is, the centurion asserts that the authority of God's prophet is greater than the authority of the Roman military official, and by implication that the command structure of God's delegate is superior to the command structure of the Roman army; see Minear, *To Heal*, 18. Since it was the emperor who was the army's commander-in-chief, this also implies that the status of Jesus is greater than the status of the emperor. Luke's explicit assertion to that effect in Acts 10:36 will be discussed below.

[701] Cf. Ps 107:20. In Luke 4:39, Jesus rebukes the fever causing it to depart. Luke 4:35 applies the same language to a case of exorcism. Acts 10:38 ascribes illnesses in general to the oppression of the devil.

[702] Nolland, *Luke*, 313, argues that Matthew, who does not mention any delegations, has likely abbreviated the original Q to emphasize that Jesus accepts Gentiles as Gentiles, without any mediation or third party commendation.

acknowledgement of the divine authority of Jesus by the Gentile centurion.[703] The centurion, with his extraordinary perception in recognizing Jesus as the divine emissary and his humble confession of faith, serves as a prototype of a true believer, favorably accepted by God—even though he does not belong to the God's chosen nation of Israel, God through Jesus accepts his faith and responds favorably.[704]

The account of the healing of the centurion's slave is followed by the story of the raising of the widow's son (7:11–17), which is also unique to Luke's Gospel. The two stories exhibit obvious parallelisms: the centurion and the widow are both in need of a miracle on behalf of someone who is of a great concern to them and who is terminally ill (the centurion's slave) or who is already dead (the widow's son); the centurion's recognition of Jesus's supreme authority as the divine emissary in the first account is followed by the crowd's recognition of Jesus as God's prophet who is channeling God's presence to the people in the second (7:16). Together, the two accounts in sequence present Jesus as God's prophet, who has the power to overcome death, and substantiate the assertion of verse 22: "the dead are raised."

The broader context of the Gospel shows Luke's intention to present these two stories from a certain perspective. In the beginning of his ministry (Luke 4:15–30), Jesus refers to the narratives concerning Elijah (4:25–26) and Elisha (4:27), comparing himself with these prophets of old (cf. 9:8), who were known to bestow God's blessings on Gentiles. The story of Elijah (2 Kings 17:8–24), who brought back to life the son of the widow in Zarephath of Sidon, foreshadows the story of Jesus raising the widow's son in

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[703] So Augustin George, "Guerison de l'esclave d'un centurion: Lc 7, 1–10," *AsSeign* 40 (1972): 76; Nolland, *Luke*, 318.

[704] See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 653.

Nain.[705] The story of Elisha (2 Kings 5:1–19), who performs a healing for the Syrian military official Naaman, prefigures the story of Jesus healing the centurion's slave.

It has been noted that the similarity between the healing of Naaman and the centurion's slave is only general. Both characters are officers in foreign armies who request a healing from a Jewish prophet without coming into direct contact with him, and who are granted a healing from a distance. However, the accounts differ significantly in their details. Naaman is himself sick. He does not send intermediaries to the healer—instead, the healer sends for him. He does not perform any acts of benevolence to the Jews, but brings treasures directly to Elisha seeking to obtain the healing in return. He does not amaze Elisha by his humility, but to the contrary, underscores his high status, and is humbled by Elisha. Naaman seeks a personal contact with the prophet, doubts the validity of the prophet's instructions, and finally gains faith only as the result of the miracle.[706]

Nevertheless, the direct reference to the miracle of Elisha in conjunction with the miracle of Elijah in Luke 4:27 and the placement of the story of the centurion directly prior to the story of the raising of widow's son (which has obvious similarities with the Elijah's miracle) strongly implies a connection between Jesus's actions and the actions of Elijah and Elisha, and thus serves to confirm Luke's point that Jesus was a mighty prophet of God. This literary goal is made explicit by the people's response that

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[705] Gowler, *Text*, 104, n. 41, points out that the echoes of 1 Kings 17:8–24 are particularly strong in this passage: the prophets both meet the widows at the gate of the city (1 Kings 17:10; Luke 7:12); the widows have the only son who dies (1 Kings 17:17; Luke 7:12); that the prophets resurrect the sons from the dead and return them to their mothers (1 Kings 17:23, Luke 7: 15); the people respond with acknowledgement of the prophet's relationship with God (1 Kings 17:24; Luke 7:16–17). A major difference between the two stories is that Elijah prays to God asking to bring the son back to life, whereas Jesus does it himself directly and authoritatively (1 Kings 17:21; Luke 7:14).

[706] See Gagnon, *Double Delegation*, 128, n. 16.

concludes the two miracles—the people called Jesus προφήτης μέγας ἠγέρθη ἐν ἡμῖν, "great prophet raised up among us," and recognized his ministry as God's visitation with his people (7:16).[707]

The affirmation of Jesus's ministry as the visitation of God was made earlier in Luke's narrative by John the Baptist (Luke 3:1–18). The narrative of 7:18–35, which follows the miracle stories, plays out the connection between the ministries of John and Jesus.[708] Luke makes a point that it is the religious outsiders and outcasts, including the Gentile soldiers of Luke 3:14, who were receptive to John's preaching before, and who recognize its fulfillment in Jesus's ministry now. To the contrary, the Pharisees and the lawyers, who refused John's message before, now failed to appreciate the significance of Jesus's ministry (7:29, 34). The concluding portion of the chapter, the story of the Pharisee and the sinful woman (7:36–50), serves as a final reminder that it is those who show love and faith—such as the centurion—that win favor with God.

To summarize, Roman army personnel continue to play a prominent part in affirming Jesus's role as God's messenger and in providing examples of the proper response to the gospel message. In the account of John's baptism in Luke 3, Gentile soldiers, in contrast to the Jewish leaders, accept John's call to repentance in anticipation of the arrival of God through his Messiah. Now in Luke 7, a Gentile centurion recognizes Jesus as God's Messiah who possesses divine power and authority. In both passages, the Roman military represents outsiders to Judaism who acknowledge God's work done

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[707] See Johnson, *Luke*, 120.

[708] Among others, Nolland, *Luke*, 313.

through Jesus and are, therefore, allowed to share in the blessings formerly reserved for the Jews alone.

The centurion of the Gospel of Luke foreshadows the centurion of Acts. Together both centurions serve as the prototype of the Gentile believer acceptable to God. Luke 7 already illustrates the principle proclaimed in Acts 10—οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήμτης ὁ θεός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστιν, "God does not show favoritism, but in every nation the one who fears him and does righteousness is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34–35). As the faith of the centurion of Luke 7 elicits the praise of God's prophet, so the faith of the centurion of Acts 10 receives the divine approval, which then becomes the main argument for the inclusion of Gentiles into the Christian church.

B. The Story of the Centurion Cornelius (Acts 10–11)

The fundamental importance of the first Gentile conversion in Acts 10 for the narrative of Luke-Acts has been widely recognized and does not need to be reasserted here.[709] Luke clearly shows his intention to emphasize the significance of the episode through the repetition of the story of Acts 10 in Acts 11, by connecting the story with the account of the birth of the church in Acts 2, and the reiteration of its main points at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. The story of Cornelius leads to the reassessment of the church's identity and to the initiation of the Christian mission to the Gentiles throughout the Empire all the way to its capital.[710]

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[709] Dennis R. MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 19, observes that the account of the conversion of Cornelius "is a pillar supporting Luke's entire literary and theological construction."

[710] Johnson, *Acts*, 186, points out that the entire section of Acts 10–15 "is dominated by the crisis

In the wider context of the book, the conversion of Cornelius marks the beginning of the final stage in the expansion of the gospel in the narrative of Acts. In Acts 2, the gospel was proclaimed to the Jews. In Acts 8:4–17, 25, it was preached to the Samaritans. This spatial advancement of the gospel reveals the gradual fulfillment of the plan for the apostolic mission outlined by Jesus in Acts 1:8—ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἔν τε Ἰερουσαλήμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς. The conversion stories of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26–39) and Paul (Acts 9:1–30) anticipate the fulfillment of the final clause of the pronouncement. The story of the eunuch, an exotic personage from a remote land, foresees the expansion of the gospel beyond Palestine.[711] The transformation of Paul from the violent persecutor of the church into the σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς, "elect vessel," destined to advance the Christian mission among Gentiles (Acts 9:15) anticipates the inauguration of that mission in the house of Cornelius.[712] The birth of the first Gentile church in the house of the Roman centurion provides justification to the Gentile mission, which is then validated by the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 and executed by Paul and his companions in the following chapters of the book. The story of Cornelius sets in motion the expansion of the church to Gentiles and launches the gospel to the final frontier defined in Acts 1:8, ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

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precipitated by Cornelius' and Peter's visions." Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 264, also notes that the issues concerning the validity of the acceptance of Gentiles raised in Acts 10 remain unresolved until Acts 15, whereas the controversy surrounding the following mission to Gentiles persists through the remainder of the book.

[711] Gaventa, *Acts*, 123.

[712] Gaventa, *Acts*, 123, observes the movement of the narrative: the account of the conversion of the centurion follows the conversion of Paul as a theological justification of his following activity as a missionary to the Gentiles. Following the story of Cornelius, the narrative returns to Paul (Acts 11:25).

Structurally, the story of Cornelius in Acts 10–11 can be divided into five subsections: (1) 10:1–8, the vision of Cornelius; (2) 10:9–16, the vision of Peter; (3) 10:17–23, the summons of Peter to Caesarea (4) 10:24–48, Peter's proclamation and the birth of the Gentile church; (5) 11:1–18, Peter's report to the Jerusalem church.[713] The account contains a series of parallel events that make clear that the story is a careful literary construction.[714] Repetitions underscore the most important points of the narrative. The vision of Cornelius is reported four times: in the original narration (10:3–6), in the report of the centurion's emissaries given to Peter (10:22), in the reiteration of his vision by Cornelius to Peter (10:30–33), and in Peter's report to the Jerusalem congregation (11:13–14). Likewise, Peter's vision is mentioned three times: in the original narration (10:9–16), in Peter's speech in the house of Cornelius (10:28), and in Peter's report to the Jerusalem church (11:5–10). The entire section of Acts 11:1–18 is a detailed reiteration of Acts 10, which would not be necessary if the author did not want to add additional emphasis to the story.[715] The length of the account is another indicator of its importance—overall, the story is the longest in Acts.[716]

The story begins with placing the account in Caesarea (10:1).[717] Considering the role that the story of Cornelius plays in the narrative of Acts, Luke's choice of this

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[713] See Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 447.

[714] Pervo, *Acts*, 265.

[715] Barrett, *Acts*, 1:491.

[716] The story of Cornelius in Acts 10–11 comprises sixty-six verses, not counting the recapitulation of the events in Acts 15:7–11. The second longest story of Acts, Paul's trip to Rome (27:1–28:16), contains sixty verses.

[717] In the narrative of Acts, Philip had already reached Caesarea with his preaching (8:40), and Saul had stopped there on his way to Tarsus (9:30). It will figure in the story again in 12:19; 18:22; 21:8, 16; 23:23, 33; 25:1, 4, 6, 13.

particular location is hardly coincidental. Built by a Jewish king in honor of a Roman Emperor, Caesarea Maritima was a Roman city in a Jewish land, and its Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants both claimed it as their own.[718] When Judaea passed under direct Roman rule, Caesarea became the seat of the Roman prefect and then of the procurator, and as such functioned as the Roman capital of Judaea.[719] During the Jewish War, the city served as the headquarters for the Roman army and was the place where Vespasian's troops declared him emperor.[720] The role of the city in the recent Jewish war and the establishment of the currently ruling imperial dynasty likely underscored its association with the Roman power for Luke's readers. Caesarea is a perfect fit for its role in the narrative as the site of the inauguration of the Gentile mission and the gateway between the Jewish land and the rest of the Empire in the movement of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome.

The *nomen* Cornelius originated from a Roman patrician family of *Cornelii.* The name became common after 82 B.C.E., when Lucius Cornelius Sulla freed thousands of slaves, who subsequently acquired his *nomen*.[721] It is likely, therefore, that Cornelius belonged to a family boasting over a century-old lineage of Roman citizens.[722] The use of

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[718] Cf. Josephus, *B.J.* 2.266–270; *A.J.* 20.173–177. According to *A.J.* 20.182–184 and *B.J.* 2.284ff., it was the Jewish-Gentile controversy in Caesarea that eventually led to the Jewish revolt against Rome; see the discussion in Chapter 3. Also see Lee I. Levine, "The Jewish-Greek Conflict in First Century Caesarea," *JJS* 25 (1975): 381–97; Lee I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (SJLA 7; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 14; Aryeh Kasher, "The *Isopoliteia* Question in Caesarea Maritima," *JQR* 68 (1977): 16-27.

[719] Tacitus, *Hist*, 2.78, refers to the city as the capital of Judaea.

[720] Josephus, *B.J.* 3:409–413.

[721] Appian, *Bell. civ*. 1.100. *CIL* 2-15 contains about 2,600 inscriptions attesting to the *nomen* of Cornelius, two of which come from Syria; see Antonia Lussana, "Osservazioni sulle inscrizioni di una gens Romana," *Epigraphica* 11 (1949): 33–43.

[722] The known names of centurions, including the name of Cornelius, reveal that they came from the families that obtained Roman citizenship in the somewhat distant past and so were believed to have

the *nomen* alone in Acts 10:1 reflects a practice of the Julio-Claudian period to omit the *cognomen* for military personnel.[723]

The next clause identifies Cornelius as ἑκατοντάρχης ἐκ σπείρης τῆς καλουμένης Ἰταλικῆς.[724] It means that Cornelius holds the rank of a centurion of an auxiliary cohort, likely *cohors II Italica voluntariorum civium Romanorum*.[725] The contemporary evidence attests to this cohort as a part of the Roman army in the region. Even though Cornelius's story takes place prior to the death of king Herod Agrippa in 44 C.E. (Acts 12:21–23), the placement of the Roman cohort in Caesarea is entirely possible, since the presence of Roman troops is attested in other client kingdoms of the Empire. Whereas auxiliary troops were normally recruited from the non-citizen population, the name of this particular cohort indicates that it was originally composed from citizen volunteers. Imperial donatives given to citizen auxiliary cohorts indicate that their status was comparable to the status of the legions. When stationed in a region for some time, citizen cohorts could replenish their ranks from local non-citizens. Thus, the mere fact that Cornelius served in a *cohors civium Romanorum* or was a centurion does not necessarily imply his Roman citizenship.[726] As discussed above, however, Cornelius was most likely a Roman citizen.

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stronger ties to Rome.

[723] Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*, 161; Levinskaja, *Dejanija*, 100. Notably, the centurion Julius of Acts 27:1 is also mentioned only by his *nomen*.

[724] Mark uses the Greek transliteration of the Latin name, κεντυρίων (15:39,44,45), Matthew uses ἑκατόνταρχος (8:5, 8), and Luke—ἑκατοντάρχης (Luke 7:2, 6; Acts 10:22). New Testament MSS provide variant readings. See the discussion of the Lukan terminology in Chapter 1.

[725] See Chapter 1 on *cohors II Italica voluntariorum civium Romanorum*.

[726] Some, including Broughton, *Roman Army*, 5:443, and Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 459, simply presuppose that the office of centurion implied Roman citizenship. However, that was not the case for auxiliary cohorts, since non-citizen centurions were also known.

In Acts 10:2, Luke begins by affirming the centurion's piety, associating it, as he did in case of the centurion in Luke 7, with the Jewish faith and Jewish nation. The centurion is called εὐσεβής, "pious" (also in 10:7) and φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, "fearing God." The piety of Cornelius is expressed in terms common to Jewish and Christian texts—he was ποιῶν ἐλεημοσύνας πολλὰς τῷ λαῷ καὶ δεόμενος τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ παντός, "giving alms generously to the [Jewish] people and praying to God continually."[727]

The expression φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν is applied to groups of Gentiles further in Acts along with variant forms, σεβούμενοι or σεβούμενοι τὸν θεόν.[728] This terminology has led to a variety of scholarly positions concerning the existence of Gentiles with the particular religious status of followers of the Jewish religion, who were not circumcised proselytes fully observing Torah, but who nevertheless accepted Jewish monotheism and observed Torah to some extent.[729] Literary sources furnish some evidence suggesting that such Gentile "God fearers" did exist.[730] Josephus mentions σεβούμενοι τὸν θεόν,

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[727] Giving alms and prayer are mentioned in Exod 25:29; 27:20; Lev 24:2, 8; 2 Sam 9:7, 10; 1 Chr 16:37, 40; 2 Chr 9:1; Ps 15:8; 24:15; 33:1; 33:17; 39:11; 50:3; Tob 12:8; Matt 6:2–6; *Did.* 15:4; 2 *Clem.* 16:4. The term τῷ λαῷ designates Jewish people; cf. Acts 2:47, 3:9, 3:11, 12, 23; 4:1, 2, 8, 10, 17, 21, 25, 27; 5:12, 13, 20, 25, 26, 34, 37; 6:8, 12; 7:17, 34; 10:2, 41, 42; 12:4, 11; 13:15, 17, 24, 31; 19:4; 21:28, 30, 36, 39, 40; 23:5; 26:17, 23; 28:17, 26, 27.

[728] Acts 10:22, 35 and 13:16, 26 has φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, Acts 16:14 and 18:7—σεβούμενοι τὸν θεόν, Acts 13:50; 17:17—σεβούμενοι, Acts 13:43—σεβούμενοι προσήλυτοι, and Acts 17:4—σεβούμενοι Ἕλληνες.

[729] Pervo, *Acts*, 332, n. 12, provides the bibliography for scholarly discussion of the terminology and its meaning.

[730] LXX uses the adjective θεοσεβής seven times, applying it to Jews: Exod 18:21; Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; Jdt 11:17, 4 Macc 15:28; 16:12. The use of θεοσεβής applied to non-Jews with the meaning of "pious" or "devout" is found in literary sources beginning with Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.37. Josephus uses it six times, applying the term to both Jews and non-Jews: *A.J.* 7.130, 153 (about biblical David), 12.284 (Mattathias about Jewish rebels); 14.308 (Mark Anthony about Hyrcanus); 20.195 (about Poppaea, the consort of Nero, who was supportive of Judaism); *C. Ap.* 2.140 (general meaning of devout or religious). In the New Testament θεοσεβής, which denotes a righteous person, is only found in John 9:31.

apparently Gentiles, who made a contribution to the Jerusalem temple.[731] Other literary references indicate the existence of Gentile followers of the Jewish religion without using this terminology.[732] Inscriptional evidence provides further proof of Gentile sympathizers of Judaism, attesting to the Gentile θεοσεβής in the context of the Jewish synagogue. Thus, a first century C.E. emancipation inscription from Panticapaeum (modern Kerch, Ukraine) mentions a synagogue comprising Jews and θεὸν σέβων.[733] Later inscriptions, including a famous stele from Aphrodisias in Asia Minor, further attest to application of the term to Gentiles.[734]

Based on this inscriptional evidence, some have concluded that there was a certain form of membership in the synagogue available to Gentiles, who, in some cases,

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[731] Josephus, *A.J.* 14.110.

[732] Josephus, *B.J.* 7.45; *C. Ap.* 2.123; Philo, *QE* 2.2; Juvenal, *Sat.* 14:96–108.

[733] *CIJ* 2.683a; Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 155. The inscription urges the emancipated ex-slave to continue to visit the synagogue, which also provides the protection against re-enslavement.

[734] Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-fearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary: Texts from the Excavations at Aphrodisias* (CPhS Supp. 12; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), published an inscription from a stele found on the site, which confirmed the existence of the Gentile θεοσεβής. The stele appears to be Jewish, since two of its three lists contain many biblical names and the word προσήλυτος as a designation of status. However, the sixty-three names given in the list of the θεοσεβής do not appear to be Jewish. Also see D.-A. Koch, "The God-Fearers between Facts and Fiction: Two Theosebeis Inscriptions from Aphrodisias and their Bearing for the New Testament," *ST* 60 (2006): 62–90; Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 153–164. For arguments against the existence of the technical term θεοσεβής (prior to the publication of the Aphrodisias inscription), see A. Thomas Kraabel, "The God-fearers Meet the Beloved Disciple," in *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (ed. Helmut Koester et al.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 276–84; A. Thomas Kraabel, "The Disappearance of the 'God-Fearers'" *Numen* 28 (1981): 113–126; A. Thomas Kraabel, "Synagoga Caeca: Systematic Distortion in Gentile Interpretation of Evidence for Judaism in the Early Christian Period," in *"To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews, "Others" in Late Antiquity* (ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs; Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1985), 219–46; A. Thomas Kraabel, "Immigrants, Exiles, Expatriates, and Missionaries," in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World: Essays Honoring Dieter Georgi* (ed. Lukas Bormann, Kelly Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger; NovTSup 74; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 71–88; A. Thomas Kraabel, "The God-Fearers—a Literary and Theological Invention," *BAR* (1986): 47–53.

were an integral part of the worship community.[735] Others have suggested that the name of "God-fearer" could be applied to anyone who provided support for the Jewish community, whether for religious, humanitarian, political or other reasons.[736] Indeed, the centurion of Luke 7 was affirmed by the Jewish community as the one who loves the Jewish people and is deemed worthy to benefit from the Jewish healer (that is, from the healing power of the Jewish God) because of his act of benevolence, not because of his religious believes (Luke 7:4–5). The sources attesting to Gentile benefactions toward the Jewish community, including building synagogues, show no indication that the benefactors shared Jewish beliefs.[737] Regardless of the precise identity and religious inclinations of the Gentile "God-fearers" in the above sources, the significance of the terminology applied to Cornelius in Acts 10:2 is clear. Cornelius prays to the Jewish God and performs acts of benevolence to the Jewish community.

The text further indicates that Cornelius feared God σὺν παντὶ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, "with his entire household." The members of his household included his οἰκέται mentioned in Acts 10:7, apparently his slaves. Acts 10:24 speaks of his συγγενεῖς, indicating that Cornelius had a family.[738] The reference to the centurion's family deserves special attention, since it is known that Roman soldiers on active duty were forbidden by law to marry. The earliest reference to the legal prohibition reports that in 44 C.E.

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[735] So Trebilco, *Jewish Communities*, 165.

[736] Pervo, *Acts* 333, points out that the Aphrodisias inscription speaks of the Gentile God-fearers in the context of their support of a certain Jewish enterprise without indicating their inclination for Jewish religious beliefs.

[737] For a survey of types of interest in Judaism and various meanings of the term "God-fearer," see Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 146–48, 168–74.

[738] Broughton, *Roman Army*, 5:443, points out, that since Cornelius is surrounded by family and friends, he appears to be retired and settled in Caesarea; also Barrett, *Acts*, 1:449.

Claudius τοῖς τε στρατευομένοις, ἐπειδὴ γυναῖκας οὐκ ἐδύναντο ἔκ γε τῶν νόμων ἔχειν, τὰ τῶν γεγαμηκότων δι καιώματα ἔδωκε, "gave the rights of married men to the soldiers, since, by the law, they were not permitted to have wives."[739] It was suggested that Claudius was alleviating the effects of the ban introduced by Augustus as a part of his military reforms conducted after the civil wars.[740] The evidence demonstrates, however, that even though the soldiers could not have wives *de jure*, they had them *de facto*.[741] Women and children lived both in the settlements outside the forts and, as the excavated artifacts from the military forts show, some may even have resided inside the camp proper.[742]

It is unclear whether the ban on marriage applied to centurions.[743] The

[739] Dio, 60.24.3. Brian Campbell, "The Marriage of Soldiers under the Empire," *JRS* 68 (1978): 153, points out that the existence of the ban is confirmed by a group of *papyri* dating to 113–142 C.E., which contain the judgments of Roman officials in Egypt on the legal implications of the marriage ban. In particular, Rutilius Lupus, who was the prefect of Egypt in 113–117 C.E., affirms that it is not possible for a soldier to marry. Campbell observes that while all identifiable cases in these papyri deal with auxiliaries, the statement seems to include the legions as well. The reference from Dio also implies that all soldiers were bound by the marriage prohibition.

[740] Cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 24.1. Also Phang, *Marriage*, 16–52, 86–133, 326–383; Campbell, *Marriage*, 154.

[741] Dio 56.20.2–5, notes that "not a few women and children and a large cortege of servants" followed the marching column of Varus when he led the Roman legions to annihilation in 9 B.C.E. Wilhem Liebenam, "Exercitus," PW 6:1676, observes that whereas the law prohibited soldiers to marry, lax handling of discipline allowed them to live together with their women. Phang, *Marriage*, 43, notes that in the epitaphs, the soldiers and their women present themselves as husband and wife.

[742] Penelope Allison, "Soldiers' Families in the Early Roman Empire," in *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (ed. Beryl Rawson; Oxford: Blackwell, 2011), 163, 181; Agnieszka Tomas, "Reading Gender and Social Life in Military Spaces (Pls. 173–175)," in *Światowit: Annual of the Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw 8 (49)/a* (ed. Franciszek M. Stępniowski. Warsaw: Institute of Archaeology of the University of Warsaw, 2011), 139–52.

[743] Phang, *Marriage*, 129–32, notes the absence of direct evidence that would indicate exactly which ranks were affected by the marriage ban. She argues, nevertheless, that centurions would be affected just as the common soldiers.

inscriptional evidence shows some of them as having families.[744] A centurion's wages were sufficient to support a family, and his living quarters within the camp were adequate in size to accommodate it.[745] In particular, the excavations at the fort of Vindonissa in the province of Germania Superior (modern Windisch, Switzerland) have provided evidence for the domicile of the families of centurions within the fortress in the end of the first century C.E.[746] Therefore, Cornelius did not have to be retired from the army to have a household, and the reference to a soldier under his command (10:7) suggests that the centurion was, in fact, on active duty.[747]

The appearance of an angel to Cornelius in 10:3 is reminiscent of the angelophany experienced by the priest Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11–20). In the

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[744] *ILS* 2662; *AE* 1960, 28, contain inscriptions, where centurions refer to their *uxores*. D. R. Wilson and R. P. Wright, "Roman Britain in 1963: I. Sites Explored; II. Inscriptions," *JRS* 54 (1964): 178, cite an inscription on an altar, dedicated by the wife of Flavius Verecundus, a centurion of *legio VI Victrix* posted on the Antonine Wall in the second century C.E. Lindsay Allason-Jones, *Women in Roman Britain* (London: British Museum Publications, 1989), 57–59, also observes that the families of centurions are mentioned on tombstones.

[745] Phang, *Marriage*, 131, suggests that the marriages of centurions could have been tolerated, because centurions were fewer in number than ordinary soldiers and had means to support a family. Harald von Petrikovits, *Die Innenbauten römischer Legionslager während der Prinzipatzeit* (Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademi der Wissenschaften Band 56; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1975), 62, observes that certain houses in the camp, presumably occupied by centurions, were larger than the accommodation of ordinary soldiers and sometimes had luxurious features, such as under-floor heating, kitchens and baths, painted walls, and mosaic floors. Allason-Jones, *Women*, 58, also observes that these houses were sufficient in size to accommodate a family. Also see Hoffmann, *Quarters*, 110; Mark Hassall, "Homes for Heroes: Married Quarters for Soldiers and Veterans," in *Roman Army as a Community: Including Papers of a Conference Held at Birkbeck College, University of London on 11-12 January, 1997* (ed. Adrian Goldsworthy and Ian Haynes. JRASup 34; Portsmouth, R.I.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1999), 35.

[746] Jürgen Trumm and Regine Fellman Brogi, "Mitten im Lager geboren—Kinder und Frauen im römischen Legionslager Vindonissa," in *Frauen und römisch Militär: Beiträge eines rundes Tisches in Xanten vom 7. bis 9. Juli 2005* (ed. Urich Brandl; British Archaeological Reports International Series 1759; Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008), 102–19, reports that the skeletal remains of at least three infants have been excavated in association with a centurion's house inside the legionary fortress of Vindonissa in modern Switzerland. Thomas Pauli-Gabi and Jürgen Trumm, *Ausgrabungen in Vindonissa im Jahr 2003* (Jahrbericht der Gesellschaft Pro Vindonissa; Brugg: Vindonissa-Museum, 2004): 45–49, identify these remains as the children of the centurion who shared the house with his family.

[747] Since, as I will argue, Cornelius represents a prototypical Gentile believer for the rest of Acts, the fact that he has a family makes him a better fit for that role.

Gospel, the angel announced the coming of the new era in the salvation of Israel (Luke 1:16). Here, the appearance of the angel anticipates the inauguration of the mission for the salvation of Gentiles. The reference to the ninth hour of the day implies that Cornelius was following the customary Jewish time of prayer.[748] This specific time of the day indicates that Cornelius's vision took place in the broad daylight and thus contributes to the reality and veracity of his experience.[749]

The next verse elaborates on the devotion of Cornelius consistent with traditional Jewish piety and indicates that the Jewish God recognized the piety of the centurion. The angel reveals to Cornelius that his prayers and alms ascended as a μνημόσυνον, "memorial offering," before God. The LXX employs μνημόσυνον to translate Hebrew terms used for the cereal offering to God—the odor of the sacrifies makes God remember the worshiper.[750] In the period under consideration and specifically after the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 C.E. (that is, when the book of Acts was composed), pious deeds, such as prayer and almsgiving, became the spiritual sacrifices offered instead of the temple worship.[751] In this context, the Gentile centurion offers sacrifices comparable to the Jewish cultic worship that are acceptable to God.

Having received instructions to send for Peter (10:5–6), Cornelius dispatched δύο τῶν οἰκετῶν καὶ στρατιώτην εὐσεβῆ τῶν προσκαρτερούντων αὐτῷ, "two household

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[748] Cf. Acts 3:1.

[749] Johnson, *Acts*, 182, points out that such visions are not limited to the biblical tradition, but are also frequently found in Hellenistic novels.

[750] Lev 2:2, 9, 16; 5:12; 6:15; Ps 111:6; Sir 38:11; 45:16.

[751] Johnson, *Acts*, 183, points out the references to that effect in the Jewish (Tob 12:12; *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* 4; *Tanchuma Wayera* 1; *1QS* 8:1–9; *4QFlor* 1:1–6) and New Testament (Phil 4:18; Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15–16; 1 Pet 2:5) sources.

servants and a pious soldier of those attending him." (10:7–8). The οἰκέται are apparently the slave members of Cornelius's household. The fact that Cornelius gives orders to a soldier indicates that the centurion is on active duty, even though he has a family. The expression τῶν προσκαρτερούντων αὐτῷ, literally "of those attending him," could refer either to the soldier alone or include the οἰκέται. These servants from the centurion's household as well as the soldier could be part of the centurion's staff employed for administrative tasks.[752] The soldier is called pious—the same term εὐσεβής was applied to Cornelius himself in 10:2, which implies that the soldier shared the religious values of his commanding officer.

The following section of Acts 10:9–16 concerns the vision of Peter, which complements the vision of Cornelius and prepares Peter for the visit to a house of a Gentile. Later in the chapter, this vision of the unclean food that God has cleansed will lead Peter to the understanding that formerly unclean Gentile people are now cleansed by God.

The next section of Acts 10:17–23a bridges the visions of Cornelius and Peter through the messengers sent by the centurion to summon Peter to Caesarea. Just as Peter is pondering the meaning of the vision he just experienced, the messengers appear at his door (10:17–18). The Spirit instructs Peter to come along with the messengers, since it was God who through the angel instructed Cornelius to seek Peter (vv. 19–20). This directive completes the literary symmetry that underscores the divine coordination of the entire event: both Cornelius and Peter receive a vision from God and both are instructed by God to seek the other. Answering Peter's question about the reason for their visit, the

[752] See Chapter 1 for the discussion of Roman military personnel involvement in administration.

messengers explain who sent them and why (10:21–22). They describe the centurion as ἀνὴρ δίκαιος καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, μαρτυρούμενός τε ὑπὸ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους τῶν Ἰουδαίων, "a man righteous and fearing God, of whom the entire Jewish people bear testimony."[753] The description of Cornelius as δίκαιος καὶ φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν is an exact match to the characteristic found in 10:2 apart from the substitution of δίκαιος for εὐσεβής. In both cases, the adjectives describe a righteous person.[754] Once Peter has received the instructions from the Spirit and has heard the story of Cornelius, he understands the meaning of his vision (cf. 10:28; 34–35) and is now willing to associate with Gentiles—he invites the messengers into the house to spend the night (10:23).

The last section of the chapter, Acts 10:24–48, narrates the events in the house of Cornelius during Peter's visit. In anticipation, Cornelius calls συγγενεῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἀναγκαίος φίλους, "his relatives and intimate friends" (10:24).[755] His relatives and closest friends, along with the οἰκέται (10:7), would comprise his extended household, already described as pious and God-fearing (10:2). At the end of the section, the assembly is referred to as τὰ ἔθνη, "the Gentiles" (10:45).

As Peter approaches the house, Cornelius meets him, falls at his feet, and prostrates before him (10:25).[756] The act of obeisance (προσκύνησις) is incredible in view

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[753] Cf. the usage of the "entire Jewish people" in 1 Macc 10:25; 11:30, 33; Josephus, *A.J.* 12.135; 14.245.

[754] Cf. Acts 10:35. The assertion that the entire Jewish nation bears witness about the centurion strongly alludes to Luke 7:4–5, where the representatives of the local Jewish people bear good witness about another centurion.

[755] Here the adjective ἀναγκαίος, literally "necessary," carries the same meaning as Latin *necessarius* and denotes the intimate ties of friendship; see BDAG, 60.

[756] The D-text considerably embellishes the beginning of the verse: "As Peter was approaching Caesarea, one of his slaves ran on ahead and announced he had come. Cornelius got to his feet and met him."

of the high position in the social hierarchy that a centurion would have held. Here it indicates Luke's intention to show that the centurion viewed Peter, whom he has known to be a divine emissary (cf. 10:33), as a holy being.[757] This authorial intent is clearly seen from Peter's immediate affirmation of his humanity in protest, ἀνάστηθι· καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπός εἰμι (10:26).[758] The purpose of the scene is to prepare the reader for the upcoming proclamation of the sole lordship of Jesus (10:36). When Peter enters the house, he finds many Gentiles gathered there (10:27). It is apparent that the presence of a Jew in a Gentile house was a serious issue, as Peter is about to explain his actions here (10:28) and then again before the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem in the following chapter (cf. 11:2–4). According to Peter's assertion (ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε), the segregation rule that ἀθέμιτόν ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ Ἰουδαίῳ κολλᾶσθαι ἢ προσέρχεσθαι ἀλλοφύλῳ, "it is unlawful for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner," was known to non-Jews.[759] In justification of his presence, Peter explains the meaning of his vision in Acts 10:9–16: "no human should be called profane or unclean" (10:28).

Even though Peter already knows about the purpose of his invitation from the messengers (10:21–22), Luke here makes him repeat the question in order to recite the vision of Cornelius a third time (10:29–33), thereby reemphasizing its importance to the reader. The concluding words suggest that the centurion viewed the presence of God's emissary as the presence of God himself—πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πάρεσμεν—

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[757] For Hellenistic literary examples of performing προσκύνησις to human beings thought to be belonging to a superhuman realm, see BDAG, 882. In Luke-Acts, προσκύνησις is reserved for God (Luke 4:7–8; Acts 8:27; 24:11) and Jesus (Acts 24:52).

[758] Cf. similar rejection of divine honors by Paul and Barnabas in Lystra in Acts 14:15.

[759] E.g. Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5, writing of the Jews, says, *separati epulis, discreti cubilibus*. For the usage of the term ἀθέμιτόν, cf. 2 Macc 6:5; 7:1; 10:34.

and the following message of Peter as the communication God commanded Peter to deliver—ἀκοῦσαι πάντα τὰ προστεταγμένα σοι ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου. This further clarifies the act of prostration of Cornelius before Peter in Acts 10:25.

The following section of Acts 10:34–43 contains the proclamation of Peter before the assembly of the Gentiles.[760] In the beginning of his speech, Peter provides the rationale for his interpretation of his vision—God showed him that no human being should be called profane or unclean (10:28) because God shows no partiality, but in every nation accepts the one who fears God and practices righteousness (10:34–35). These criteria of acceptance fit precisely the characteristic given to Cornelius and his household earlier (10:2, 22).[761] After this short introduction, which affirms that the Gentiles gathered at the house of Cornelius are acceptable to God, Peter delivers his sermon.

The sermon encapsulates the ministry of Jesus and the apostles in Luke-Acts. In the first sentence, Peter makes a profound statement: τὸν λόγον [ὃν] ἀπέστειλεν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ εὐαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος, "[he] sent the message to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ: this one is the Lord of all!" (10:36) In so doing, Peter presents a succinct summary of the gospel as a message of peace proclaimed through Jesus Christ, and declares Jesus as the universal

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[760] Pervo, *Acts*, 227, points out that the structure of vv. 34–43 displays symmetry with the description of the missions of Christ and the apostle at the center:

A. vv. 34b–35. God discriminates on the basis of conduct, not ethnicity.
B. v. 36a. The message came to Israel first, through Jesus.
C. v. 36b. Christ is Lord of all.
D. vv. 37–40. The mission of Jesus.
D′. vv. 41–42a. The mission of the apostles.
C′. v. 42b. God has made Christ judge of all.
B′. v. 43a. The message of the prophets.
A′. v. 43b. Faith in Christ is the criterion.

[761] The terminology of acceptance, δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστιν, is cultic; cf. LXX Lev 1:3; 19:5; Isa 56:7 (about acceptance of Gentile offerings).

Lord.[762] Despite certain translation choices, οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος is hardly peripheral to Peter's point.[763] To the contrary, the use of the demonstrative pronoun οὗτος strongly suggests emphatic affirmation of the identity of Jesus Christ as πάντων κύριος: this one (and not someone else) is the Lord of all.[764]

The implied counterpart of this assertion emerges from the historical and literary context of Acts. The only other κύριος of the world mentioned in the book apart from God and Jesus is the Roman emperor (Acts 25:26).[765] Contemporary evidence, both literary and archaeological, shows the universal scope of the application of the title κύριος or *dominus* to the emperor. Among Greco-Roman writers, Epictetus speaks of the emperor as ὁ παντῶν κύριος καῖσαρ.[766] Lucan, possibly applying the contemporary terminology of the mid-first century C.E. to the late Republic, refers to Julius Caesar as *dominus mundi*, "the Lord of the world."[767] Martial calls Domitian *omni terrarium*

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[762] Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 463–64, discusses possible readings of the statement. First, πάντων can be a genitive of neuter πάντα, "everything," or as genitive of masculine πάντες, "everyone," pointing out that in this context the latter is preferred; also Barrett, *Acts*, 1:522. Second, even though the pronoun οὗτός can grammatically refer to τὸν λόγον, "the word," such a reading would be nonsensical, and therefore its antecedent has to be Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Johnson, *Acts*, 192, also argues for the latter reading, drawing a comparison with Rom 9:5 and 10:12.

[763] Several commentators and translations interpret the clause οὗτός ἐστιν πάντων κύριος as parenthetical; so KJV, ASV, RSV, NASB, Barrett, *Acts*, 1:489, 522; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 458, 463; Gaventa, *Acts*, 170.

[764] Cf. Acts 2:36, which emphasizes that it is precisely this Jesus whom God made Lord and Christ. C. Kavin Rowe, "Luke-Acts and the Imperial Cult: A Way Through the Conundrum?" *JSNT* 27 (2005): 291, points out the force of Luke's choice of the demonstrative pronoun from other available options.

[765] This is the only time in the New Testament that the emperor is called κύριος. Overall, the term κύριος is employed about two hundred times in Luke-Acts. The vast majority of uses refer to God or Jesus. The other references include masters in the parables of Luke 12–14, 16, 19–20; the angel of God as addressed by Cornelius in Acts 10:4; Paul and Silas as addressed by the jailer in Acts 16:30; and the masters of a girl telling the future in Acts 16:16, 19.

[766] *Diatr.* 4.1.12.

[767] Lucan, 9.20

domino deoque, "the Lord and God of the entire world."[768] Suetonius indicates that Domitian was customarily addressed *dominus et deus noster*, "our Lord and God," both in writing and orally.[769] Jewish sources display this usage as well. Philo addresses Caligula as κύριος, while Josephus applies the title to Titus.[770] Inscriptional evidence confirms this practice: numerous *papyri* and *ostraka* call Nero κύριος, and an inscription from Boeotia honors him with the title of ὁ τοῦ παντὸς κόσμου κύριος Νέρων.[771]

The affirmation of the lordship of the Roman emperor took place on the battlefield. The imperial hegemony over the world was rooted in emperor's ability to achieve military victories, whether in order to expand the limits of the Empire or to uphold the Roman rule within the existing borders by effectively handling external and internal threats. As the world was perceived to exist within the framework of the divine order, this military prowess was interpreted as evidence of a particular relationship between the emperor and the gods. Victory constituted the essential proof of the divine favor manifested through the supernatural power of *Victoria* bestowed upon the commander-in-chief.[772] Imperial propaganda developed this theme and presented specific manifestations of *Victoria* in various conquests—*Gallia Capta*, *Aegyptus Capta*, *Iudaea Capta*—as a personal attribute of the victor— *Victoria Caesaris*, *Victoria Caesaris*

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[768] *Epig*. 8.2.5–6

[769] *Dom.* 13.2.

[770] Philo, *Legat.* 286; 356; Josephus, *B.J.* 6.134.

[771] *SIG*^{3} 2.814, Ins. 30–31.

[772] J. Rufus Fears, "The Theology of Victory at Rome: Approaches and Problems," *ANRW* 2.17:742. The article provides a useful survey of the evolution of the ideology of *Victoria* in the Roman state and association of this concept with the emperor. Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 69–70, discusses the inscriptions from Asia Minor which identify divine providence and blessings with the person of Augustus.

Augusti Imperatoris, *Victoria Imperatoris Caesaris Vespasiani Augusti*.[773] Since victories upheld peace in the Empire, *Pax* and *Victoria* were intrinsically linked and presented as the benefits brought about through the supernatural qualities of the *princeps*.[774] In other words, the emperor was perceived to possess special divine favor manifested by his victories on the battlefield, and thus he personally guaranteed the wellbeing of the Roman state.[775]

The sources devoted to the Flavian victory in Judaea, a recent event at the time of the publication of Luke's works and a frequent reference in the prophecies of the Gospel of Luke as discussed above, offer a vivid illustration of the use of such an ideology of military victory for substantiating the universal lordship of the emperor. Contemporary literary witnesses present the Jewish campaign as the restoration of peace and security in the Empire, whereas the *Iudaea Capta* motif was popular on the coins minted by every Flavian emperor including Domitian, who did not himself participate in the war.[776] Uniquely, even the Jewish Messianic expectations underwent reinterpretation in the context of the rise of the *Flavii* through the victory in the Jewish campaign. Thus, Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius speak of a prophecy from the Jewish writings that predicted a rise of the ruler of the world from the land of the Jews and apply the

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[773] *CIL* 9.5904; 10.3816; 6515; Fears, *Theology of Victory*, 745. Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 293–94, points out that after Nero's death, each of the following three emperors actively exploited the concept of the imperial *Victoria*.

[774] Fears, *Theology of Victory*, 807. As Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 463–64, notes, the meaning of "peace" is broader than merely "the absence of war"—it expresses the state of well-being that is granted by the divinity and brings harmony, order, security, and prosperity. For the Hebrew Bible background of the concept, see Isa 48:18; 52:7; 54:10; Ezek 34:25–29; Ps 29:11; 85:8–10; Nah 1:15.

[775] Fears, *Theology of Victory*, 814.

[776] Suetonius, *Vesp.* 1.1; Josephus, *B.J.* 7.157–158. See n. 503 for examples of the role of the victory in the Jewish war in the Flavian propaganda.

prediction to Vespasian, whom the army proclaimed emperor in the Judaean city of Caesarea.[777]

The affirmation of the lordship of the Roman emperor through his victories on the battlefield meant that in practical terms this lordship was based on his army's ability to establish and to uphold it.[778] It is not a surprise, therefore, that beginning with Augustus the emperors made efforts to strengthen the ties between the army and the imperial household.[779] At the beginning of their service, the soldiers swore the *sacramentum*, the oath of allegiance to the emperor. The bond established by the oath was sacred and compared in the contemporary literature to giving an oath to the gods.[780] Since the time of Augustus, the oath was repeated annually and, probably already in the first half of the first century C.E., was included in the army's annual calendar. In addition to the yearly *sacramentum*, the soldier was engaged in numerous celebrations of the imperial cult on an annual cycle throughout the entire length of his service. Of the forty-one entries in the surviving section of the calendar preserved in the *Feriale Duranum*, twenty-seven relate to the imperial cult, including those honoring deified emperors.[781] Garrisoned throughout the Empire, the army was, therefore, a vehicle that introduced the imperial cult to the

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[777] Josephus, *B.J.* 6.312–13; Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.13.1–2 (considers both Vespasian and Titus as the fulfillment of the Jewish prophecy); Suetonius, *Vesp.* 4.5.

[778] The speech of king Agrippa II before the Jewish insurgents in Josephus, *B.J.* 2.345–404 is an example of the affirmation of the universal lordship of the Romans through their legions.

[779] See Chpater 1 for the discussion of the role of the Roman army as the basis of the imperial power.

[780] Plutarch, *Sull.* 27.4; Livy 26.48.12; 28.27.4; Vegetius 2.5; Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.14.15.

[781] The evidence suggests that the calendar already existed in some form in the first century C.E. and was binding for the Roman troops throughout the Empire; see n. 94.

indigenous population.[782] This would naturally happen at administrative/military sites such as Caesarea, where soldiers and civilians lived closely together.

The setting of the Cornelius episode in Caesarea makes Luke's allusion to the divinity of the emperor even more evident as the city was designed and built as the Palestinian center of the imperial cult. The magnificent ναὸς Καίσαρος erected by king Herod the Great conspicuously stood on a height opposite the mouth of the harbor and contained colossal statues of Augustus and Roma.[783] The influence of Caesarea as the center of the imperial cult in the region increased as the city became the seat of the Roman governor and the headquarters of the Roman military garrison in Judaea.[784] The literary and archeological sources provide evidence of the Roman administration's involvement in promoting of the imperial cult in the province. The inscription of Pontius Pilate found in Caesarea testifies to his dedication of the *Tiberieum* there.[785] According to contemporary sources, the efforts of the prefect in promoting the imperial cult went

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[782] Tacitus, *Hist*. 1.55. As Pliny the Younger, *Epist*. 10.52–53, 100–103 demonstrates, the provincials could join the troops in giving the oath of allegiance to the emperor on his birthday. This shows that the emperor's cult provided a link between the military and the provincials.

[783] Josephus, *B.J.* 1.414. In *A.J.* 15.339, Josephus indicates that the temple was visible to sailors at great distance from the harbor. Philo, *Legat.* 305, refers to the temple by its Greek term, ὁ Σεβαστεῖον. Archaeological excavations confirm the prominent architectural presence of the imperial cult in Caesarea; see Kenneth G. Holum, "The Temple Platform: Progress Report on the Excavations," in *Caesarea Papers* (ed. Kenneth G. Holum, Avner Raban and Joseph Patrich; JRASup 35; Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 1999), 2:13–40; Lisa C. Kahn, "King Herod's Temple of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea Maritima," in *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (ed. Avner Raban and Kenneth G. Holum; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 141, 145; Heidi Hänlein-Schäfer, *Veneratio Augusti: Eine Studie zu den Tempeln des ersten römischen Kaisers* (Rome: Bretschneider, 1985), 201–3; Peter Richardson, "Archaeological Evidence for Religion and Urbanism in Caesarea Maritima", in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Terence L. Donaldson; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 11–34; R. Jackson Painter, "Greco-Roman Religion in Caesarea Maritima," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Caesarea Maritima* (ed. Terence L. Donaldson; Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 110–12.

[784] For discussion of the status of Judaea and the titles of the local Roman governors, see n. 530, 531.

[785] See n. 531 for the references.

beyond the borders of the city. Philo reports that in the palace of Herod at Jerusalem, Pilate set up the votive shields in honor of Tiberius that most likely had carried a honorific inscription calling Tiberius *Caesar divi Augusti filius*, thus referring to Augustus as a god and to Tiberius—as a son of a god.[786] Josephus relates that Pilate transferred Caesarean troops to Jerusalem for the winter and thus introduced Roman military standards bearing images of Caesar into the city.[787] The profound religious significance of this action was made evident by the intensity of the reaction of the Jerusalem Jews. The episode of the military standards illustrates both the prominence of the imperial cult in the military and the army's role in its dissemination through other regions—as the military units moved about on various duties, the army carried the symbols and the rites of the imperial cult throughout the Empire.

In light of the above, Luke's declaration of Jesus as the bringer of peace and the πάντων κύριος to Cornelius in Caesarea has a particular significance. Peter makes the proclamation in the center of the imperial cult in the region and delivers it to a Roman centurion—the principal representative of the Roman army, essential both in the affirmation and dissemination of the imperial cult. Through the centurion in Caesarea, Luke appropriates the principal assets of the emperor's cult and uses them to assert the lordship of Christ.[788]

The following verses of Acts 10:37–39 provide a brief outline of Jesus's story, including the beginning of his ministry on the heels of the preaching of John the Baptist,

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[786] Philo, *Legat*. 290–306; see n. 534.

[787] *B.J.* 2.169–174; *A.J.*18.55–59.

[788] Luke-Acts also affirms Jesus as the true savior; see Luke 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23 (cf. Luke 19:9; Acts 4:12; 16:17.

his healings, and his crucifixion.[789] It is worth noting that at every point of the outline, the soldiers and centurions are the important characters in the gospel story: soldiers are among the recipients of the preaching of John the Baptist in Luke 3:14, a centurion receives praise and help from Jesus the healer in Luke 7:1–10, and another centurion declares Jesus righteous at the cross in Luke 23:47. The rest of the sermon (10:40–43) mentions the resurrection of Jesus, his appearance to his chosen witnesses, and the following mission of the apostles in proclamation of the gospel. Even though the original proclamation was to be delivered τῷ λαῷ (10:42), that is, to the Jews, this time the recipients are the Gentiles.[790] Earlier Peter declared Jesus the Lord of all (10:36), now he proclaims him as the judge of the living and dead, extending the concept of his universal sovereignty through time.[791] The last sentence of the sermon (10:43) sums it up in a creedal statement, which by the authority of πάντες οἱ προφῆται announces forgiveness of sins through the name of Jesus to πάντα τὸν πιστεύοντα εἰς αὐτόν, "to whomever believes in him." Immediately, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Gentile listeners (10:44) confirms the validity of the statement.[792] The bewilderment of the Jewish believers and Peter's response (10:45–47) serve to emphasize Luke's point—the

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[789] See Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Message and Meaning of Jesus Christ* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 336.

[790] Johnson, *Acts*, 195, observes that according to Acts 10:36–38, Peter proclaims the same message that was "sent to the children of Israel" through the preaching of Jesus Christ. This implies that the mission to the Gentiles is a continuation of Jesus's ministry.

[791] In Luke-Acts, it is only here and in the address to the Areopagus in Acts 17:31 that the role of the judge of the living and dead is explicitly attributed to Jesus. Elsewhere in early Christian writings, the expression is found in Rom 14:9; 1 Thess 5:9–10; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 4:5; *Barn.* 7.2; 2 *Clem.* 1.1; Justin, *Dial.* 118.1.

[792] Even though Luke presents the outpouring of the Spirit as an interruption of Peter's speech, Peter's sermon is complete. The same literary technique of interruption after completion is used in Acts 17:32; 22:22; 23:7; 26:24. In all these cases including the present one, the "interruption" is rather a reaction caused by the speech.

proclamation of the gospel among the Gentiles leads to conversion and God's acceptance just as has been the case with preaching among the Jews.[793] Peter's words ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς underscore the common experience of Jewish and Gentile believers and connect the current event in the house of Cornelius to the birth of the church in Acts 2. Based on the demonstration of the divine favor to the Gentiles, Peter orders that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (10:48).[794]

The final section of Acts 11:1–18 deals with Peter's justification of his visit to the house of the centurion in Caesarea before the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Peter's defense allows Luke to recapitulate and emphasize the main points of the story for the reader.[795] The main purpose of Peter's speech is to affirm his mission as a divine action. The references to divine actions appear continuously throughout the speech, including the divine admonition not to call profane what God made clean (11:9), the divine directive to go to Caesarea (11:12), the divine command to deliver a message of salvation to the house of Cornelius (11:13–14), and the divine affirmation of the acceptance of Gentile believers through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (11:15).[796] The latter is emphatically

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[793] Thus far in Acts, only Jewish converts have received this token of divine approval; cf. Acts 2:1–4; 38; 4:31; 8:17; 9:17.

[794] Cf. Acts 10:43—ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν is διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ (Jesus). For baptisms in Luke-Acts, often in explicitly stated connection with forgiveness of sins and/or the name of Jesus, see Luke 3:3 (audience of John the Baptist; cf. Acts 10:37); Acts 2:38; 41(believers in Jerusalem); 8:12–13 (believers in Samaria); 8:36–38 (Ethiopian eunuch); 9:18 (Paul).

[795] Additionally, as the account of the Samarian mission (Acts 8:14–15) has demonstrated, Luke is eager to note the endorsement of missionary activity to the outsiders by the Jerusalem church. Here Luke stresses the connection with the Jerusalem congregation that is already established through the choice of Peter, a central figure in the Jerusalem church, for the role of the messenger to the house of Cornelius. As Johnson, *Acts*, 199, points out, the situation in Caesarea was more complicated since the extension of the missionary activity took place not only across geographical boundaries (as well as across various forms of the Jewish faith in Judaea and Samaria), as was the case in Samaria, but across demographic lines.

[796] Walter T. Wilson, "Urban Legends: Acts 10:1–11:18 and the Strategies of Greco-Roman Foundation Narratives," *JBL* 120 (2001): 77–99, examines the concept of ξενία ("guestfriendship") in the story and notes that when hospitality involved individuals, it also linked their respective groups, such as the

identified with the original experience of the apostles and other disciples at Pentecost (cf. 2:1–5) and is presented as the fulfillment of the word of the Lord (11:16; cf. 1:5).[797] Having thus established God's leadership over the entire chain of events and the connection with the original Pentecost experience, Peter concludes with an affirmation of his decision to baptize the Gentile believers as an inevitable response to divine action (11:17).[798] The Jerusalem congregation recognizes God's hand in the events and glorifies God for sharing the "repentance to life" with the Gentiles (11:18).

To summarize, the story of Cornelius is a watershed event in the narrative of Acts that defines Luke's following account in several ways. First, it provides the rationale for accepting Gentiles into the church and sanctions the mission to Gentiles that dominates the rest of the narrative. Second, it presents Cornelius as a model Gentile believer. Third, it uses the Roman centurion as a prototype of future Gentile believers, anticipating in his conversion the upcoming expansion of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Finally, it employs the figure of the Roman centurion to assert Christ's lordship over the Roman Empire.

The appearance of an angel to Cornelius in the beginning of the episode marks the inauguration of a new stage in the salvation history presented in the book of Acts. Peter's

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co-travellers of Peter and the household of Cornelius, in an enduring bond. From this perspective, in Acts 11 Peter represents (before the Jerusalem congregation) not only Cornelius, but also the entire group of Gentiles who were gathered in his house.

[797] Holladay, *Introduction*, 340, aptly calls the experience "the Gentiles' Pentecost." It will be the basis of Peter's argument in Acts 15:7–8 for acceptance of Gentiles into Christian fellowship without imposing the requirements of Jewish religion.

[798] Johnson, *Acts*, 186, points out Luke's emphasis on God's intention to expand salvation onto the Gentiles here and throughout Luke-Acts from the beginning. In Luke 2:32, the infant Jesus is announced as a "light of revelation to the Gentiles"; in Luke 3:6, John's ministry is introduced by the quote from LXX Isa 40:5, which promised that "all flesh will see the salvation of God"; in Luke 24:47, in the conclusion of the book, Jesus informs the apostles that repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed "to all nations." In Acts 1:8, Jesus sends the apostles to the mission to "the ends of the earth."

sermon in the house of the centurion culminates in a creedal statement that announces the opportunity for salvation to the Gentiles. Following the demonstration of God's acceptance of Gentile believers through the outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentile congregation, Peter repeatedly stresses the common experience of Jewish and Gentile believers and connects the current event in the house of Cornelius with the birth of the church in Acts 2. This connection of Cornelius's episode with the account of the origination of the Christian church in Acts 2 points to its utmost significance in the narrative. As Pentecost marked the beginning of the first stage of the Christian mission outlined by Jesus in Acts 1:8, so the conversion of the Gentiles in the house of the centurion marks the beginning of its final stage, launching the gospel mission to Gentiles throughout the Empire.

Within this framework, Cornelius plays the role of the prototypical Gentile believer for the rest of the narrative of the book. Luke's intent to employ Cornelius for this role is seen in the shift of emphasis from the centurion's personal qualities to that of God's acceptance of the Gentiles in general in the narrative of Acts 10–11. The account of Acts 10 repeatedly accentuates the centurion's virtue (10:2, 4, 22, 31), affirming his piety and presenting him as a benefactor of the Jewish community. In fact, Acts 10 presents Peter's visit and his message of salvation as God's reward for the centurion's virtue (cf. 10:4–5, 31–32). However, in the end not just Cornelius, but all the Gentiles who gathered in Cornelius's house to listen to Peter's sermon received the gift of the Holy Spirit as the sign of God's favor. The narrative explains this expansion of God's favor from one individual to the entire Gentile congregation. In Acts 10:2, Cornelius is described as φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν, "fearing God," he who performs the acts of

righteousness—alms giving and prayer. In Acts 10:35 Peter announces that in every nation the God-fearer (φοβούμενος τὸν θεόν), the one who practices righteousness, is acceptable to God. Thus, Luke portrays Cornelius as more than just an individual—he represents the general type of the "God-fearer" and defines a Gentile believer acceptable to God. Cornelius is a perfect example of the type of Gentile who follows certain religious practices of the Jewish religion and associates himself with the Jewish people.[799] As such, the centurion plays the role of the prototypical Gentile believer for the rest of Acts. When the reader encounters other God-fearers further in the book, as in Luke's account of Paul's preaching in Jewish synagogues where he wins such Gentile God-fearers to Christ, the reader already knows that they are like the centurion Cornelius.[800]

Peter's summary of the event in Acts 11 brings Luke's point home, finalizing the transition from the individual piety of Cornelius to the divine acceptance of Gentile believers. Peter's report mentions neither Cornelius's virtue nor his reward. The effect of this is that Peter's summary emphasizes God's acceptance of all Gentile believers in general and not just one righteous centurion.[801] This particular perspective on the significance of the story is clearly seen both in Peter's conclusion to his report (11:17) and in the response of the Jerusalem congregation (11:18). Through Luke's use of the

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[799] Johnson, *Acts*, 182.

[800] Cf. Acts 13:16, 26; 17:17; 18:7. As Pervo, *Acts*, 333, puts it, "it is appropriate to "view the God-Fearers of Acts as clones of Cornelius." The role of the Cornelius as a prototypical Gentile God-fearer is also noted by Kraabel, *Disappearance of God-fearers*, 119, who calls Cornelius "the archetype," who "defines the God-fearer for Acts."

[801] See Pervo, *Acts*, 287.

centurion figure as the prototypical Gentile believer, God's approval of the piety of one centurion was transferred to the divine acceptance of all Gentile converts.

The name of Cornelius, the title and origin of his particular unit, the geographical setting of the story, and especially his rank of centurion are all features that further expose the role of Cornelius as the prototypical Gentile believer, whose conversion anticipates the following Gentile conversions throughout the Empire. The name of Cornelius underscores his Roman origin. His σπείρα τῆς καλουμένης Ἰταλικῆς, likely *cohors II Italica voluntariorum civium Romanorum*, has Italian roots and boasts the status similar to that of the citizen legions. He is stationed at Caesarea, the Roman city in the Jewish land and the Palestinian gateway to the Empire. All these features underscore the connection of the first Gentile convert with Rome. Most of all, Cornelius's rank of a Roman centurion makes him the representative of the Roman Empire in Palestine, both militarily and administratively. For the indigenous population, the Roman centurion was Rome. In a very real sense, the conversion of centurion Cornelius foreshadows the conversion of the Empire.

The conversion of the Caesarean centurion is also central to Luke's proclamation of Jesus as πάντων κύριος, the focal point of Peter's inaugural sermon given to the first Gentile church. The Roman emperor, the acclaimed κύριος of the known world, affirmed, upheld, and propagated his lordship through the army. Therefore, the recognition of Christ's superior lordship by the principal representative of Roman military power in the Empire, which occurs in the very center of the imperial cult in the region, is strong affirmation of the supremacy of Christ. In other words, through the image of the Roman

centurion subjecting himself to Christ, Luke employs the imperial theology of victory to affirm the victory of the Christian God.

V. Conclusion

The above exposition reveals that Luke's presentation of Roman army personnel appears in a distinctively positive light in comparison with other New Testament writings and, as will be pointed out in the Conclusion, with the Greco-Roman and Jewish sources. Even when Luke relates the events that implicate the Roman army as a deadly hostile force, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, or the crucifixion of Jesus, he avoids presenting the army in a negative light. Luke modifies the Passion narrative to tone down the involvement of the Roman troops in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus, transferring all the blame for Jesus's death on the Jewish people and their leaders. In his predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, Luke exploits this notion of the Jewish people's guilt in their rejection of God's Messiah. Surpassing the other Gospels in the number and the clarity of the prophetic allusions to the Roman army, Luke underscores the army's role as the divine agent of punishment for that sin.

The portrayal of the Roman army as the instrument of the divine will is also seen in the accounts describing the interaction between Paul and the Roman troops. The accounts of the Roman soldiers saving Paul from lynching in the temple by the Jewish mob, protecting him from the assassination plot of the Jewish radicals, transferring him to Caesarea and then further to Rome demonstrate that in the narrative of Acts, the Roman troops continuously facilitate the progressive development of the divine plan of expanding the Gentile mission to the imperial capital. In this chain of events, the centurion Julius stands out as he puts his life at risk in order to save Paul's. The entire

account of Paul's sea voyage from Caesarea to Rome plays out the symbiotic relationship between the divine messenger and the Roman centurion that results in everyone's deliverance from peril and the fulfillment of the divine intent.

As Luke shows through Peter's sermon in the house of the centurion Cornelius, the key stages of the gospel story include the ministry of John the Baptist, the healing activity of Jesus, and his crucifixion. Remarkably, the Roman military figures in Luke-Acts exemplify the proper response to the gospel at each of these stages. The soldiers, found exclusively in Luke's account, are present at John's baptism and accept his message of repentance in wake of the Jesus's ministry. The centurion of Luke 7 recognizes Jesus as God's emissary who possesses divine authority and the power to heal at will, demonstrating a level of faith not found in Israel. The centurion at the cross makes a declaration unique to Luke's account, delivering the final verdict on Jesus's innocence. In the second meaning of the proclamation, the centurion affirms Jesus as the righteous one. Thus in the Gospel of Luke, soldiers and centurions exemplify outsiders to Judaism who acknowledge what the unbelieving Jews refuse to accept. Thereby Luke prepares the reader for concentrating on the Gentile mission in the final portion of Luke-Acts.

The narrative of Acts shifts the focus to the Gentile mission by employing the figure of the centurion Cornelius as a prototypical Gentile believer. This function can already be seen in the portrayal of the centurion of Luke 7. Both centurions elicit praise for their benefactions to the Jewish community, demonstrate humility, and receive divine recognition of their faith. Both centurions serve as the as model Gentile believers acceptable to God, exemplifying the principle stated in Acts 10:34–35, οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήμτης ὁ θεός, ἀλλ᾽ ἐν παντὶ ἔθνει ὁ φοβούμενος αὐτὸν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος

δικαιοσύνην δεκτὸς αὐτῷ ἐστιν. But whereas the account of the centurion of Luke 7 only hints at God's acceptance of the Gentiles, the story of Cornelius declares it in an explicit and powerful way. Both the recognition of Jesus's supreme lordship and the divine approval of Gentile believers are achieved in the figure of the Roman centurion, the principal representative of Rome in Judaea, thus anticipating the upcoming expansion of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire.

The following Conclusion summarizes the assessment of Luke's choice of the Roman centurion for the role of the prototypical Gentile believer augmenting the discussion with the insights provided by the analysis of the preceding chapters.

Conclusion

The analysis of the Greco-Roman literary sources revealed that regardless of their genre and literary agenda, the majority describes the Roman military in unfavorable terms. Whether we read the historical treatises of Polybius, Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, and Appian, the biographical writings of Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch, and Suetonius, or the works of Plautus, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Petronius, Quintilian, Epictetus, Juvenal, Fronto, and Apuleius, the authors speak of the inability of the soldiery to control their passions resulting in excessive self-indulgence, laxity, greed, insolence, indolence, rapacity, and brutality. Such pervasiveness of the negative tone towards the Roman soldier originates from both stock literary *topoi* and a particular literary agenda of the author of the work in question. The influence of a literary agenda is manifest in the works of history and some works of biography as they draw the character of the Roman soldier in the wider context of the moral decline of Roman society in general. In particular, Polybius's warning that corruption in the army results in consequences disastrous to the Roman state is actualized in the writings of those authors, who view the civil wars, whether those of the final years of the Republic or the year of the four emperors, as the climax of the moral degradation of the Roman state, and who capitalize on the popularized vices of the soldiery to assist in making their point.

The presentations of the Roman army in the works of Julius Caesar and Velleius Paterculus are more balanced. Their more positive outlook results in part from the extensive military experience of these writers, which allows them to express their personal appreciation of the soldiers instead of resorting to stock derogatory language.

The specific literary agendas of these authors also influence their presentation of the soldiers, associating their depictions of the army with the particular perspectives on the affairs of the Roman state they would like to convey. The emphasis Julius Caesar places on his soldiers's loyalty to his persona and their devotion to his cause boosts his image as a great leader and supports the credibility of his political cause in civil war, whereas the instances of the soldiery's unruly behavior and attempts at mutiny that he also describes accentuate his ability to control the potentially destructive force of the army. The familiar theme of moral degradation in the context of civil wars of the first century B.C.E. explains the negative references to soldiers in the first part of Velleius Paterculus's history. In the second part, the change of tone and the emphasis on the soldier's merits and the army's loyalty to the *imperator* contributes to Paterculus's depiction of the rise of the Roman state under Tiberius and to his literary agenda of celebrating the military, leadership, and moral qualities of his patron.

The association of the Roman army with the Roman society, state, and ruler seen in the above Greco-Roman sources also colors the portrayal of the army in the Jewish witnesses and accounts for the differences in their outlooks. The Roman army depicted in the Jewish sources is the army deployed in the East, which is the army that Roman authors treat with particular disfavor. According to the Roman historians, the decadent environment of the Eastern towns undermined military discipline and corrupted the troops, causing insubordination, weakness on the battlefield, and abuse of the local population. However, this motif of the laxity and military ineffectiveness of the Eastern army is completely absent from the Jewish prophetic writings. Even though the Jewish witnesses belong to different historical periods and various genres, they unanimously—

albeit in differing overtones—speak of the Roman army as an invincible power. Whether these writings address Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. (the Dead Sea Scrolls and *Psalms of Solomon*), the War of Varus in 4 C.E. (*Assumption of Moses*), the Jewish War of 66-73 C.E. (*Sibylline Oracles* 4 and 5, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*), or the Roman conquests in general (*Sibylline Oracles* 1-3), they emphasize the might and military skill of the Roman troops.

The moral assessment of the army in the majority of these sources is, however, predominantly negative—the Romans are invincible, but wicked. Even though the prophetic literature presents the Roman assault as God's punishment for the sins of the Jews, it denounces the Romans for their own immorality and condemns them to destruction. In so doing, the writers employ the established literary *topos* of God using a foreign empire, such as the Assyrians or Babylonians in the past, as an instrument of divine justice followed by the destruction of the wicked empire itself. In this *topos*, the images of the foreign power, its rulers, and its army are used interchangeably. Whether the crimes of the army, the sins of the Roman rulers, or the iniquities of the Roman nation in general are the subject of the prophetic denouncement, the witnesses proclaim that God, who in the past destroyed the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires, will also destroy the Roman Empire along with its army.

Josephus also presents the Roman army as the dominant force in the world, making no distinction for the troops deployed in the East. Speaking from personal experience acquired while accompanying the army during the Jewish campaign, Josephus emphasizes the discipline, the skill, and the valor of the Eastern legions, who are capable of overcoming any challenges of combat. Josephus makes it clear that the Eastern army

represents the might of the Empire itself through the mouth of king Agrippa II, who warns the Jewish insurgents about the perspective of facing the same invincible army that has created the Empire and holds its numerous nations in submission.

In accordance with the Jewish prophetic tradition, Josephus, who also presents himself as a prophet of God, speaks of the Roman army as an instrument of divine punishment of the Jews for their sins. However, the customary Jewish prophetic denunciation and vilification of the foreign troops is absent from his works. To the contrary, Josephus explicitly differentiates between past foreign invaders and the Romans, emphasizing that whereas God condemned the former to destruction, the latter has full divine approval and support. Even though at times Josephus depicts the Roman soldiers as violent and brutal, he makes an effort to exonerate them from liability in the sufferings inflicted on the Jewish population, attributing the injustices and afflictions that befall the Jewish nation to the incompetency of particular Roman prefects and procurators, anti-Jewish allies and auxiliary troops, factions of Jewish rebels, and ultimately the offenses of the Jewish people against God. Such vindication of the Roman troops results from the fact that Josephus writes as a client of the *Flavii* and therefore coordinates his depiction of the army with his goal of praising the military acumen and the leadership qualities of his patrons, especially Titus. The instances of the heroic exploits of the Roman troops during the Jewish campaign resemble the valiant acts of the soldiers in Caesar's *Commentarii* and serve a similar literary goal of demonstrating the soldiers's devotion to their commander in chief through imitating his personal acts of bravery and military prowess. Such presentation of the army serves to emphasize the *imperator's* rapport with his troops, underscore his military genius and achievement, and buttress his public image.

Such literary tactics further demonstrate the close association of the Roman army with the Roman imperial power.

The discussion of the Greco-Roman and Jewish sources also revealed that the figure of the Roman centurion stands out in both military and off-the-battlefield contexts. It has been shown that centurions typically possessed extensive military experience, were distinguished for their valor and leadership qualities, and comprised the core commanding staff of the army. The bravery of the centurions in battle is a common motif in the works of history and biography, including the writings of Polybius, Julius Caesar, Velleius Paterculus, Livy, Tacitus, Plutarch, and Josephus. Owing to his key place within the army hierarchy and his recognized leadership and character qualities, the centurion could be entrusted with the highest authority. Among others, the Greco-Roman sources include examples of delegations of centurions from Caesar and Octavian to the Senate, the commissioning of the centurions to conduct the proscriptions of the Roman elite during the second triumvirate, and the appointment of the centurion by Tiberius to represent his authority in the mediation of the dynastic dispute in Thrace. In Philo, Caligula entrusts a centurion with the imperial authority to apprehend the prefect of Egypt and to command the assistance of the prefect's military staff for his arrest. Non-literary witnesses of the period confirm the role of the centurion as the representative of the imperial power throughout the Empire's domain. The evidence demonstrates that it was the centurions who regularly supervised building, transportation, policing, guarding, tax-collection, and litigation. Performing these duties, centurions posed as the Roman officials who were immediately present within the local community as representatives of

Rome and when needed provided direct access to the Roman power. In a very real sense, for the civilian population of the Empire the centurion was Rome.

In sum, the Greco-Roman and Jewish literary sources often associate their portrayal of the Roman army with their particular perspective on the Roman state. Several witnesses specifically present the centurion as a principal agent of the Roman authority in both domestic and foreign affairs. Non-literary evidence corroborates this view, testifying to the role of the centurion as a primary representative of Rome to the population of the Empire. These observations help to explicate Luke's specific utilization of the Roman military figures and especially the character of the Roman centurion in Luke-Acts.

Chapter 4 demonstrated that the role of the Roman army in Luke-Acts is particularly prominent and distinctively positive in comparison to the other New Testament Gospels. Even when Luke speaks of the army's involvement in the destruction of Jerusalem and crucifixion of Jesus, he avoids presenting the Romans in a negative light. In the prophecies against Jerusalem, Luke utilizes the Jewish prophetic *topos* of divine punishment for the sins of the nation by the hands of a foreign army, but, similarly to Josephus, he does not chastise the Romans for the destruction, limiting his comments to the army's role as an agent of the divine will. In his version of the Passion Narrative, Luke's editorial changes minimize the involvement of the Roman military in Jesus's sufferings and death. On the other hand, the narrative of Luke-Acts stands apart because of the accounts that present Roman military figures in a positive light. Only Luke's Gospel lists the soldiers among the recipients of John the Baptist's preaching and baptism. Luke's redaction of the story of the healing of the centurion's slave in Capernaum

uniquely presents the centurion as the one who loves and benefits the Jewish people, and who is humble and sensitive to the Jewish customs. The declaration of Jesus as δίκαιος by the centurion at the cross is also unique to Luke. This pronouncement both proclaims Jesus to be innocent—the prevalent motif in the account of Jesus's trial—and affirms him as the righteous one of God—a recurrent topic in the following narrative of Acts. In Acts, the piety of centurion Cornelius leads to the birth of the first Gentile church and inspires the Christian mission to the Gentiles throughout the Empire. The Roman troops play an important role in facilitating that mission by repeatedly saving Paul's life, safeguarding his trip from Jerusalem to Caesarea, and then delivering him to Rome. During the voyage, the philanthropy of the centurion Julius towards Paul culminates in saving Paul's life, ensuring safe arrival of the missionary and his gospel to the imperial capital.

What is the reason for Luke's distinctively positive treatment of the Roman military? This study has shown that Luke's favorable portrayal can be explained by the function that army personnel play in the development of Luke's narrative story. At crucial stages of his narrative, Luke employs Roman military characters, and especially centurions, as representative figures for the targeted audience of the Christian mission to Gentiles. As the soldiers at the preaching of John the Baptist accept his message, they exemplify the expected Gentile response to the gospel. Next in the narrative comes the centurion in the story from the healing ministry of Jesus. He presents a model Gentile believer, who is humble, loving, benevolent, and shows an exemplary faith in Jesus's divine power and authority. The next centurion is seen standing at the cross asserting the innocence of Jesus and proclaiming him as the righteous one of God. He represents the Gentiles who affirm the fundamental claims of Christian faith, which unbelieving Jews

refuse to accept. The centurion Cornelius plays the role of the model figure in the seminal account of the birth of the Gentile Christian church. His piety leads to the acceptance of non-Jews into Christian fellowship and launches the Christian mission to Gentiles. The centurion himself becomes a prototypical Gentile believer for the future converts, whereas his faith allows Luke to assert the universal lordship of Christ.

The discourse of Greco-Roman and Jewish sources has shown that the witnesses frequently link the Roman army with the Empire itself and portray the Roman centurion as a major representative figure in this connection. The discussion of Luke-Acts has demonstrated that Luke employs the Roman military, and especially centurions, as prototypical figures for the Gentile believers in the Empire, who comprise the targeted audience of the Christian mission. In short, the Roman Empire in Luke's narrative is a receptive mission field, and the Roman centurion, the principal representative of the Empire, exemplifies the desired response.

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