

Ritual, Narrative, and Trauma

**Considering the Socio-Psychological Significance of
Roman Martial Rituals**

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Abstract

The Roman conduct of war appears to have been a ritualized affair. This thesis is concerned with unfolding this ritual pattern and discussing the socio-psychological significance this may have held for the Roman soldier at war. It investigates the various rituals that the soldier would have been witness or participant of: the *lustratio*, *auspicium*, *devotio hostium*, and *passum sub iugum*. The comparative analysis and source collection of these rituals may already offer new insights. Its Republican chronological scope results from this. Literary sources form the primary focus of this approach, intermittently supported by the disciplines of archaeology, numismatics, and epigraphy. Accordingly, it attempts to position these rituals in the course of warfare, as it would feature for the soldier. From the vantage point of trauma studies and the principle of narrative understanding, this thesis offers an alternative interpretation of the significance ritual may have had for the Roman soldier's experience of battle. Thereby, it explores new avenues of study to the experience of ritual and battle. This thesis argues that the various rituals that featured in the preamble and summation of battle had significant potential to shape the individual's anticipation, experience, and memory of the event. The rituals that the soldier would be witness or participant of, aided him in the creation of a meaningful narrative of events, thereby having the potential to offer psychological relief.

Abbreviations

- App. *Civ.* – Appian, *Civil Wars*
App. *Mithr.* – Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*
App. *Pun.* – Appian, *Punic Wars*
App. *Sam.* – Appian, *Samnite Wars*
App. *Span.* – Appian, *Spanish Wars*
App. *Syr.* – Appian, *Syrian Wars*
Caes. *Gall.* – Caesar, *Gallic Wars*
Cass. Dio – Cassius Dio, *Roman History*
Cat. *Agri.* – Cato the Elder, *On Agriculture*
Cic. *Div.* – Cicero, *On Divination*
Cic. *Nat. Gods* – Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*
Cic. *Pis.* – Cicero, *Against Piso*
Dion. Hal. – Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*
Eutr. *Sum.* – Eutropius, *Summary of Roman History*
Fest. – Festus, *Breviarium*
Fest. *Lex.* – Festus, *Lexicon*
Flav. Jos. *Jew. War* – Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*
Flor. *Epit.* – Florus, *Epitome of Roman History*
Front. *Strat.* – Frontinus, *Stratagems*
Hirt. *Afr.* – Hirtius, *On the African War*
Hirt. *Alex.* – Hirtius, *On the Alexandrine War*
Liv. – Livy, *The History of Rome*
Liv. *Peri.* – Livy, *Periochae*
Macr. *Sat.* – Macrobius, *Saturnalia*
Oros. *His. Pag.* – Orosius, *History against the Pagans*
Plin. *Nat. His.* – Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*
Plut. *Aem.* – Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius*
Plut. *Brut.* – Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*
Plut. *Cam.* – Plutarch, *Life of Camillus*
Plut. *Cras.* – Plutarch, *Life of Crassus*
Plut. *Marc.* – Plutarch, *Life of Marcellus*
Plut. *Mar.* – Plutarch, *Life of Marius*
Plut. *Rom.* – Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*
Plut. *RQ* – Plutarch, *Roman Questions*
Poly. – Polybius, *Histories*
Strab. *Geo.* – Strabo, *The Geography*
Suet. *Nero* – Suetonius, *Life of Nero*
Tac. *Ann.* – Tacitus, *Annals*
Var. *Lat. Lan.* – Varro, *On the Latin Language*

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Introduction

‘...our empire was won by those commanders who obeyed the dictates of religion.’

– Cicero (106-43 BCE), *On the Nature of the Gods*.¹

To Cicero, the Roman conduct of war was a religious affair. The Romans owed their military success to their strict religious observance and ‘reverence for the gods’, he surmised. At all times, the consul at war was required to align military decision-making to religious decree, as dictated by custom, the priestly colleges, and the Senate. These dictates would ensure that wars were fought justly and in accordance with divine injunction. In this sense – and in fact, this sense alone – the Romans surpassed all other nations, Cicero modestly posits. Cicero composed his work *On the Nature of the Gods* in 45 BCE, the year in which Caesar and Pompey competed for power and the Republican status quo faltered. His reference to the gravity of religious observance was no mere historical anecdote, it was a maxim as well – a silent reminder to the military competitors of his time not to stray too far from the dictates of religion.

To no surprise, we may see Cicero’s views reflected in the accounts of the ancient authors. In fact, Roman warfare and religion appear to have been closely intertwined – if ‘warfare’ and ‘religion’ can be considered separate categories at all, of course. In the narratives of Livy (64 BCE - 12 CE), for instance, we read how the *fetiales*, a special college of priests, officially declared the Roman wars by ritually throwing a bloodstained spear into enemy lands.² Polybius (ca. 200-120 BCE) informs us about the *sacramentum*, an oath taken by soldiers not to abandon the standards and disobey command, adding a somewhat sacral dimension to the status of the soldier.³ Appian (95-165 CE) notes how the Romans performed the *lustratio*, an ‘act of purification’, before armies marched out or fleets sailed out.⁴ Cicero explains how the augurs were consulted before campaigns and battles, to witness the behaviour of birds in search

¹ Cic. *Nat. Gods* 2.3.7. For the translations used for the primary sources in this paper, see the bibliography at the end. The list of abbreviations used for citing these works can be found at the beginning of this thesis.

² Liv. 1.32.13-14: ‘It was customary for the Fetial to carry to the enemies’ frontiers a blood-smeared spear tipped with iron or burnt at the end, and, in the presence of at least three adults, to say, “Inasmuch as the peoples of the Prisci Latini have been guilty of wrong against the People of Rome and the Quirites, and inasmuch as the People of Rome and the Quirites have ordered that there be war with the Prisci Latini, and the Senate of the People of Rome and the Quirites have determined and decreed that there shall be war with the Prisci Latini, therefore I and the People of Rome, declare and make war upon the peoples of the Prisci Latini.” With these words he hurled his spear into their territory. This was the way in which at that time satisfaction was demanded from the Latins and war declared, and posterity adopted the custom.’

³ Poly. 6.21.

⁴ App. *Civ.* 5.96.

for favourable omens pertaining to the future.⁵ Whereas in the heat of battle, a general could sacrifice himself and his soldiers to the gods by mode of the *devotio*, as Livy notes.⁶ Or he might call upon the enemy gods by mode of the *evocatio*.⁷ In the aftermath of battle, as we may read in Appian, the Romans would collect and sacrifice the enemy spoils, in dedication to their deities.⁸ Or in a fashion rather peculiar, enemy prisoners might be discarded by the act of sending prisoners under the yoke – a ‘token that men have come under the power of others’, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60-7 BCE) concludes.⁹ Additionally, the returning victor could be awarded a triumph, allowing the general and his army to enter Rome in a procession proceeding towards the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, where sacrifices would be performed, honouring the supreme Roman deity. Furthermore, as Varro (116-27 BCE) informs us, the *equus october* and *armilustrum* would signify the end of the campaigning season by sacrificing a warhorse and purifying the weapons.¹⁰ In summary, the ancient authors provide ample reference to the synthesis of the military and the religious in the Roman conduct of war.

Yet why was such strenuous care taken in carrying out these rituals? Evidently, it rested on a sense of belief that such actions would ensure fortune and prosperity, and that they would guarantee successful wars. As Ando (2008) forwarded, ‘Killing is serious business. The unleashing of fatal violence demands regard for the more-than-human.’¹¹ The *pax deorum* had to be kept: ‘a mutually beneficial state of peace between Rome and its deities’, as Johnson (2012) aptly sums.¹² Any rupture in this relationship had to be averted through the proper ritual

⁵ See for example Cic. *Nat. Gods* 2.3.7 or Liv. 22.1.5.

⁶ See, for instance, Liv. 8.9.4-14 for the *devotio* of Publius Decimus Mus in 340 BCE. Discussion by: M. Beard, J. North & S. Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 2: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, 1998), 157. The *devotio* appears difficult to pin down: ‘Whether or not any of these incidents ever actually took place, this practice of self-sacrifice {*devotio*) came to be regarded as the ultimate example of a general’s heroism and piety (both to his city and to the gods).’ Cicero poses that he can quote numerous of such cases (*Nat. Gods* 2.3.10): ‘But among our ancestors religion was so powerful that some commanders actually offered themselves as victims to the immortal gods on behalf of the state, veiling their heads and formally vowing themselves to death. I could quote numerous passages from the Sibylline prophecies and from the oracles of soothsayers in confirmation of facts that no one really ought to question.’

⁷ In 396 BCE, the Roman commander Camillus performed an *evocatio* during the Siege of Veii: ‘At the same time I beseech thee, Queen Juno, that dwellest now in Veii, to come with us, when we have gotten the victory, to our City – soon to be thine, too – that a temple meet for thy majesty may there receive thee.’ These prayers uttered, he set forward with overwhelming numbers to assault the town on every side’ (Liv. 5.21.3-4). Discussion can be found in: Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome: Volume 2*, 41-42.

⁸ App. *Pun.* 8.48.

⁹ Dion. Hal. 16.1.4.

¹⁰ Var. *Lat. Lan.* 5.153; 6.14.

¹¹ C. Ando, *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, 2008), 120.

¹² M. Johnson, ‘*Pax deorum*’, entry in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History* (Wiley Online Library, 2012).

observance.¹³ This unique relationship, or ‘contract’, the Romans maintained with their deities has been noticed by Polybius as well, a native Greek who was well-acquainted with things Roman.¹⁴ He similarly listed Roman piety as ‘the quality in which the Roman commonwealth is most distinctly superior’, while adding further comment:

‘I believe that it is the very thing which among other peoples is an object of reproach, I mean superstition, which maintains the cohesion of the Roman State. These matters are clothed in such pomp and introduced to such an extent into their public and private life that nothing could exceed it, a fact which will surprise many. My own opinion at least is that they have adopted this course for the sake of the common people. It is a course which perhaps would not have been necessary had it been possible to form a state composed of wise men, but as every multitude is fickle, full of lawless desires, unreasoned passion, and violent anger, the multitude must be held in by invisible terrors and suchlike pageantry.’¹⁵

In writing these words, Polybius might have considered himself to be amongst the wise men. He provides an interesting interpretation of the Romans’ insistence on religious observance, calling attention to the socio-psychological effects of the omnipresent ritual ‘pageantry’ in Roman society. The rigor and display of Roman ritual conduct, he observed, contributed to the influence it could assert. It operated as a unifying and driving force, as Polybius seems to suggest. We may encounter similar observations in Cicero, albeit phrased differently. He too noted the significance of Roman religious observance, of which its disappearance, he writes, would ‘entail the disappearance of loyalty and social union among men.’¹⁶ Cicero similarly alludes to the social glue that Roman ritual conduct could form, and the collective emotional sentiment that could result from it. In short, the rigor and meticulousness of Roman ritual conduct invites discussion of the mentality that it could incite.

For illustration, we may consult Livy’s account of the events of the Second Punic War in 218 BCE. He notes how the sacrifices, purifications, and prayers that were performed ‘went far to alleviate men’s anxiety concerning their relations with the gods.’¹⁷ Likewise, in Plutarch’s

¹³ E. Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2010), 111.

¹⁴ Polybius was born in Megalopolis in the Peloponnese and was brought as a hostage to Rome in 167 BCE. Here, he befriended Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus, thus familiarising himself with the higher strata of Roman society. In 146 BCE he returned to Greece, partaking in public office there. For more information, see Walbank’s collection of essays on Polybius: F.W. Walbank (ed.), *Polybius, Rome and the Hellenistic World* (Cambridge, 2002).

¹⁵ Poly. 6.56.6.

¹⁶ Cic. *Nat. Gods* 1.2.4.

¹⁷ Liv. 21.62.11.

(46-120 CE) account of the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE, we may read how the ceremonies of purification and sacrifice led to the ‘zeal and goodwill of their forces’, and thus ‘they were at an advantage’ – a psychological advantage, Plutarch apparently refers to.¹⁸ And in the preamble to the Battle of Aquilonia in 293 BCE, Livy notes how the ‘universal excitement’ among the soldiers was further invigorated by favourable news from the augurs: ‘they were going to engage the enemy under the guidance and blessing of heaven’.¹⁹ When hostilities had ceased, efforts could be made to properly acknowledge the blessings the divine had previously granted. Plutarch describes how, after the Battle of Aquae Sextiae in 102 BCE, the enemy spoils would be dedicated to the gods in a communal sacrifice – a ‘celebration of their victory (...) as the custom was’.²⁰ These cases may serve to illustrate that the ‘pomp’ and ‘pageantry’, as remarked by Polybius, of Roman ritual conduct could indeed have been of notable influence on the mindset of those experiencing it, having the potential to confirm and strengthen socio-psychological roles. The ancient authors provide interesting insights in the effects and significance of ritual conduct in the Roman way of war.

A brief glance at the ancient sources suggests that Roman warfare appears to have been a ritualised affair. In a sense, one could argue that the rituals performed before, during, and after battle, offered the constituents for a coherent martial narrative. Beard, North & Price (1998) suggested that these rituals embodied ‘the celebration of the annual rhythm of war-making’.²¹ Stoll (2011) argued that ‘service life in the militia armies of the republic was admittedly “framed” by cult actions belonging to the sphere of state...’²² Piegdoń (2014) similarly emphasized the ‘religious whole’ these combined war rituals formed.²³ Warrior (2006) posed that ‘Nowhere in the surviving testimony is the Roman insistence on such piety better seen than in the conduct of their wars.’²⁴ Rich (2013) too concluded on the ‘centrality of both war and religion in the life of the Roman Republic.’²⁵ And Shean (2010) succinctly notes: ‘All Roman

¹⁸ Plut., *Brut.* 39.2.

¹⁹ Liv. 10.40.5-6.

²⁰ Plut. *Mar.* 22.3.

²¹ Beard, M., North, J. & Price, S., *Religions of Rome: Volume 1: A History* (Cambridge, 1998), 43.

²² O. Stoll, ‘The Religions of the Armies’, in: P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army* (Oxford, 2011), 451.

²³ M. Piegdoń, ‘Some Remarks on War Rituals in Archaic Italy and Rome and the Beginnings of Roman Imperialism’, *Electrum*, 21 (2014), 92.

²⁴ V.M. Warrior, *Roman Religion* (Cambridge, 2006), 56.

²⁵ J. Rich, ‘Roman Rituals of War’, in: B. Campbell & L. Tritle, *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World* (Oxford, 2013), 691.

wars started and ended with religious ceremonies.’²⁶ In summary then, the synthesis of the military and the religious in the Roman Republic has been noticed in scholarly review. And moreover, a sense of temporality, of opening and closure, appears to have been inherent to this synthesis. What has remained unnoticed however, is the underlying socio-psychological significance of the apparent ritual construct that regularly featured in the way the Romans waged their wars.

This thesis is concerned with exploring the significance that Roman martial rituals could have had for the Roman soldier at war. In this paper I will investigate the ways in which this military-religious amalgam was actually experienced by the soldier, and to what degree this could have been meaningful to his conception and experience – or in short, ‘narrative’ – of battle. As already indicated by Polybius, Cicero, Livy, and Plutarch, the performance of ritual in the preamble to battle could reinforce morale and offer psychological relief. Similarly, rituals performed in the summation of battle may have functioned to ensure psychological victory by offering the elements of confirmation and conclusion, and epitomizing defeat. In short, there is sufficient reason to investigate the apparent structural prevalence of ritual in the course of Roman warfare from a socio-psychological perspective. Ultimately, the performance of certain acts on certain occasions – the performance of ‘ritual’ – reflects on the situation that evoked it, that is the event of battle. I believe this implies that the rituals the Romans performed in their military endeavours harboured elements from which they derived a sense of meaning, for they had to be performed in a certain manner on certain occasions. If the structural prevalence and significance of ritual in the Roman conduct of war can be proven, a consideration of the socio-historical context in which it situates – and on which it reflects – would be both appealing and commonplace. That is the scope that I will adopt in this thesis.

The military structure of the Roman army has been studied extensively. It was a uniquely complex and organized apparatus, and scholarly attention has therefore often fixated on its organization, hierarchy, and social structure.²⁷ The composition of the Roman military has intrigued many, and rightly so. It is a field of study well-explored, we may safely state, and this paper will only benefit from this corpus. The same might be said of the other part of the amalgam – religion. The Roman religious system was omnipresent in society and influenced

²⁶ J.F. Shean, *Soldiering for God: Christianity and the Roman Army* (Leiden, 2010), 37. In this passage Shean refers to Roman Republican warfare.

²⁷ See for example: A. Goldsworthy, *The Complete Roman Army* (London, 2004); P. Southern, *The Roman Army: A Social and Institutional History* (Oxford, 2007). Also, various entries in: P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Companion to the Roman Army* (Oxford, 2011).

conduct in every way. Indeed, many scholars have stressed the totality of religion and argued that it was manifest to such a degree, that the term ‘religion’ is simply a superfluous addition – a concept words are unable to describe.²⁸ That ‘religion’ mingled into the Roman conduct of war may therefore be considered no novelty, as may already have become apparent in the accounts of Livy, Appian, Cicero, and others introduced before. This study however, of ritual in the Roman conduct of war, positions itself in the bifurcation of the military and the religious and attempts to explore new research avenues by investigating the socio-psychological effects of this amalgam from the perspective of the Roman soldier at war.

The study of the experience of war, of its psychological consequences, of its dangers, and of the psychological coping mechanisms by which these dangers can be shielded, is a recently evolving one. The psychology of war and the experience of combat in the ancient world has been addressed by pioneers such as Pritchett (1974), Keegan (1976), Hanson (1989), Van Wees (2000), and Lynn (2003).²⁹ Only recently however, scholars have substantiated the study of the experience of war more confidently. The field of trauma studies, the study of the psychological impact of combat – and the elements that potentially prevented this – slowly entered academic discourse two decades ago. Shay’s *Achilles in Vietnam* (1995) and Tritle’s *From Melos to My Lai* (2000) paved the way for new interpretations; for the trans-historical study of trauma and the consequences of war on the human psyche.³⁰ Following these works, Cosmopoulos’ *Experiencing War: Trauma and Society from Ancient Greece to the Iraq War* (2007) and Meineck’s *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks* (2014) have demonstrated the innovative potential of this approach.³¹ These collections explored new ways of approaching the ancient mind at war, experimenting with the information the present-day disciplines of psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience provide us about the experience of combat, danger, and death. This approach has proved to be fruitful and refreshing and will inspire and furnish

²⁸ See for example: Warrior, *Roman Religion*, 7 (‘For the Romans there was no clear distinction between religion and politics.’); Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome: Volume 1*, x (‘...many of our familiar categories for thinking about religion and religious experience simply cannot be usefully applied here...’); Ando, *The Matter of the Gods*, 14-15 (‘The study of Roman religion – as a system of embedded symbols and social actions and their institutionalization – must therefore take its epistemological foundation into account. The distribution and diffusion of power and authority in the religious sphere among individuals, offices, colleges, and institutions reflect at every level the basic needs of Roman religion, to acquire, adjudge, and preserve *cognition deorum*, “knowledge of the gods”.’)

²⁹ W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War, Parts I-V* (Berkeley, 1974-1991); J. Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London, 1976); V.D. Hanson, *The Western Way of War* (Berkeley, 1989); H. van Wees, *War and Violence in Ancient Greece* (London, 2000); J.A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (New York, 2003).

³⁰ J. Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam* (Boston, 1995); L. Tritle, *From Melos to My Lai* (Routledge, 2000).

³¹ M.B. Cosmopoulos (ed.), *Experiencing War: Trauma and Society from Ancient Greece to the Iraq War* (Chicago, 2007); P. Meineck & D. Konstan (eds.), *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks* (New York, 2014).

the course of this research. It should be noted that the historical study of trauma and the psychological impact of combat is not without controversy. Clearly, the trans-historical study of modern phenomena requires caution and nuance, as has been forwarded frequently in scholarly review.³² I will therefore address this field thoroughly in the first chapter and evaluate its merits and demerits. Consequently, I will propose an analogous interpretation of trauma using the concept of ‘narrative’, which will accordingly facilitate the approach of this thesis – a translation of theory into methodology, suitable for historical research.³³ Using this framework, I intend to realize a new interpretation of the significance of Roman rituals of war.

I believe little more introduction is needed. In this paper I will investigate the prevalence of Roman martial rituals from a historical perspective, and consider the socio-psychological significance these rituals might have held for the Roman soldier at war. First, it will investigate and attempt to explain the apparent structural prevalence that may be inferred from the ancient sources. And second, consequently question and contextualize this phenomenon apropos of its historical climate. It is an analysis of Roman martial rituals from the perspective of those who experienced it. To facilitate this approach, the following question will feature centrally:

Could the structural prevalence of ritual in the Roman conduct of war have provided narrative meaning to the individual experience of battle, and thereby alleviated its psychological impact?

To facilitate this approach, further clarification of the avenues that this paper will take, and the delimits that it will consider, is requisite. First and foremost, I would like to stress that this study is of a historical nature. I am concerned with the historical phenomenon of Roman ritual and in that sense, I seek to retrieve and analyse plausible historicity as can be derived from the source material. Literary sources form the primary focus of this approach, intermittently supported by

³² See for example: A. Young, *Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton, 1997); J. Crowley, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite: The Culture of Combat in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 2012).

³³ The relation between narrative and trauma has, amongst others, been forwarded in: P. Janet, *Les médications psychologiques* (Paris, 1919); L. Mink, ‘Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument’, in: R. Canary & H. Kozicki, *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding* (Wisconsin, 1978); C. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, 1996); M. Crossley, ‘Narrative Psychology, Trauma and the Study of Self/Identity’, *Theory & Psychology*, 10.4 (2000), 527-546; R. Tuval-Mashiach, et al., ‘Coping with Trauma: Narrative and Cognitive Perspectives’, *Psychiatry Interpersonal & Biological Processes*, 67.3 (2004), 280-293; J. Pederson, ‘Trauma and Narrative’, in: J.R. Kurtz (ed.), *Trauma and Literature* (Cambridge, 2018), 97-109; W. Seeley, ‘Neuroscience, Narrative, and Emotion Regulation’, in: J.R. Kurtz (ed.), *Trauma and Literature* (Cambridge, 2018), 153-166.

the disciplines of archaeology, numismatics, and epigraphy.³⁴ Rituals are performative, fluid, and mobile, and tend to leave little archaeological trace.³⁵ To grasp the significance of these rituals, we therefore greatly rely on literary sources. Authors such as Livy, Cicero, Caesar, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, offer the most detailed and frequent descriptions. Later writers, such as Appian, Plutarch, Florus, and Cassius Dio, may provide similar accounts, though often based on those mentioned before. Nevertheless, we face chronological inconsistency: Livy, for example, provides an account of the *lustratio* in 483 BCE; Dionysius writes of the passing under the yoke in 457 BCE; and Appian of a ritual sacrifice in 202 BCE – they write about events that, often, occurred significantly earlier. The topic of historicity will therefore feature recurrently in this paper: to what degree can we trust sources writing at a significant later date, and to what degree are they biased by contemporary reflection? And clearly, when are we dealing with anachronistic literary invention? Second, I would like to point out that this paper is concerned with Roman martial rituals as phenomena. I am not interested in the topic of Roman exceptionalism, a course that has been adopted in the more popularized literature.³⁶ With regard to exceptionalism, Hellenistic influences on ‘Roman’ rituals fall out of the scope of this research performace.³⁷ Rather, its scope is steered by a trend in the ancient sources, e.g. the chronological emphasis on the Roman Republic (conventionally, 509-27 BCE). This chronological emphasis results from the collected source material (I refer to appendices I, II, III, and IV) – I am not interested in singling out Republican rituals, nor excluding imperial

³⁴ Discussion of the ancient accounts will be based on the English translations (for the editions used, I refer to the bibliography). If specific passages or words are of significance, the Latin original version will be added in the footnote concerned.

³⁵ The act of sacrifice, the most common form of Roman ritual, involves degradable items such as wine, incense, meat, or fruits. Moreover, these items are either sacrificed in fires or disposed of through libation – processes which leave little material footprint.

³⁶ See: C. Murphy, *Are we Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America* (Boston, 2008). The theme of exceptionalism has often been brought forward in popular media, in which the ‘empires’ of Rome and the United States are subject of comparison. See for example: The Huffington Post (16-04-2014), ‘The Romans, Just Wars and Exceptionalism’; The New York Times (11-05-2007), ‘Lessons for America, courtesy of the Roman empire’; American Exceptionalism: A Project of The Heartland Institute (23-08-2014), ‘How to Lose a Constitution – Lessons from Roman History’. For an excellent nuanced discussion of the topic, see: A.M. Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome* (Berkeley, 2009).

³⁷ Studies of a different kind may be required for this approach. Interesting examples of Hellenistic rituals preceding and mirroring Roman rituals may be found in the Greek *tropaion* (see: J. Stroszeck, ‘Greek Trophy Monuments’, Myth and Symbol II Conference: Symbolic Phenomena in Ancient Greek Culture, The Norwegian Institute at Athens (2004); J. De Vivo, ‘The Memory of Greek Battle: Material Culture and/as Narrative of Combat’, in: Meineck & Konstan (eds.), *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks*, 163-184), or the Macedonian Xandikos (see: J. Mazzorin & C. Minniti, ‘Dog Sacrifice in the Ancient World: A Ritual Passage?’, in: L.M. Snyder & E.A. Moore (eds.), *Dogs and People in Social, Working, Economic or Symbolic Interaction* (Oxford, 2006), 63).

rituals. The emphasis in address in this paper will therefore merely mirror the emphasis in address in the ancient sources. This trend naturally leads to questions and will be discussed accordingly.

The paper will assume the following form. The first chapter will offer a historiographical overview of the subject. Consequently, it will offer theoretical consideration and positions this paper in the wider historiographical context. Most notably, the third paragraph will provide an interpretation of ‘meaning’, as posed in the main question, and offer a theoretical framework that enables its study. Simultaneously, this serves as a methodological groundwork.

The second chapter will introduce the concept of ritual in the Roman religious system and will pose an interpretation of ‘ritual’ effective to the purposes of this paper. The second paragraph will provide an overview of the corpus of Roman martial rituals, while concurrently presenting a selection in material. In the following paragraphs, the rituals of the *lustratio* and the *auspicium* will take centre stage. These rituals were performed before battle and may therefore be addressed first. The chapter will be concluded with some final remarks.

Chapter three will focus on rituals that appear to have been structurally performed in the aftermath of battle. The first paragraph will address several rituals that were bound to the Roman calendar. The second paragraph will discuss the *devotio hostium* – the sacrifice of enemy arms and armour. The third paragraph will discuss the somewhat odd act of passing the defeated enemies under the yoke, the *passum sub iugum*. Lastly, the well-known *triumphus* will receive address, followed by some concluding remarks.

The fourth chapter will adopt an encompassing perspective on the matters discussed in the chapters before. I will discuss the various rituals addressed before comparatively and analyse the trends that may be witnessed. I will address the ritual pattern that may have been of note to the soldier. Consequently, I will locate my findings in its historical context and engage in the discussion necessary to answer the main question, posed in this introduction.

The conclusion will offer final results and suggestions for further research potential. Appendices I, II, III, IV, and V, provide an overview of the collected source material relevant to this thesis. In this order, I believe the question *Could the structural prevalence of ritual in the Roman conduct of war have provided narrative force to the individual experience of battle, and thereby alleviated its psychological impact?* can be answered and explained in the most effective way.

I – Ritual, Religion, and the Experience of War – Historiography and Theory

Why did the Romans perform their rituals? This is certainly no new question – there is, however, new ground that can be explored. This chapter aims to contextualize the approach of this paper. The following historiographical overview provides both the basis and incentive of my research. I believe it is necessary to examine the historiography of both Roman ritual and approaches to the ancient mind at war adequately, for this will pave way for my theoretical framework. Roman ritual, as will be addressed shortly, has been studied extensively. It is therefore not the aim of this paper to provide an extensive review of this discourse, or any encompassing review at all. Neither will it be the scope of this paper to engage in semantic conversation with scholars such as Georg Wissowa, William Warde Fowler, or Georges Dumézil – pioneers in the study and interpretation of Roman religion and ritual. The goal of the following historiographical outline is to illustrate what has *not* been addressed sufficiently. Similarly, and consequently, this paper has no interest in an extensive review of psychological approaches to the ancient past. This historiographical outline will therefore assume the form of a synopsis: what perspectives and methods have evolved in the past decades to grasp the psychology of the ancient world? And naturally, where does this paper originate and interpose?

As will become apparent, the approaches to ritual and cognition are complementary – or rather, they are in synergy, as the theoretical framework, featured in the third paragraph, will demonstrate. The framework of this paper is interdisciplinary: it will both bridge and fill in the gap between the fields of religion, ritual, and the experience of war, providing new insights into Roman martial rituals and the psychology of ancient warfare. It is my aim to juxtapose approaches to reach a new understanding. The resulting whole is greater than its parts.

How then, have Roman rituals been interpreted in the past? Consequently, how have scholars studied ancient cognition? And what approach will this paper adopt to generate a new understanding of the prevalence of Roman martial rituals? These three questions will be discussed in the next paragraph.

§1.1 The study of Roman ritual

Studying religion in the Roman world may be done best by studying the way in which it primarily became manifest and expressed: in the conduct of ritual. In that sense, Roman religion was above all expressive and performative. The instrumentation of Roman religion has

frequently been noted in scholarly review.³⁸ I will provide a brief outline of the ways in which Roman religion and martial rituals have been addressed in the past. This historiographical overview will clarify the position of this thesis and explain the motivations behind its approach.

Any scholar dealing with the topic of Roman religion – or in fact, any topic on Roman history – will encounter the works of great scholars such as Theodor Mommsen, Georg Wissowa, and William Warde Fowler, perforce. Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte* (1854-1856) touched upon the topic of religion, though only briefly.³⁹ Wissowa, a student of Mommsen, was amongst the first to devote a complete work to the topic of Roman religion in *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (1902).⁴⁰ It was an outline foremost, and offered an overview of all deities, cults, practices, and rituals that constituted Roman religion. Wissowa shied anthropology and aimed at providing a draft of Roman religious behaviour without the interpretative risks of anthropological enquiry. Fowler, a British historian on Roman religion, built on Wissowa's work in his magnum opus *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (1911).⁴¹ He did not engage in cognitive discourse, nor did he make psychological assumptions about the effects of religious experience. Rather, his approach was concerned with the rule of law: he interpreted the Roman religious system as one dictated by laws – perhaps unwritten, but widely understood.⁴² In this arrangement, the *pax deorum* was to be maintained, 'a system of bargaining with the gods: as partaking of the nature of a legal contract.'⁴³ Sacrifice, prayer, the fulfilment of vows, purification, and the expiation of omens could serve to secure this precarious relationship, Fowler noted. It was a 'highly technical subject' for the Romans.⁴⁴ Latte (1960) replaced Wissowa's 'handbook' of Roman religion after over fifty years in *Römische Religionsgeschichte*. He similarly adopted an encompassing approach, noting the changes Roman religion went through from the earliest 'religions of the farmer' to its latest Christian form.⁴⁵ Ritual practice, he noted, may sometimes have preceded an established belief in the gods, and its significance is therefore as much generated by tradition as its relation to the divine. With the decline of the Republic, so too did ritual observance decline. Latte concludes on its

³⁸ See, for example: J. Rüpke, *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome* (Ithaca, 2016). Rüpke argues that Roman Religion became manifest through the performance of ritual, hence 'Lived Religion'.

³⁹ T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1854-1856).

⁴⁰ G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (Munich, 1902).

⁴¹ W. W. Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (London, 1911).

⁴² The legal approach to Roman society was already introduced by Mommsen, both a jurist and historian. Frankly, Mommsen did not offer the comprehensive legal interpretation of Roman religion as Fowler did.

⁴³ Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Romans*, 200.

⁴⁴ Fowler, 7.

⁴⁵ K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (München, 1960), 64.

‘political abuse’.⁴⁶ Of further note is the work of Versnel. In his dissertation *Triumphus* (1970), he traced the vast chronological trajectory of the Roman triumph, effectively demonstrating both the changeable and conservative nature of Roman ritual.⁴⁷ In *Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual* (1993), Versnel similarly noted the ambiguity between myth and ritual, often leading to misinterpretation, invention, and inconsistency.⁴⁸

More recently, Beard, North & Price (1998) provided an extensive review of religion in the Roman world in two volumes in *Religions of Rome*.⁴⁹ Similarly to Latte, their works are tasked with presenting a coherent overview, supported by a collection of relevant source material in the second volume. Scheid’s *Introduction to Roman Religion* (2003) and Warrior’s *Roman Religion* (2006) adopted a similar course. Beard’s personal work *The Roman Triumph* (2007) offered a clever reinterpretation of one of the more famous Roman rituals.⁵⁰ Based on her analysis of the Roman triumph, ‘Roman religious ritual’, she surmised, ‘can be characterized as *both* rigidly conservative *and* extraordinarily open to innovation.’⁵¹ The scholar of Roman religion is nearly always confronted with the socio-anthropological field of ritual studies. Evidently, this field harbours a vast historiography as well, which I will briefly address in the next chapter.

Besides encompassing approaches to Roman religion and ritual conduct, more detailed analyses have demonstrated the versatility of Roman religion. Notably, the expediency of religion has been forwarded by scholars such as Rasmussen (2003), Rosenberger (2007), Ando (2008), Santangelo (2008), Orlin (2010), and Smith (2012), who all emphasized the socio-political drive behind the performance of religion, and the socio-political goals that could be achieved by performing and appropriating ritual conduct.⁵² Orlin, for instance, concluded that ‘in Roman religious actions we may see reflected a mind-set that is as much politically

⁴⁶ Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte*, 287-288.

⁴⁷ H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development, and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden, 1970).

⁴⁸ H.S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion, vol. II: Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual* (Leiden, 1993).

⁴⁹ Beard, et al., *Religions of Rome: Volume I & II*.

⁵⁰ M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, 2007).

⁵¹ Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 129. Italics by Beard.

⁵² S.W. Rasmussen, *Public Portents in Republican Rome* (Rome, 2003); V. Rosenberger, ‘Republican Nobiles: Controlling the Res Publica’, in: J. Rüpke (ed.), *Blackwell Companion to Roman Religion* (London, 2001), 292-303; Ando, *The Matter of the Gods* (2008); F. Santangelo, ‘The Fetials and their ius’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 51.1 (2010), 63-93; E. Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire* (Oxford, 2010); C.J. Smith, ‘The Feriae Latinae’, in: J.R. Brandt & J.W. Iddeng, *Greek and Roman Festivals: Content, Meaning, and Practice* (Oxford, 2012), 267-288.

conditioned as religiously correct.’⁵³ The omnipresence of religious conduct in Roman society meant that it could be utilized to achieve political ends as well. In the texts of Cicero, we may already encounter such observations.⁵⁴

In the attempt to retrieve and explain the meaning of ritual, scholars recently have shifted perspective to those who experienced it. Through the use of cognition, of studying the modes by which humans make sense of their environment and experiences, new approaches have been forwarded by scholars such as Whitehouse, Martin, and Beck. Coined as ‘Cognitive Science of Religion’ (CSR), ancient rituals have been interpreted in promising new ways. Whitehouse & Martin (2004) explored the use of cognition in *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History, and Cognition*, in which they forwarded that it is ‘the social world of difference and not the common mental structures of human cognition’ that we are dealing with.⁵⁵ Such approaches have often been of anthropological use, but Whitehouse & Martin rightly note the value it may hold for the historian.⁵⁶ Martin (2006) offers an interesting case of cognitive theorising into the Hellenistic mystery religions, in which he analyses the attractiveness of cult in Roman society.⁵⁷ Of serious note is the study of Panagiotidou & Beck (2017), in which they demonstrated the potential of a full-scale cognitive interpretation of ritual in their analysis of the Mithras cult.⁵⁸ The mode by which the ancient Romans ‘acquire, store, transform, and use knowledge of their surroundings’, they argued, was no different than ours.⁵⁹ The well-preserved *mithraea* throughout the Mediterranean offered them the spatial information by which they could reconstrue the cognitive experience of space and the rituals that were performed in them. Embodied cognition, ‘the portal which connects the “lived bodies” with their surroundings and mediates self-awareness of the embodied subjects as unique

⁵³ Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome*, 136.

⁵⁴ Cic. *Div.* 2.35.75: ‘...although in the beginning augural law was established from a belief in divination, yet later it was maintained and preserved from considerations of political expediency.’

⁵⁵ H. Whitehouse & L.H. Martin (eds.), *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History, and Cognition* (New York, 2004), 46.

⁵⁶ H. Whitehouse & L.H. Martin (eds.), *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, History, and Cognition* (New York, 2004): ‘Suggestions that the cognitive sciences might provide a theoretical foundation for the study of religions have appealed rather more to anthropologists than to historians of religion, and ethnographic data have more often been elicited than have historical materials to illustrate or to assess the analyses of and the predictions about religion by cognitive theorists...’ More specifically, see: D.L. Gragg, ‘Old and New in Roman Religion: A Cognitive Account’, in: Whitehouse & Martin, *Theorizing Religions Past*, 69-86.

⁵⁷ L.H. Martin, ‘Cognitive Science, Ritual, and the Hellenistic Mystery Religions’, *Religion and Theology*, 13.3-4 (2006), 383-395.

⁵⁸ O. Panagiotidou & R. Beck, *The Roman Mithras Cult: A Cognitive Approach* (New York, 2017).

⁵⁹ Panagiotidou & Beck, *The Roman Mithras Cult*, 4.

entities', allowed them to efficiently study the effect of one's surroundings on his/her cognitive processes of sense-making.⁶⁰ This is a promising field of study.

With regard to rituals that featured in the Roman military landscape, contributions number fewer. In the effort of locating the 'purest' and most distant origins of rituals, discussion of specific martial rituals has often fixated on the topic of symbolism. This scholarly trend was professed most by Georges Dumézil, who regularly pointed at the Indic roots of European rituals in his works.⁶¹ The horse-sacrifice of the *equus october*, for instance, mirrored that of the Vedic *asvamedha*, he argued.⁶² Similarly, in Rose (1922) we may find an extensive review of the origin and symbolism of the Roman sacrifice of enemy weapons.⁶³ Halliday (1924) sought after cultural parallels in his discussion of the Roman ritual of the passing under the yoke.⁶⁴ And Rosivach (1983), for example, set out to analyse the symbolic role that Mars played in the various rituals performed in the capital.⁶⁵ This approach has received wide attention in earlier scholarly debate.

More recent discussion of the Roman martial ritual corpus can be found in Rüpke (1990), Stoll (2010), Rich (2013), and Piegdoń (2014). Rüpke's *Domi Militiae* addressed the religious structure of the Roman army, discussing the various religious phases a Roman army would go through in the course of warfare.⁶⁶ Rüpke's work most of all offers an encapsulating collection of the source material and focuses on the role of the Roman state in military religious conduct. He concludes: 'Römische Religion konstruiert Krieg als seine rein staatliche Aktivität.'⁶⁷ Stoll's entry in *A Companion to the Roman Army* is primarily focused on the role of cult religion in the imperial army, yet he ascertained similar conclusions with regard to the importance of state in army religion.⁶⁸ Rich evaluated the various Roman war rituals in the Republic more extensively and noted the shift in agency from the commander to the emperor.⁶⁹

⁶⁰ Panagiotidou & Beck, 70-71.

⁶¹ See, for example: G. Dumézil, *The Destiny of the Warrior* (translated, Chicago, 1973); G. Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion* (translated, Baltimore, 1996). Dumézil can, in a sense, also be considered as a mythographer.

⁶² Pascal (1981) took the effort to re-address the topic of the Vedic origins of the *equus october* in: C.B. Pascal, 'October Horse', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 85 (1981), 261.

⁶³ Rose, H.J., 'Lua Mater: Fire, Rust, and War in Early Roman Cult', *The Classical Review*, 36.1/2 (1922), 15-18.

⁶⁴ W.R. Halliday, 'Passing under the Yoke', *Folklore*, 35.1 (1924), 93-95.

⁶⁵ Rosivach, V.J., 'Mars, the Lustral God', *Latomus*, 42.3 (1983), 509-521.

⁶⁶ J. Rüpke, *Domi Militiae: Die Religiöse Konstruktion des Krieges in Rom* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁶⁷ Rüpke, *Domi Militiae*, 247.

⁶⁸ Stoll, 'The Religions of the Armies', 451.

⁶⁹ Rich, 'Roman Rituals of War', 692: 'However, the most radical change came with the replacement of the Republic by the rule of emperors. As with other Republican institutions, Augustus subtly deployed war rituals, some little known except to antiquarians, in the construction of his regime (...)'.

The most recent addition to the study of Roman martial rituals is by Piegdóń (2014). His approach focused on a shared Italic warrior ethos, but unfortunately led to cursory results.⁷⁰

In review, a variety of interpretations of Roman ritual has been addressed in the past. I believe this may serve to demonstrate the versatility and potency of the study of ritual. Clearly, one may now wonder where and how this thesis will interpose in this vast collection. As I have forwarded in the introduction, I am interested in the socio-psychological effects that Roman martial rituals may have had on the soldier's experience of battle. This interest springs forth from the religious whole in Roman warfare that has been noticed in historiographical review, as well as the effects that it may have had on those experiencing this whole, as inferred from the accounts of Livy, Appian, and Cicero. Thus, the interpretation of ritual that this paper seeks to analyse is concerned with the position it asserted in the larger plotline of warfare. In short, I am interested in the ways in which the performance and experience of ritual altered the experience of the succeeding, or preceding, experience of battle. It attempts to extract the meaning ritual conveyed in relation to its catalyst – the notion of battle. Clearly then, the notion of 'meaning' and the experience of battle requires address. The following paragraph will provide a historiographical context to these notions. I believe this may offer sufficient historiographical and theoretical review from which the proposition of this thesis will present itself.

§1.2 War, trauma, and the ancient world

Studying the ancient experience and perception of war is faced with inevitable difficulties. Recently, the study of the psychological impact of warfare – the study of trauma – has gained ground in historiographical review. By mode of an interdisciplinary approach, using the disciplines of history, psychology, psychiatry, neuroscience, and anthropology, scholars have addressed intriguing new topics with regard to the ancient mind at war – it is a much debated and presently evolving field. War has always had the potential to cause psychological harm, we may freely argue, yet the conditions in which war was performed and perceived are historically and culturally variable. The disposition towards violence; towards killing, alters the consequent psychological impact of that act. It alters the way in which we psychologically cope, and thereby alters the possibility of events being universally traumatizing. Thus, we may question the nature of combat trauma too – or rather, as some posit, the 'nurture' of combat trauma. For if the socio-

⁷⁰ Piegdóń, 'Some Remarks on War Rituals in Archaic Italy and Rome and the Beginnings of Roman Imperialism', 93-94: 'Roman war rituals were not an exception in Italy (...) The presence of war rites in Italic tribes indicates that in Italy, war was an important element of existence.'

cultural environment influences the perception and experience of combat, does this also have the potential to influence the prevalence of combat trauma? In other words, is combat trauma a universally experienced trans-historical phenomenon?

In the last twenty years, scholarly debate has paid much attention to answering this question. To view trauma as a universal phenomenon, is to assert that human biology and physiology – and thereby stress-response – is universal too. From this perspective, combat trauma is a phenomenon that the Roman soldier could likely have experienced too. Boston psychiatrist Jonathan Shay was the first to argue for the universality of trauma. In *Achilles in Vietnam* (1995), Shay effectively paralleled the experiences of Vietnam veterans to the Homeric heroes in the *Iliad*. The feelings his patients expressed to him, Shay recognized in the war-torn characters of Achilles, Ajax, and Hector. Even more so, ‘Homer has seen things that we in psychiatry and psychology have more or less missed’, he argues.⁷¹ Shay paved the way for a new universalist understanding of combat trauma, focusing on deeply rooted feelings such as guilt and trust, rather than official terminology and symptomatology. Classicist and Vietnam veteran Lawrence Tritle followed in his footsteps with *From Melos to My Lai* (2000) – in essence very much the same, yet Tritle ventured further in post-diagnosing historical figures and in projecting a known concept onto a past wherein unknown (a form of ‘presentism’, on which I will elaborate).⁷² Shay’s follow-up book, *Odysseus in America* (2002), centered on the veterans’ experience of homecoming. Tritle contrasts the spheres of combat and non-combat, and of the military and civilian way of life. Homecoming therefore naturally forms an obstacle for the soldier: the transition from an environment in which violence was allowed to one where it was not, facilitated traumatic response.⁷³ Homer’s *Odyssey* metaphorized this process, Shay argued – unfortunately venturing somewhat too far in his interpretation.⁷⁴

Arguing against the notion of universalism, Allan Young adhered to a relativist understanding in *Harmony of Illusions* (1997): combat trauma, he argued, is a product of our time – a cultural construct, and therefore not universally applicable.⁷⁵ Shay’s parallels between Vietnam and Troy were inherently flawed, and subject to the anachronistic projection of modern concepts on the past, Young argued. The relativist school developed over the years, notably

⁷¹ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, xiii.

⁷² Tritle, *From Melos to My Lai*.

⁷³ J. Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Rituals of Homecoming* (New York, 2002).

⁷⁴ Shay’s argument is indeed clear and profound: in returning from the military sphere to the civilian, the combatant faces various mental trials. To prove his point – one rooted in present-day psychiatric experience – Shay is somewhat biased, interpreting metaphors and symbols in the *Odyssey* too eagerly. Nevertheless, I believe Shay succeeded in emphasizing the significance of homecoming for the combatant, both in the present and in the past.

⁷⁵ A. Young, *Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton, 1997).

with Jason Crowley's *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite* (2012), in which he argued that culture determined the perspective towards war: in ancient Athens, he concluded, violence and war were accommodated, accepted, and therefore psychologically less harmful.⁷⁶

This is not the place to discuss the full history of the study of combat trauma in the past. Nevertheless, what we can learn from this, is that there is a strong dichotomy in conceptual thinking: the universalist approach opposed to the relativist approach (they do not necessarily exclude one another, of course).⁷⁷ The universalist position asserts that human biology is universal, and its physiology responds similarly to impulses – both now and in antiquity. The way we experience and process stress and fear, is universal. The relativist position argues that trauma is subject to social and cultural variables. The conditions for trauma are determined by their historical environments. The ancient culture of combat differs significantly from the present, it is therefore problematic to draw direct parallels with the past.⁷⁸ The universalist approach asserts human biological and physiological response to stress to be universal, whereas the relativist approach argues trauma to be a socio-culturally subjective phenomenon. The former argues for its ancient existence, whereas the latter argues against its ancient existence. At present, the universalist-relativist debate is far from solved. This I believe demonstrates the strength and validity of both views.

There is however a sense of common ground: whether the ancients did experience combat trauma or not, there seems to be consensus that we can in fact reconstruct experience in the past – that we can delve into the ancient mind from a cognitive approach – and thereby can determine whether they experienced trauma or not. Thus, both the universalist and relativist

⁷⁶ Crowley, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite* (2012).

⁷⁷ Proponents of the universalist approach are: Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam* (1995); Shay, *Odysseus in America* (2002); L. Tritle, 'Hector's body: Mutilation of the dead ancient Greece and Vietnam', *Ancient History Bulletin*, 11 (1997), 123-136; Tritle, *From Melos to My Lai* (2002); J.E. Osterman & J.T.V.M. de Jong, 'Cultural issues and trauma', in: M.J. Friedman, T.M. Kean & P.A. Resick (eds.), *PTSD: Science & practice – A comprehensive handbook* (New York, 2007), 425-446; P.A. Mackowiak, & S.V. Batten, 'Post-traumatic Stress Reactions before the Advent of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Potential Effects on the Lives and Legacies of Alexander the Great, Captain James Cook, Emily Dickinson, and Florence Nightingale', *Military Medicine*, 173 (2008), 1158-1163; several entries in: P. Meineck & D. Konstan (eds.), *Combat Trauma and the Ancient Greeks* (New York, 2014); and several entries in: 'D.E. Hinton & B.J. Good (eds.), *Culture and PTSD: Trauma in Global and Historical Perspective* (Pennsylvania, 2015). Proponents of the relativist approach can be determined as: Young, *Harmony of Illusions* (1997); A.A. Melchior, 'Caesar in Vietnam: Did Roman Soldiers Suffer From Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?', *Greece and Rome*, 58.2 (2011), 209-238; Crowley, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite* (2012);

⁷⁸ For a simple yet effective explanation of the universalist-relativist debate, see an article by J. Crowley & O. Rees, 'PTSD in Ancient Greece: Was there mental trauma in ancient warfare?', *Ancient Warfare*, IX.4 (2015), 70-74.

position agree on the fact that we can reasonably study ancient cognition. The differing conceptual approaches are in fundamental agreement.

Fuelled by the novelty of this cognitive perspective, several studies have focused on the retrospective diagnosing of historical figures with PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) or attribution of symptoms of the phenomenon. Such retrospective studies have shown that Alexander the Great, for example, ticked many boxes of the criteria for PTSD, as dictated by the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV): sleeplessness, emotional numbness, hyper-alertness – he was allegedly even too psychologically incapacitated to have been able to further his eastern campaign, had he lived.⁷⁹ Gaius Marius too, qualified for various of the more severe symptoms as featured in the DSM-IV criteria: intrusive memories (B1), nightmares (B2), delirium (B3), sleeplessness (D1), and hypervigilance (D4).⁸⁰ Unfortunately, the authors note, they were unable to ‘confirm a full PTSD diagnosis because [the ancient] authors were not likely to assess all DSM criteria among their contemporaries.’ The same held for Gilgamesh, the famous king of Uruk, who also exhibited the symptomatology of criterion B of the DSM. Additionally, he qualified for category C (avoidance and numbing), therefore entitling him to PTSD on the grounds of mood disturbance manifesting itself through ‘complicated bereavement or depression.’⁸¹ Clearchus of Sparta, famous for his role in Xenophon’s *Anabasis* – who in fact offers an eyewitness account – demonstrated rage (B5) and hypervigilance (D4) which, combined with other symptoms, made him the ‘first-known case of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, in the western literary tradition.’⁸² Such retrospective studies have been conducted on various other historical figures in the past decades, often featuring in more popular literature and media.⁸³

⁷⁹ P.A. Mackowiak, & S.V. Batten, ‘Post-traumatic Stress Reactions before the Advent of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: Potential Effects on the Lives and Legacies of Alexander the Great, Captain James Cook, Emily Dickinson, and Florence Nightingale’, *Military Medicine*, 173 (2008), 1161. In their cross-historical study, Mackowiak & Batten conclude that all four of their case-studies (Alexander, James Cook, Emily Dickinson, and Florence Nightingale) contracted a form of PTSD: ‘If these four famous individuals did all have PTSD. as our interpretation of the evidence suggests, then their illnesses covered a broad spectrum of the condition...’ (p. 1162). The criteria of the DSM-IV are used in the article since the DSM-V, which we now use, was published in 2013. The DSM-V can freely be consulted online. Also, see: S. Kotsopoulos, ‘Arretaeus the Cappadocian on mental illness’, *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 27 (1986), 171–179. Kotsopoulos argued for Arretaeus abilities as a psychiatrist. Or: G. Devereux, ‘The psychotherapy scene in Euripides’ *Bacchae*’, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 90 (1970), 35–48.

⁸⁰ P.J. Birmes, et al., ‘Psychotraumatology in Antiquity’, *Stress and Health*, 26 (2010), 27.

⁸¹ Birmes, ‘Psychotraumatology in Antiquity’, 29.

⁸² L. Tritle, ‘Xenophon’s portrait of Clearchus: A study in post-traumatic stress disorder’, in: Tuplin, C. (ed.) *Xenophon and his world* (Stuttgart, 2004), 326.

⁸³ See for example: Daily Mail (23-01-2015), ‘Did ancient warriors suffer PTSD too?’, or: Trouw (26-01-2015), ‘Oorlogstrauma ouder dan de weg naar Rome’.

To imagine a traumatized Alexander, delirious Marius, depressed Gilgamesh, or enraged Clearchus, is indeed alluring. It offers a window into the ancient mind. Moreover, it offers a *familiar* window, for it allows us to view the distant character of Alexander through the lens of the present-day terminology and understanding of PTSD. Though such retrospective diagnoses are theoretically not incorrect – for the reported behaviour *does* tick the modern boxes of the DSM criteria – they rest on the erroneous principle that modern concepts can be directly projected onto the past. In this case, the principle that by inspecting the *reported* behaviour of historical figures on symptoms of a phenomenon that is only presently defined and understood (i.e. PTSD), we can reasonably attribute them with that phenomenon. Consequently, by attributing PTSD, we are led to assume that we have a reliable insight into the ancient mind: a mind that is sleepless, numbed, delirious, and ravaged – a mind that is organized by the present-day symptomatology of PTSD, and is interpreted according to the present-day understanding of the vocabulary of trauma. In short, a mind on par with ours. In *Historian's Fallacies* (1970), Fischer coined the term of 'presentism': 'a complex anachronism, in which the antecedent in a narrative series is falsified by being defined or interpreted in terms of the consequent.'⁸⁴ In other words, the risk of interpreting the past in terms of the present. Clearly, one could argue that the historian is always confronted with the problem of presentism, for we can only interpret and understand the past according to our own terms and knowledge.⁸⁵ Anything concerning the past is automatically influenced by present understanding.

My research would end here if I were to comply with this statement. Clearly, we must break the circular reasoning: 'A reflection on what truth is in the human sciences must not try to reflect itself out of the tradition whose binding force it has recognized.', as historical philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer rightly noted.⁸⁶ Evidently, we cannot single out the present in our interpretation of the past – and evidently, we must not let that get in the way of conducting historical research. The problem with the 'presentist' bias is one of superficiality then. If we are led by the conceptual borders of PTSD, we are simultaneously constrained by them. We cannot grasp a phenomenon as varying and ambiguous as trauma in the single attributed form of PTSD. Terminology and classification prove troublesome even in modern psychiatry, the study of trauma being subject to methodological and paradigmatic shifts regularly. Furthermore, as Shay

⁸⁴ D.H. Fischer, *Historian's Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York, 1970), 135.

⁸⁵ As historian Lynn Hunt for example comments: 'Presentism admits of no ready solution; it turns out to be very difficult to exit from modernity or our modern Western historical consciousness. But it is possible to remind ourselves of the virtues of maintaining a fruitful tension between present concerns and respect for the past.' (in: The newsmagazine of the American Historical Association, 01-05-2012).

⁸⁶ H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (translation by J. Weinsheimer & D. Marshall, London, 2013) 17.

rightly noted: 'PTSD can unfortunately mimic virtually any condition in psychiatry.'⁸⁷ The study of trauma is faced with the fundamental discrepancy of attempting to understand that which is not understood; of mapping 'mis-experienced' experience; of describing the indescribable; of talking about the unspeakable.

Thus, the study of trauma is faced with difficulties – both in the present, and its projection on the past. How then, can we study the psychological effects of war in antiquity? How can we grasp the phenomenon of combat trauma? And naturally, how does this relate to ritual? In the next paragraph I will propose an answer to these questions and introduce the theoretical framework that will be foundational to this research.

§1.3 Narrative and trauma: a theoretical framework

I have explained above the difficulties of presentism, terminology, labels, and diagnoses – difficulties reserved for both the historian and the psychiatrist, though in this study only concerned with the former. It is my aim to bypass these difficulties and reach an understanding of the phenomenon of combat trauma that lends itself for trans-historical study.

Definitions of trauma, or 'PTSD', have been developed specifically for the circumstances in which it was of concern. When we apply the phenomenon of trauma to a past in which it was undefined, we risk presentism. The precursory notion of 'shellshock', for instance, reflected the socio-cultural impact of modern artillery-warfare.⁸⁸ The First World War was marked by new technologies and tactics: 'shelling', automated weapons, chemical warfare – leading to a war more static than before. Its participants were subject to continuous bombings while entrapped in trenches. This mental strain produced psychosomatic wounds of which direct physical causes could not be found. As explanation, British physician Charles Myers coined the term 'shellshock' in the medical journal *The Lancet* in 1915, thereby offering an interpretation that reflected contemporaneous issues: the shock caused by shells bursting.⁸⁹ Combat Stress, Combat Stress Reaction, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: these terms too, are contemporaneously bound by the use of the word 'stress' – which has become socially introduced and entrenched since the second half of the twentieth century.⁹⁰ Clearly, we will

⁸⁷ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 182.

⁸⁸ See: A. van Lil, 'Trauma en Hysterie in de Grote Oorlog', *Historisch Tijdschrift Aanzet* (30-05-2016).

⁸⁹ C.S. Myers, 'A contribution to the study of shellshock', *The Lancet*, 1 (1915), 316-320. Interestingly, even his patients suggested the shells to have been the cause of symptoms. Of a patient, he recalls: 'It was this shell, he says, which "caused his blindness." (p.316).

⁹⁰ R. Viner, 'Putting Stress in Life: Hans Selye and the Making of Stress Theory', *Social Studies of Science*, 29.3 (1999), 391-410.

never be able to fully dissociate from the present when studying the past, and it is not the purpose of this research to attempt to do so. Rather, I suggest the ‘distillation’ of a phenomenon: of stripping a notion of its socio-cultural associations, leaving behind a more simplified yet direct phenomenon, lending itself better for trans-historical application. In the case of trauma, this is about basic understanding and cognitive processing.

I believe we need to look for a cognitive link by which we can bridge the gap of history. We need to understand trauma – the basis of trauma. A traumatic experience is marked by an overwhelming amount of impulses – of ‘stress’ – which exceeds the individual’s psychological ability to cope. It can be an emotionally transgressive event, which violates our expectations, norms, and values, and thereby infringes our moral horizon. A traumatic experience is a cognitive break: it obstructs our ability to properly assign emotions to that experience, and therefore properly process that experience. It obstructs our process of sense-making. It is an experience which cannot be made fit to the structure of our memory, due to the lack of proper context. In short, it is an experience in lack of a meaningful narrative. This concept, of ‘narrative’: of structuring events in time; of assigning context and meaning; of sense-making, is what I believe offers the link in our study into Roman martial rituals and combat trauma.

In the introduction of his famous *The Content of the Form* (1990), historian Hayden White writes:

‘To raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture and, possibly, even on the nature of humanity itself. (...) Far from being a problem then, narrative might well be considered a solution to a problem of general human concern, namely, the problem of how to translate knowing into telling, the problem of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning that are generally human rather than culture-specific.’⁹¹

Narrative, White argues, is the primordial mode of human understanding. The principal way human beings structure time is through narrative: it connects events through time and creates a comprehensible overview. By structuring events in time, by creating a narrative, we understand. This simple, or perhaps rather complex, concept is an inherent biological feature to mankind. A brief example illustrates this: when seeing a picture, we automatically tend to read this according to the structure of narrative. The most basic picture of a man leads us to ask questions: Who is this man? Where is he? Why is he here? How did he get here? By answering these

⁹¹ H. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1990), 1.

questions, and creating the context of a story, we attempt to understand. Contextualizing things into a comprehensible narrative enables us to assign meaning to them, and therefore understanding. The tendency to create this context – to understand through the frame of narrative – we might call ‘narrative perception’: the habit to perceive and process in the form of narrative.⁹² Contextualizing events and experiences into a comprehensible narrative enables us to assign meaning to it and thereby understand. It is the most basic process of ‘framing’, we might argue – of providing a meaningful frame to experiences, by which they are provided with meaningful context. It is a cognitive tool we apply almost automatically and rather subconsciously to grasp the things we experience and process them. It is our primordial mode of understanding, and therefore fundamental if we want to understand the other side of the coin: ‘misunderstanding’; cognitive failure; or, in other words, if we want to understand trauma.

The same principle of narrative perception holds for the way we structure the past: in memory. Pierre Janet (1859-1947), French psychologist and psychotherapist, coined the notion of ‘narrative memory’. As a pupil of Jean-Martin Charcot, the Parisian founding father of neurology, Janet experienced the advent of hysteria, shellshock, and trauma at the beginning of the twentieth century. He was interested in the structural motives underlying ‘hysterical’ and traumatic expressions; he was interested in the life events and experiences that culminated in trauma. A traumatic memory, he argued, was a memory that could not be transformed into a neutral narrative – that could not be recited in our means of understanding, in narrative form.⁹³ The failure to construct a comprehensible narrative, or to assign memory to an already existing neutral narrative, consequently prevented the ‘synthesis’. In other words, the shards of memory without narrative are prevented from effective integration into the psyche. This, in turn, promotes dissociation, c.q. symptoms of trauma. Janet never took action to define and promote a definition of post-traumatic stress syndrome.⁹⁴ Rather, he was concerned with tracing the root of the problem; of tracing the origins of the wide-ranging symptoms that his patients were displaying. The root of the problem he found in a disrupted narrative memory. In one of his main works, *Les médications psychologiques* (1919), Janet concludes:

⁹² H.P. Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge, 2008), 7-9.

⁹³ B. van der Kolk, P. Brown & O. van der Hart, ‘Pierre Janet on Post-Traumatic Stress’, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 2.4. (1989), 372.

⁹⁴ Kolk, ‘Pierre Janet on Post-Traumatic Stress’, 372.

"[A person] unable to make the recital which we call narrative memory, and yet he remains confronted by [the] difficult situation."⁹⁵

Janet's notion of narrative memory, of mental synthesis, has found much resonance – and in fact, still does. Van der Kolk and Van der Hart (1989) demonstrated and specified Janet's ideas about narrative memory.⁹⁶ Janet's emphasis on dissociation during the experience of a traumatic event should, they argued, receive more attention. In their works, Van der Kolk and Van der Hart have advanced the notion of cognitive overwhelming and dissociative relived memories, as well as Singer (1990).⁹⁷ In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996), Caruth furthers Janet's notion of narrative memory through Freud's psychoanalytic theories.⁹⁸ The involuntary reliving of traumatic memories is due to its failure to assimilate at the moment of its initial experience, she argued, thereby forming a 'rupture in perception'.⁹⁹ Wigren (1994) and Tuval-Mashiach (2004) distinguish narrative distortion on two levels: the narrative of the traumatic event, and the encompassing life-story of the individual.¹⁰⁰ A traumatic event could infringe on both levels: the former is concerned directly with the experience of the event, the latter with placing the event in an individual's larger narrative lifeline. In more recent neuroscientific works, the role of narrative becomes apparent too. (2018), in *Trauma and Literature* (2018), describes the cognitive processes at play: 'Narrative memory consists of the explicit schema and mental constructs that people deploy to sort, organize, and make conscious sense of their experiences. (...) A traumatic memory is defined as an individual or social memory that cannot be fit to narrative memory and so leads to dissociative behaviours.'¹⁰¹ A traumatic event strikes with such force that the brain is unable to effectively record in memory.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ P. Janet, *Les meditations psychologiques* (Paris, 1919), 661. Translation is borrowed from: Kolk, 'Pierre Janet on Post-Traumatic Stress', 375.

⁹⁶ B. van der Kolk & O. van der Hart, 'Pierre Janet and the breakdown of adaption in psychological trauma', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 146.12 (1989), 1530-1540.

⁹⁷ J. Singer, *Repression and Dissociation: Implications for Personality Theory, Psychopathology and Health* (Chicago, 1990).

⁹⁸ C. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, 1996).

⁹⁹ Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 103-104.

¹⁰⁰ J. Wigren, 'Narrative Completion in the Treatment of Trauma', *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 31.3 (1994), 415-423; R. Tuval-Mashiach, et al., 'Coping with Trauma: Narrative and Cognitive Perspectives', *Psychiatry Interpersonal & Biological Processes*, 67.3 (2004), 280-293.

¹⁰¹ W. Seeley, 'Neuroscience, Narrative, and Emotion Regulation', in: J.R. Kurtz (ed.), *Trauma and Literature* (Cambridge, 2018), 158.

¹⁰² J. Pederson, 'Trauma and Narrative', in: Kurtz, *Trauma and Literature*, 100.

Traumatic memories become manifest in diverse ways. Bessel van der Kolk, notes: ‘Terrifying experiences may be remembered with extreme vividness, or may totally resist integration.’¹⁰³ They may be of very specific and intense recollection, or rather of vague and *déjà vu*-like nature. This given, pinpointing trauma to a single ‘mode’ of experience appears impossible, and indeed: undesirable. Nevertheless, what both ends have in common is their deviating dissociative character – their lack of integration into a person’s narrative memory. They have been stored without the correct ‘narrative assignment’; without a proper frame of context which regulates the assignment of emotion to that specific experience. Van der Kolk explains: ‘Instead, the memories may have been organized on an implicit or perceptual level, without any accompanying narrative about what happened.’¹⁰⁴ The parts of the brain responsible for processing memory and assigning emotional response, are being suppressed.¹⁰⁵ This lack of narrative registration; of context; of significance, consequently leads to the maladaptive recollection of the event. This could come in the form of intrusive memories or displaced emotional response: the basis of trauma, we may argue. Trauma then, is the failure of our narrative perception: the lack of a meaningful narrative to which that experience can be assigned. Abbott (2008) explains this process as ‘narrative jamming’: the inability to understand through narrative, thereby leaving a situation without overview, context, perspective, and meaning.¹⁰⁶ It is incompatible with our structure of sense-making, thereby leaving it cognitively unrepresentable. ‘It cannot be generalized. It can only be relived.’, Seeley (2018) aptly writes.¹⁰⁷

I believe the widely varying psychological harm battle may bring forth, its diverse manifestation in the mind, and its diverging responses and symptoms, can all be grasped under the denominator of narrative. The lack of a meaningful narrative obstructs our process of sense-making, thereby making it unfit to narrative memory – exceeding a person’s psychological ability to effectively cope. It is a cognitive break: obstructing our ability to properly assign emotions to that experience, and therefore properly processing that experience. Trauma, in whatever form, bears the marks of a distorted and incomplete narrative.

¹⁰³ B. van der Kolk, ‘Trauma and Memory’, in: B. van der Kolk, A.C. McFarlane & L. Weisaeth (eds.), *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society* (New York, 1996), 282.

¹⁰⁴ Kolk, ‘Trauma and Memory’, 287.

¹⁰⁵ As argued by: Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth (eds.), *Traumatic Stress*; E. Vermetten, ‘Stress, trauma en posttraumatische stressstoornis’, *Tijdschrift voor Psychiatrie*, 51.8 (2009), 595-602.

¹⁰⁶ Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 10.

¹⁰⁷ Seeley, ‘Neuroscience, Narrative, and Emotion Regulation’, 159.

§1.4 Methodology

This simplified yet essential notion of trauma – of an experience without the correct narrative – will form the vantage point of my research. The universality of narrative understanding offers a cognitive link by which the study of the ancient Roman experience of war can be reconstrued and grasped. Narrative offers a framework through which we can study meaning, understanding, and experience, which I believe holds great potential for the study of combat trauma in the past. By studying the narrative value of events and factors that were present on and around the battlefield, we can identify the elements that had the potential to influence the individual's narrative understanding, and thereby the elements that had the potential to either induce or prevent trauma. Derived from the above discussion, I distinguish two methodological approaches that this framework offers:

- 1) The identification of 'narrativizing' elements (c.q. elements that aid the individual in creating a meaningful narrative of events, that aid narrative perception).
- 2) The identification of 'de-narrativizing' elements (c.q. elements that obstruct the individual in creating a meaningful narrative of events, that obstruct narrative perception).

This dual methodological framework offers a simplified yet direct approach to cognition in the ancient past. By stripping the notion of trauma from its cultural frame, and thereby distilling a universal phenomenon from a cultural concept, we may conduct trans-historical analysis more confidently. In light of the previously explained historiographical debate, my interpretation is both universalist and relativist – the former I regard as the essence, the latter as its manifestation. I do not utilize the 'simplification' of trauma out of academic ease or convenience – rather, I regard this approach to be one out of efficiency and necessity. And moreover, one out of historical interest. Clearly, the study of ancient cognition and trauma is faced with methodological and hermeneutical difficulties. If we want to bridge these difficulties and further our understanding of the prevalence of trans-historical phenomena – which is amongst the goals of this research – we need to look for more fundamental links; links that transcend cultural constructs. It is the aim of this research to contribute to the study of trauma, both in its contemporary and historical variants, and introduce and amplify new perspectives. Vice versa, it the aim of this research to understand Roman martial rituals from a new perspective – a perspective that, as I will address in the next chapter, offers a more profound understanding to the prevalence of ritual.

In summation, my research is concerned with the identification and analysis of narrativizing elements. Narrativizing elements aid narrative perception and therefore offer windows of understanding. They are, we might argue, psychological coping mechanisms. As I have outlined in the introduction, the structural prevalence of Roman martial rituals hints at a deeper socio-psychological significance. It is the purpose of my research to reveal, address, and analyse this significance through the notion of narrative understanding. For this reason, I am concerned with the former approach. The latter, the study of de-narrativizing elements, holds potential for studies of a different kind.¹⁰⁸

How then, do Roman martial rituals ‘narrativize’? First, it is necessary to reach some definition of ritual, and its position in the Roman religious and military landscape. This will feature in the following chapter.

¹⁰⁸ An interesting study of the elements that are present in battle that have a disorientating and de-narrativizing effect on the soldier is provided by De Vivo (2014). De Vivo studied the effects of wearing a closed Corinthian helmet in battle. The helmet restricted vision and hearing to a high degree, thereby impeding the senses that allow us to receive information on our surroundings. This lack of incoming information could have had great influence on the soldier’s ability to process and create a meaningful narrative of events. The helmet disorientates. In the words of De Vivo: ‘In particular, the restrictive nature of the Corinthian helmet made it nearly impossible for the individual warrior to access sensory data in order to construct a narrative of experience.’ (p. 179). See: De Vivo, ‘The Memory of Greek Battle: Material Culture and/as Narrative of Combat’, 163-184.

II – Rituals of Opening: The Transition Towards Battle

What is ‘ritual’? Providing a conclusive answer to this question may arguably be one of the most persistent challenges to the scholar concerned with ritual. Interpretations abundant, it nevertheless appears to be difficult to pin down the concept of ritual. What criteria does a set of actions have to fulfil to qualify as a ritual? And moreover, to what degree can and should ritual be defined? Clearly, an answer to these questions would require a commentary vastly exceeding the limits of this paper – and notably, a paper with different interests. For the concept of ‘ritual’ is merely instrumental, rather than fundamental: a denominator by which the wide-ranging manifestations of that phenomenon can effectively be studied. Ritual then, is no phenomenon that this paper seeks to define. Nevertheless, it is requisite to briefly touch upon the topic, for this paper is concerned with the notion of ritual, and a form of consensus as to what constitutes a ritual would be both beneficial and commonplace.

‘...even among those who have specialized in this field there is the widest possible disagreement as to how the word ritual should be used and how the performance of ritual should be understood.’, anthropologist Edmund Leach wrote in a 1968 encyclopaedia entry.¹⁰⁹ The anthropologist, historian, archaeologist, psychologist, theologian, and virtually any other disciplinary scholar: all are concerned with the notion of ritual, and all have their own notion of ritual. In the words of religious historian Jonathan Smith (1987), ritual is ‘a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are.’ – the embodiment of the perceived pure and correct conduct.¹¹⁰ For classicist Walter Burkert (1972), ritual is a reference to myth, and through its re-enactment the survival of myth.¹¹¹ For sociologist Erving Goffman (2005), ritual was about interaction and symbolic communication – a social ‘glue’, both inter- and cross-cultural.¹¹² And in the words of cultural anthropologist Victor Turner (1986), ritual allows ‘the contents of group experiences [to be] replicated, dismembered, remembered, refashioned, and mutely or vocally made meaningful.’¹¹³ In

¹⁰⁹ E. Leach, ‘Ritual’, *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (1968).

¹¹⁰ J. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago, 1987), 109.

¹¹¹ W. Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Translated by P. Bing (Berkeley, 1983), 29-31.

¹¹² B. Stephenson, *Ritual: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2015), 79-80. For Goffman’s work on ritual interaction, see: E. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (London, 2005).

¹¹³ V. Turner, ‘Dewey, Dilthey, and Drama: An Essay in the Anthropology of Experience’, in: V. Turner & E. Bruner (eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (Urbana, 1986), 43.

summation, it may be apparent that interpretations of ritual are myriad. And clearly, we must not wander too far in this myriad.¹¹⁴

I suggest a change of perspective towards a more profound and simplified understanding of the phenomenon of ‘ritual’, instrumental to the scope of this paper. An understanding less concerned with the various theoretical frameworks of the present academic discourse, and much more concerned with Roman attitudes to, and perceptions of, these sets of actions we may now refer to as ‘ritual’. An understanding which does not risk unnecessary theoretical and hermeneutical complexity, by simply viewing ‘ritual’ as those actions, whether physical or verbal, of which it was believed that they had to be performed in a certain manner on certain occasions. When Livy writes that ‘the customary sacrifices had been duly offered’, or Plutarch that the ‘ceremonies of sacrifice and purification which the seers prescribed had been performed’, or Appian of ‘the yoke, this being the mark of shame they are accustomed to put upon others’ – I believe we may infer this sense of actions of which it was believed that they had to be performed in a certain manner on certain occasions.¹¹⁵ When I refer to ‘ritual’ in this paper then, I refer to this notion. Since this study is concerned with ritual from the perspective of the attestant, it benefits from a definition inferred from the attestant.

As with defining ‘ritual’, we naturally need to reach some definition on what constitutes a ‘martial’ ritual, for such a distinction was clearly not recognized by the ancient writers. Any ritualized act that referred to warfare would qualify, one could argue, but such a broad scope would not facilitate the approach of this paper, for I am concerned with the experience of the individual soldier. For that reason, my analysis centres on those ritualized acts that were either *witnessed* or *performed* by the soldier. Clearly, we may not be able to confirm the presence of soldier A when ritual B was performed – source material simply leaves us short. But that is not the *modus operandi* of this paper. And neither does it obstruct the actual approach of this paper, for I believe that a general rule can be inferred from comparative source analysis. By mode of induction; by deriving a general sense of what was believed to be right; of perceived customary behaviour; of correct conduct, we may safely reach consensus on what rituals were supposed to be witnessed or performed by the soldier. I believe such an inductive, commonsensical approach to be both imperative and fruitful in the effort to understand Roman ritual more profoundly. Our definition of a ‘martial’ ritual may therefore be deduced from the occasion on

¹¹⁴ For other notable works on ritual, see: E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (London, 1912); M. Gluckman, *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Societies* (Chicago, 1965); C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973); C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford, 1992).

¹¹⁵ Liv. 37.14.4; Plut. *Marc.* 29; App. *Sam.* 1.6-10.

which it was performed, e.g. in the presence of the army and in the prospective or retrospective relation to battle. I believe we may now have a clear vantagepoint from which we can look more closely at the role of ritual in the Roman religious and military landscape.

§2.1 Ritual in the Roman religious and military landscape

‘...it is a general belief that without a certain form of prayer it would be useless to immolate a victim, and that, with such an informality, the gods would be consulted to little purpose. And then besides, there are different forms of address to the deities, one form for entreating, another form for averting their ire, and another for commendation. We see too, how that our supreme magistrates use certain formulae for their prayers: that not a single word may be omitted or pronounced out of its place, it is the duty of one person to precede the dignitary by reading the formula before him from a written ritual, of another, to keep watch upon every word, and of a third to see that silence is not ominously broken; while a musician, in the meantime, is performing on the flute to prevent any other words being heard. Indeed, there are memorable instances recorded in our Annals, of cases where either the sacrifice has been interrupted, and so blemished, by imprecations, or a mistake has been made in the utterance of the prayer; the result being that the lobe of the liver or the heart has disappeared in a moment, or has been doubled, while the victim stood before the altar.’

– Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*.¹¹⁶

Performing sacrifice was meticulous business. Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE), when discussing the healing efficacy of words, reflects on the strict care that ought to be taken when performing sacrifices. The act of sacrifice was always accompanied by prayer; an address to the designated deity – in a form humbler or more cavalier, reflecting the nature of the situation. The spoken word validated the sacrifice: without the correct address and request, the act of sacrifice was merely ‘hollow’. In the words of Pliny, sacrifice without prayer would indeed be ‘useless’.¹¹⁷ But clearly, not *any* prayer sufficed. Incorrect prayer too, could deem a sacrifice useless: a slip of the tongue, or a silence broken, would render the ritual corrupt. In turn, impure rituals led to consequences impure. As Pliny accounts, the ominous results of incorrectly performed sacrifices have been witnessed by those before him: livers without lobes or doubled hearts – abnormality and un-naturality. Though intended to secure favour, there was a clear flip side to

¹¹⁶ Plin. *Nat. His.* 28.3.

¹¹⁷ In the original version, Pliny writes: ‘*quippe victimas caedi sine precatione non videtur referre aut deos rite consuli.*’

the act of sacrifice, having the potential to both make or break the future to be. Naturally then, measures were taken to cement the precarious interaction between act and speech: a written version served as a blueprint, which was prompted by a first, closely watched by a second, facilitated with silence by a third, and enhanced with music by a fourth. Sacrifice then, was no cursory act. It involved various officials, written texts, musicians, sacrificial victims, and an audience to witness. Appian's account of the performing of the *lustratio* ('lustration') reminds the reader of the care and caution by which such rituals were characterized:

'When the fleet was ready, Octavian performed a lustration for it in the following manner. The altars are erected on the margin of the sea, and the multitude ranger around them in a circle of ships, observing the most profound silence. The priests who perform the ceremony offer the sacrifice while standing at the water's edge, and carry the expiatory offerings in skiffs three times round the fleet, the generals sailing with them, beseeching the gods to turn the bad omens against the victims instead of the fleet. Then, dividing the entrails, they cast a part of them into the sea, and put the remainder on the altars and burn them, while the multitude chant in unison. In this way the Romans perform lustrations of the fleet.'¹¹⁸

Though no witness, Appian had a particular understanding of the way in which the lustration was performed. Whether it was performed in this manner by Octavian, performed in this manner in Appian's day, or simply believed to be performed in this manner: its peculiar and meticulous character stands out.¹¹⁹ Altars were erected on the margin of the sea; silence was to be preserved; the offerings were to be carried around three times; and chants were performed – there appears to have been a clear sense of correct conduct. Things had to occur in a certain way. Furthermore, the sacrifice, we may safely assume, was accompanied by prayer in a manner Pliny has outlined before, adding to the layers of particularity and complexity of the situation. The fragile combination of various acts and speech contributed to the power of rituals performed successfully. We can imagine the disastrous impact a sunken skiff, high wave, or broken silence could have had for a situation like this. Ritual sacrifice then, was indeed meticulous business.

The complex character of ritual sacrifice reflects on the gravity that it was attributed with. A performed sacrifice could be pivotal for the future course of action – its outcome was

¹¹⁸ App. *Civ.* 5.96.

¹¹⁹ The fourth chapter will take into consideration the notion of contemporary reflection. The example here may simply serve to illustrate the particularity of ritual.

therefore to be respected and adhered to. Cicero (106-43 BCE), questioning the nature of the gods, concludes in his second book:

‘Again, prophecies and premonitions of future events cannot but be taken as proofs that the future may appear or be foretold as a warning or portended or predicted to mankind...’¹²⁰

The outcome of rituals, or the process to reach that outcome, was clearly indicative of the future – or, regarded as ‘proof’, as Cicero puts it.¹²¹ The correct conduct of ritual was paramount then, for despite its aim of securing goodwill, it could turn both ways. Precisely because of this; precisely because of its precarious character, it mattered. The risk of ritual failure strengthens ritual success. Or, as Ute Hüsken puts it aptly in *When Rituals go Wrong* (2007): ‘...the effectiveness of a ritual is consolidated only through its possibility of failure.’¹²² The pivotal potential of ritual formed the basis of its significance – its performance then, was a vulnerable act that required solemnity and care in order for it to advance well. A mistake (a ‘vitium’) seemed irreversible.¹²³ ‘Any ritual inaccuracy required a repetition or *instauratio*’, Smith (2012) concludes.¹²⁴ Thus, ritual failure loomed, caused by a variety of factors, whether they be natural or human. Ritual was very much concerned with the notion of purity: anomalies would render the act spoiled and ‘impure’.¹²⁵ As we have read in Pliny, this could come in the form of a prayer pronounced incorrectly. Or, as read in Appian’s account of the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE, a garland placed wrongfully: ‘When Cassius was performing a lustration for his army his lictor placed his garland upon him wrong side up...’¹²⁶ The garland, amongst various other signs, proved to be indicative of the outcome – the slightest wrongdoing or hint at ill disposition could render a ritual desecrated, thereby binding its outcome.¹²⁷ Whether this be the garland placed upside down or, in a manner considered more serious, sacred chickens that would not eat their fodder:

¹²⁰ Cic. *Nat. Gods* 2.3.7.

¹²¹ In the original version, Cicero writes: ‘*Praedictiones vero et praesensiones rerum futurarum quid aliud declarant nisi hominibus ea, quae sint, ostendi, monstrari, portendi, praedici...*’

¹²² U. Hüsken (ed.), *When Rituals go Wrong: Mistakes, Failure, and the Dynamics of Ritual* (Leiden, 2007), 363.

¹²³ A *vitium* (‘defect’ or ‘imperfection’) referred to mistakes made when rituals were performed.

¹²⁴ C.J. Smith, ‘The Feriae Latinae’, in: J.R. Brandt & J.W. Iddeng (eds.), *Greek and Roman Festivals: Content, Meaning, and Practice* (Oxford, 2012), 273.

¹²⁵ A. Chaniotis, ‘Rituals between Norms and Emotions: Rituals as Shared Experience and Memory’, in: E. Stavrianopoulou (ed.), *Ritual and Communication in the Graeco-Roman World* (Liege, 2013), 235-237.

¹²⁶ App. *Civ.* 4.134. More information on the lustration will follow in paragraph 3.3.

¹²⁷ Appian reports various other signs that occurred before battle commenced: birds hovering above the camp without noise, swarms of bees, a strange Ethiopian man arriving before the camp’s gates, and an offering for Victoria that fell on the ground.

‘...when the chickens on being released from their cage refused to feed, he [Claudius] ordered them to be thrown into the water, so that as they would not eat they might drink; but the joke cost the jester himself many tears and the Roman people a great disaster, for the fleet was severely defeated.’¹²⁸

The chickens Cicero refers to were regarded sacred and were, according to custom, consulted by the *pullarius* (‘the keeper of the chickens’) in times of need. If they would eat upon their release, it was considered a favourable sign; if they refused to eat, it represented a bad omen. And clearly, its outcome was to be respected, for needless to say, Claudius’ chickens did not fare well in the water.¹²⁹ The outcome of ritual was therefore binding and unavertable, achieved through strict care and observance.¹³⁰ Any address to the gods, was burdened with this feat. The divine dialogue that ritual offered was therefore marked by decisiveness. Its decisive outcome, however, did not concern the ritual itself: it referred to something else. It referred to events passed or those to come – to expiate past wrongdoing, or to secure favour for future actions. In that sense, it was an act of both significance and ‘signification’: an important and consequential act itself, while appertaining to events even weightier – this weight further emphasized through the performance of the ritual. It was an undertaking both preventive and responsive, thereby always referring to that which must be prevented or expiated. It signified something else then: an action already performed or to be performed, which required divine favour because of its perceived gravity. From that perspective, ritual was an act of signification. It designated the events it referred to, to be meaningful, simply because it was deemed necessary to perform certain acts in a certain manner. I believe that we may rationally infer that when certain acts were performed to absolve another, these other events were perceived to be distinct and

¹²⁸ Cic. *Nat. Gods* 2. 3.7.

¹²⁹ For an excellent analysis of the socio-political agenda of omens and prodigies, and a listing of all reported portents, see: Rasmussen, *Public Portents in Republican Rome*; Orlin, *Foreign Cults in Rome: Creating a Roman Empire*, Chapter 4.

¹³⁰ The case of Marcus Marcellus, provided by Cicero, offers clear illustration of the perceived inevitability of ritual outcome: ‘...it was wholly ignored by that famous man, Marcus Marcellus, who was consul five times and, besides, was a commander-in-chief, as well as a very fine augur. In fact, he used to say that, if he wished to execute some manoeuvre which he did not want interfered with by the auspices, he would travel in a closed litter [so that he would not be able to witness any negative omens]. His method is of a kind with the advice which we augurs give, that the draught cattle be ordered to be unyoked so as to prevent a *iuge auspicium*. What else does a refusal to be warned by Jove accomplish except either to prevent an auspice from occurring, or, if it occurs, to prevent it from being seen?’ (Cic. *Div.* 2.36.77).

significant. In other words, when a ritual was performed to expiate past events or secure favour for those in the future, these events (e.g. a battle) were believed to be significant.

When ritual was performed then, there was well-grounded cause, we may freely argue. For the required organization of knowledge and material, the strict observance and conduct, and the unavertable outcome that followed, all serve as witness to a cause considered serious and significant. It was an act of importance, that referred to events believed to be even more important. When performed then, it referred to causes grave. When performed frequently, it referred to causes even graver. This may already serve to indicate the efficacy of studying ritual patterns.

§2.2 Ritual and the soldier – a preliminary analysis

We have witnessed the particularity and meticulousness of Roman ritual. The sources provide ample reference to the ways in which the Romans conducted ritual and provide a clear impression of the gravity and seriousness that accompanied the performance of these acts. This may offer a window by which we can now study Roman rituals more specifically. As I have made clear in the introduction, our concern here is with rituals that were performed for and by the army in the conduct of war. Thus, this requires some form of selection. What rituals were witnessed or performed by the soldier in Roman conduct of war? What rituals of the ‘religious whole’ that I have previously addressed, pertained to the soldier and the upcoming or prior event of battle? In this paragraph I will review the corpus of Roman martial rituals and provide an answer these questions. This will serve as a vantage point for the more comprehensive analyses that will follow.

It would be commonplace to begin by discussing that which allegedly ‘made’ the soldier – the *sacramentum*, or oath that was taken upon recruitment. The *sacramentum* was clearly a single event and is earliest recorded by Polybius, who noted that an initiate had to swear ‘the oath that he will obey his officers and execute their orders as far as is in his power.’¹³¹ Brunt

¹³¹ Poly. 6.21.2. The oath is also recorded by Vegetius (late 4th century), who notes that ‘the soldiers, therefore, swear they will obey the Emperor willingly and implicitly in all his commands, that they will never desert and will always be ready to sacrifice their lives for the Roman Empire.’ (*On Military Matters* 2.5). Of further interest is a passage in Livy (22.38.2-5), describing the preamble to the Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE: ‘An oath was then administered to the soldiers by their tribunes — which was a thing that they had never done before. For until that day there had only been the general oath to assemble at the bidding of the consuls and not depart without their orders; then, after assembling, they would exchange a voluntary pledge amongst themselves — the cavalrymen in their decuries and the infantry in their centuries — that they would not abandon their ranks for flight or fear, but only to take up or seek a weapon, either to smite an enemy or to save a fellow citizen. This voluntary agreement amongst the men themselves was replaced by an oath administered formally by the tribunes.’ Of additional note is Dionysius of Halicarnassus (11.43.2): ‘For not only does the military oath, which the Romans observe most

(1962) suggested that this oath sanctified the soldier's loyalty, as may be inferred from Varro's discussion of the word *sacramentum*.¹³² However, Holbrook (2003) rightly noted that 'there are no examples of any soldier being explicitly declared *sacer* [outlawed] for breaking the military oath.'¹³³ The oath appears to have been mostly of legal nature, binding the soldier to his commander – in that sense, a military contract. It is difficult to consider the oath in terms of ritual patterns that related to the event of battle. Hence, I believe we need not further address the *sacramentum*, for I believe it is of lesser relevance to the topic of this thesis.

The *fetiales*, a college of priests responsible for declaring war and making formal treaties, may be known best for the *rerum repetitio* – the 'request for reparations', or put simply, declaring war (the *clarigatio*). It was an ancient institution: Livy dates their origin to the reign of Ancus Marcius (c. 641-616 BCE), whereas Dionysius attributes their genesis to the reign of Numa (c.716-673).¹³⁴ A description of their *modus operandi* can be found in Livy. He notes how the priest delivers the demands of the Roman people: first, at the border of enemy territory; second, 'to what man soever finds him'; third, when he 'enters the city gates'; and lastly, when 'he has come into the marketplace'.¹³⁵ If the demands were not met within thirty days, the *fetial* would hurl a hardened iron-tipped spear into enemy lands in the presence of at least 'three grown men'. In this way, Livy notes, the Romans declared their wars.¹³⁶ This peculiar ritual has been addressed well in historiographical review. Walbank (1949), Wiedemann (1986), Beard, North & Price (1998), and Santangelo (2008) all noted that the ritual was only sporadically performed in the mid-late Republic due to practical concerns.¹³⁷ Additionally, the *fetiales*

strictly of all oaths, bid the soldiers follow their generals wherever they may lead, but also the law has given the commanders authority to put to death without a trial all who are disobedient or desert their standards.'

¹³² P.A. Brunt, 'The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 52.1/2 (1962), 75; Var. *Lat. Lan.* 5.180: 'If it is money which comes into court in lawsuits, it is called *sacramentum* 'sacred deposits', from *sacrum* 'sacred'...'

¹³³ A. Holbrook, 'Loyalty and the sacramentum in the Roman Republican army', MA Thesis McMaster University (2003), 92-93: 'We have seen that soldiers deserted commanders such as Flaccus, Fimbria and Pompey, and were accepted with no apparent hesitation into the ranks of other armies. Such men cannot have been considered *sacer*.' Holbrook discusses the notion that a soldier could swear multiple military oaths.

¹³⁴ Liv. 1.32.5; Dion. Hal. 2.72.1.

¹³⁵ Liv. 1.32.7-9.

¹³⁶ Clearly, the Roman state would discuss the situation in the meantime. Before the priest hurled a spear into enemy territory, he would allegedly utter the following prayer (Liv. 1.32.13): 'Whereas the tribes of the Ancient Latins and men of the Ancient Latins have been guilty of acts and offences against the Roman People of the Quirites; and whereas the Roman People of the Quirites has commanded that war be made on the Ancient Latins, and the Senate of the Roman People has approved, agreed, and voted a war with the Ancient Latins; I therefore and the Roman People declare and make war on the tribes of the Ancient Latins and the men of the Ancient Latins.'

¹³⁷ F.W. Walbank, 'Roman Declaration of War in the Third and Second Centuries', *Classical Philology*, 441. (1949), 15; T. Wiedemann, 'The Fetiales: A Reconsideration', *The Classical Quarterly*, 36.2 (1986), 489-490; Beard, North & Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 1*, 132; Santangelo, 'The Fetials and their *ius*', 90. Clearly,

appear to have been mostly concerned with deciding on legal and internal matters, and the more technical and political aspects of waging war.¹³⁸ It appears somewhat difficult to establish the position of the *fetiales* in the Roman soldier's preamble to battle. Clearly, the ritual of the *rerum repetitio* was supposed to have been performed thirty days before hostilities could commence. In doing so, the *fetiales* performed a role more alike that of the diplomat or envoy, hence they would be allowed to enter the enemy city. Its function as a 'war ritual' may therefore be evident, but its position as a war ritual that directly involved the presence or operation of the army seems difficult to ascertain. I believe the rituals of the *fetiales* did therefore not pertain to the soldier and the premonition of battle as such.

The *lustratio exercitus*, the 'lustration' of the troops, can be first dated to the reign of Servius Tullius (ca. 575-535 BCE). Livy describes how 'the whole army was drawn up, and a sacrifice of a pig, a sheep, and a bull was offered by the king for its purification.'¹³⁹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus notes that 'the Romans are to this day purified by this same expiatory sacrifice', thus attesting to the customary character of the ritual.¹⁴⁰ The *lustratio* likely originated as an agricultural ceremony, whereby a specified field would be purified with the sacrifice of the pig, sheep, and bull – the *suovetaurilia*.¹⁴¹ However, the *lustratio exercitus* appears to have evolved into an autonomous ritual, solely concerned with armies (or fleets, the *lustratio classis*) before they marched out or engaged in battle. It involved the full presence of the army, which was consequently purified by the sacrifice. The ancient authors suggest that

when the Romans started to fight wars overseas, the ritual became somewhat difficult to perform. For creative solutions, note Serv. *Aen.* 9.52: thirty-three days after they had demanded redress from the enemy, the fetials threw the spear. Later, when in the time of Pyrrhus the Romans intended to wage war against an overseas foe and found no place where they could execute this rite for declaring war, they devised a scheme whereby one of Pyrrhus' soldiers was captured and made to buy a spot in the Circus Flaminius, so that they could declare war legitimately, as though in a place belonging to the enemy. Later a column was dedicated in that place, in front of the temple of Bellona. Varro, in his *Calenus*, says that at the point when commanders were about to enter an enemy field, they first used to throw a spear into that field for the sake of an omen, in order to capture a place for their camp.' Wiedemann (1986) even suggested that the whole ritual was invented by Octavian in 32 BCE (p.478-484). Polybius make a reference to some surviving ancient customs of the Romans (13.3.7): 'Some slight traces, however, of the ancient principles of warfare survive among the Romans. For they make declaration of war, they very seldom use ambushes, and they fight hand-to-hand at close quarters.'

¹³⁸ Santangelo, 'The Fetials and their *ius*', 92: 'Even when the fetials appear to have been less heavily involved in international relations, there is evidence that they were still consulted about the legal case for armed conflict, and on peace treaties.' Wiedemann, 'The Fetiales: A Reconsideration', 490: 'But in origin their role was to facilitate compromise so that disputes could be resolved without violence, at a time when no state authority yet existed to arbitrate between different Latin gentes. The Greeks were right to call the *fetiales* 'peacemakers.' The priesthood was reserved for the higher milieu of Rome, see: Beard, North & Price, 229-230.

¹³⁹ Liv. 1.44.2.

¹⁴⁰ Dion. Hal. 4.22.2.

¹⁴¹ This can be inferred from Cat. *Agri.* 141.1-4.

the *lustratio* of the army or fleet was performed at least 25 times, ranging from the reign of Servius Tullius to that of emperor Marcus Aurelius. Additionally, its customary character can be inferred from Livy, Plutarch, and Appian.¹⁴² Therefore, I believe there is tenable reason for further analysis in this thesis. Appendix I will offer an overview of the lustrations that were performed of which we may assume plausible historicity.

The *auspiciu*m, or ‘witnessing of the flight of birds’, was allegedly performed before any military undertaking, as Cicero informs.¹⁴³ The ritual was performed on many political occasions as well, yet in its military form it was known as the *auspiciu*m *ex tripudiis* or *ex avibus*. The former was performed with the *pulli* – ‘sacred chickens’ – who were required to eat the food that was presented to them, rather sloppy: a favourable sign would be obtained if the food fell from their beaks. The latter was performed by gazing at the flight of birds in the sky: if they flew in the required direction, a favourable omen was obtained.¹⁴⁴ The *auspiciu*m features frequently in the ancient sources: at least 13 times is the ritual attested in the preamble to battle. It is interesting to note that Cicero and Livy both seem to stress the necessity of an *auspiciu*m before battle.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, the ancient authors inform that the results of an *auspiciu*m would be publicly communicated to the soldiers, often leading to rejoice or lament. I believe it may be worthwhile to further investigate the ritual of the *auspiciu*m. Appendix II provides an overview of the *auspicia* that appear to have been performed before battle.

The *evocatio* is best described in Livy’s account of the Siege of Veii in 396 BCE. The Roman dictator Camillus stood in front of the besieged city, and appealed to the enemy tutelary deity, Juno Regina, uttering the words: ‘I beseech thee, Queen Juno, that dwellest now in Veii, to come with us, when we have gotten the victory, to our city...’¹⁴⁶ Camillus summoned away (to ‘summon’, ‘*evocare*’) the enemy deity and requested her to join their side, eventually offering her a temple in return. Juno allegedly conceded and presented various signs that were witnessed by the Roman soldiers.¹⁴⁷ The *evocatio* during the Siege of Veii in 396 has served to exemplify the ritual, but as Ando (2008) rightly notes, there are only five instances recorded – Veii included – in which the ritual was allegedly performed (of which two remain

¹⁴² Liv. 29.27.5: ‘according to custom’. Plut. *Crass.* 19.6: ‘the customary sacrifice of purification for the army’. App. *Civ.* 5.96: ‘In this way the Romans perform lustrations of their fleets.’

¹⁴³ Cic. *Div.* 2.36.76

¹⁴⁴ Cic. *Div.* 1.25.18.

¹⁴⁵ Liv. 9.14.3: ‘The consuls were busy with matters pertaining to gods and men, as they are wont to be on the eve of an engagement...’

¹⁴⁶ Liv. 5.21.3.

¹⁴⁷ After Veii fell, the statue of Juno Regina was transported to Rome. To demonstrate her consent, Juno allegedly voiced that she was willing to join the Romans. Additionally, the statue appeared to be light and easy to transport. Livy records these instances in 5.22.5-8.

uncertain).¹⁴⁸ It seems difficult to detect a ritual pattern in the *evocatio*, nor does the historical evidence attest to a defined, commonly understood, and commonly practiced ritual. As Gustafsson (1999) concluded, ‘there is no certain and undisputable evidence of a specific and well-defined *evocatio*-ritual (...) [and] certain aspects of their historical presentation and interpretative framework may be regarded as mythical in themselves.’¹⁴⁹ The fact that only two instances are described in detail may attest to its presumable mythical character.¹⁵⁰ I believe the *evocatio* did therefore not feature in the religious whole that the Roman soldier would commonly have experienced.

The *devotio* is illustrated best by Livy’s account of the self-sacrifice of Decius Mus in 340 BCE. In the midst of battle, Decius opted: ‘...we need the help of the gods! Let the Pontifex Maximus dictate to me the words in which I am to devote myself for the legions.’¹⁵¹ After Decius uttered the prescribed prayers, he mounted his horse and drove himself into the enemy ranks. In this way, Decius devoted himself to the gods ‘to avert destruction from his people and bring it on their enemies.’¹⁵² The *devotio* is accounted for only three times, and it seems difficult to infer a ritual pattern from this.¹⁵³ Rüpke (1990) rightly concluded that the ritual was a product of the inventive annalist tradition.¹⁵⁴ However, Versnel (1976) distinguished two types of

¹⁴⁸ Ando, *The Matter of the Gods*, 132. The other four evocations took place in 264 BCE at the defeat of the Volsinii (Plin. *Nat. His.* 34.34; Fest. 228L), 241 BCE at Falerii Veteres (Ovid, *Fasti* 3.843-844), 146 BCE at the Siege of Carthage (Macr. *Sat.* 3.9), and in 75 BCE in Asia Minor (as recorded by an inscription, discussion by Beard, et al., 248). Thus, the ritual appears to have been of Republican nature.

¹⁴⁹ G. Gustafsson, *Evocatio deorum: Historical and Mythical Interpretations of Ritualised Conquests in the Expansion of Ancient Rome* (Uppsala, 1999), 1.

¹⁵⁰ For a discussion of the practical issues of performing an *evocatio*, see: Ando, *The Matter of the Gods*, 130-133. Ando appears to somewhat avoid the question of historicity and is interested in the performance and meaning of the ritual.

¹⁵¹ Liv. 8.9.4.

¹⁵² Liv. 8.9.10.

¹⁵³ In 340 BCE by Decius Mus (Liv. 8.9.4); in 295 BCE by Decius Mus, the son of the first Mus (Liv. 10.28.14-18); and in 279 BCE, by Decius Mus, the son of the second Mus (Cass. Dio 10.5.43). The latter case remains somewhat ambiguous, for Dio doubts whether Mus actually died after performing his vow. I believe that the fact that all three cases were concerned with the same family may hint at its mythical nature, rather than a historical basis.

¹⁵⁴ Rüpke, *Domus Militiae*, 42. Livy nevertheless provides an extensive account on how to perform a *devotio* (8.10.11-13): ‘...it seems proper to add here that the consul, dictator, or praetor who devotes the legions of the enemy need not devote himself, but may designate any citizen he likes from a regularly enlisted Roman legion if the man who has been devoted dies, it is deemed that all is well; if he does not die, then an image of him is buried seven feet or more underground and a sin —offering is slain; where the image has been buried thither a Roman magistrate may not go up. But if he shall choose to devote himself, as Decius did, if he does not die, he cannot sacrifice either for himself or for the people without sin, whether with a victim or with any other offering he shall choose. he who devotes himself has the right to dedicate his arms to Vulcan, or to any other god he likes. The spear on which the consul has stood and prayed must not fall into the hands of an enemy; should this happen, expiation must be made to Mars with the sacrifice of a swine, a sheep, and an ox.’

devotio: the *devotio hostium*, which occurred more frequently, and the self-sacrifice of the general, which occurred more rarely.¹⁵⁵ The *devotio hostium* is of further interest, for as Versnel notes, this ‘must have consisted in the killing of the enemies and the destruction of their property, especially the arms.’¹⁵⁶ Versnel is correct in identifying two versions of the *devotio*, but I would like to treat the ‘*devotio hostium*’ separately, for I believe the *devotio* of enemy property constitutes as a ritual on its own.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, we may conclude that the *devotio* of the commander is of little interest here, as it does not seem to have happened frequently.

The *devotio* of enemy arms and armour appears to have been performed structurally in the summation of battle. The sacrifice has received little address in historiographical review, in contrast to its frequent mention in the ancient sources.¹⁵⁸ We may once again turn to Livy for a description of the ritual, as performed in the aftermath of the Battle of Cannae in 216 BCE for example. Here Livy notes how ‘Marcellus burnt the spoils taken from the enemy in fulfilment of a vow to Vulcan.’¹⁵⁹ In various other reports, we may read how the collection of these spoils was done by the soldiers, thus ascribing an active role to the soldier.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, Plutarch provides indication that the soldiers would also be present at the sacrifice: ‘The soldiers had taken their stand about the pyre in arms...’, he notes of the *devotio hostium* in 102 BCE.¹⁶¹ Appian and Plutarch both refer to the customary character of the ritual.¹⁶² Versnel hypothesized that the *devotio hostium* was ‘frequently practiced’ but did not present the source material to support this. I would like to confirm his hypothesis, for I believe we can identify 15 instances in which the *devotio hostium* was allegedly performed. Hence, I have included an appendix (III) in which these instances are collected and chronologically arranged. I believe the sources hint at a recurrently performed ritual, of which we can plausibly argue that it was either witnessed or performed by the soldier. I believe there is therefore compelling reason to further investigate the *devotio hostium* in this thesis.

Various accounts note how the Romans dismissed enemy prisoners of war by sending them under a yoke, which was ‘formed with three spears, two fixed in the ground, and one tied

¹⁵⁵ H.S. Versnel, ‘Two types of Roman *devotio*’, *Mnemosyne*, 29.4 (1976), 365-410.

¹⁵⁶ Versnel, ‘Two types of Roman *devotio*’, 400-401.

¹⁵⁷ As Versnel (408) similarly noted: ‘The *devotio hostium* occurs as an independent rite.’

¹⁵⁸ Versnel establishes the *devotio hostium* as a separate ritual but offers no consequent analysis. Neither does he address the source material in which the sacrifice is referred to adequately.

¹⁵⁹ Liv. 23.46.5.

¹⁶⁰ For example, Liv. 10.29.18: ‘After sending out a search party to find his colleague’s body, Fabius had the spoils of the enemy collected into a heap...’, or 38.23.10: ‘The enemy’s weapons were gathered into a heap and burnt, and the consul ordered the troops to collect the rest of the booty.’

¹⁶¹ Plut. *Mar.* 22.1.

¹⁶² App. *Pun.* 8.48; Plut. *Mar.* 22.1.

across between the upper ends of them’, as Livy informs.¹⁶³ This ritual, the *passum sub iugum*, supposedly rid the enemy of any malicious elements, as Fowler (1917) and Halliday (1924) concluded.¹⁶⁴ The ritual is best attested for in the accounts of the Battle of the Caudine Forks in 321 BCE, when a Roman army was famously ‘sent under the yoke’ by the Samnites, as accounted by Livy, Appian, and others.¹⁶⁵ Emphasis was placed that *all* defeated opponents had to pass under the yoke, disarmed and half-naked, whereas the victors would stand around, perhaps forming an aisle. As Appian notes, this is a ritual the Romans ‘are accustomed to put upon others’, but it was clearly put upon the Romans as well (I have identified 5 instances).¹⁶⁶ The ritual is best known in myth, but there appear to have been historical grounds to it as well. The ancient accounts suggest that the Romans dismissed their defeated opponents at least 7 times after battle.¹⁶⁷ Since Livy, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Appian, refer to its customary character, I believe there may be reason to further address the ritual. Appendix IV features a list of the recorded cases of the *passum sub iugum*.

The triumph may well be the Roman ritual best accounted for. Orosius (ca. 385-420) suggests that over 320 triumphs were performed in the course of Roman history.¹⁶⁸ The *Fasti Triumphales* may serve to substantiate this premise. As Versnel (1970) forwards in his work *Triumphus*, ‘The entire history of Rome has thus been marked by a ceremony which testified to the power of Rome...’¹⁶⁹ Discussion of the triumph may therefore appear commonplace. Moreover, the fact that the Roman soldier was assigned a role in the ceremony qualifies the triumph for further address in this thesis. Of the earliest triumphs, Dionysius accounts that the triumphator was followed by the ‘rest of his army, both foot and horse’.¹⁷⁰ Similarly, in the later Republican triumph, Livy notes how the soldiers would ‘march in procession through the city, singing their own and their commander’s praises’.¹⁷¹ Flavius Josephus (37-100 CE) may support

¹⁶³ Liv. 3.28.10.

¹⁶⁴ W.W. Fowler, ‘Passing under the Yoke’, *Classical Review*, 27.2 (1917), 48-51; W.R. Halliday, ‘Passing under the Yoke’, *Folklore*, 35.1 (1924), 93-95.

¹⁶⁵ Liv. 9.4.3 & 9.6.1; App. *Sam.* 1.6; Dion. Hal. 16.1.4; Cass. Dio 8.36.10.

¹⁶⁶ At the Caudine Forks in 321 BCE (App. *Sam.* 1.6; Liv. 9.4.3 & 9.6.1; Dion. Hal. 16.1.4; Cass. Dio 8.36.10), during the First Punic War in 264 BCE (Front. *Strat.* 4.1.19), during the Jugurthine War in 110 BCE (Sall. *Jug.* 38.9; Liv. *Peri.* 64.3), at the Battle of Burdigala in 107 BCE (Caes. *Gall.* 1.7 & 1.12), and at the Battle of Rhandeia in 62 BCE (Tac. *Ann.* 15.14; Suet. *Nero* 39.1; Fest. *Lex.* 20).

¹⁶⁷ In 459 BCE (Liv. 3.23.5), 457 BCE (3.28.10; Flor. *Epit.* 1.5.13; Dion. Hal. 10.24.8), 443 BCE (Liv. 4.10.4), 319 BCE (Liv. 9.15.7), 307 BCE (Liv. 9.42.7), and 294 BCE (Liv. 10.36.14).

¹⁶⁸ Oros. *His. Pag.* 7.9.

¹⁶⁹ Versnel, *Triumphus*, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Dion. Hal. 2.34.2.

¹⁷¹ Liv. 45.38.12.

this notion in his eyewitness account of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus in 81 CE.¹⁷² Nevertheless, the triumph would be performed significantly later than battle.¹⁷³ I believe it is therefore fitting to address the triumph in greater detail, and discuss the prevalence and role it may have had for the soldier in the aftermath of battle.

The *equus october*, the ‘October Horse’, was an annual festival taking place on October 15th which involved the sacrifice of a horse to Mars in the Campus Martius in Rome. The sacrifice is best recorded by Festus, who notes that it was the ‘right-hand horse of the winning pair in the chariot-race’ that was sacrificed. The horse’s head was contested for by the inhabitants of Rome, and its tail was carried to the Regia.¹⁷⁴ Wissowa (1902) suggested that the ritual served to mark the end of the campaigning season and purified the army.¹⁷⁵ Dumézil (1969) similarly argued that the ritual facilitated the return of the warrior.¹⁷⁶ Polybius and Plutarch offered alternative explanations of the meaning of the ritual.¹⁷⁷ Evidently, the October Horse took place on a set day and did not relate to the particularity of battle. Unlike, for example, the *lustratio* and *devotio hostium*, it is therefore difficult to reconstruct the role of the army on this day. It clearly took place in the urban landscape of Rome and appears to have taken form as a tribal contest, as can be inferred from Festus’ account.¹⁷⁸ Rüpke (2006)

¹⁷² Flav. Jos. *Jew. War* 7.5.4.

¹⁷³ Clearly, because of pragmatic reasons. Firstly, the triumph had to be awarded by the Senate, a decision which may have awaited itself for a while. Secondly, the specified troops had to be transported to the capital. Depending on the location there would be at, this may surely have taken weeks.

¹⁷⁴ Fest. L190. Unfortunately, the sources do not inform of the officiating priests that performed the sacrifice. It would be commonplace that this was reserved for the *flamen Martialis*, the priests of Mars, but this cannot be confirmed.

¹⁷⁵ Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, 450.

¹⁷⁶ G. Dumézil, *The Destiny of the Warrior* (translated, Chicago, 1973), 23-24. Fest. (L246) suggested that the ‘sacrifice was performed on account of a successful crop of grain.’ Dumézil opposed this view. For discussion, see: C.B. Pascal, ‘October Horse’, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 85 (1981), 266-267. For an extensive discussion of the October Horse and its relation to Mars, see: U.W. Scholz, *Studien zum altitalischen und altrömischen Marskult und Marsmythos* (Heidelberg, 1970), 81-167. For more recent discussion, see: Beard, North & Price, *Religions of Rome: Volume 1*, 47-48.

¹⁷⁷ Polybius (12.4b-4c), for instance, notes another explanation of the festival: ‘...the Romans still commemorate the disaster at Troy by shooting on a certain day a war-horse before the city in the Campus Martius’, but not soon after he rightly criticizes this explanation: ‘For at that rate we should have to say that all barbarian tribes were descendants of the Trojans, since nearly all of them, or at least the majority, when they are entering on a war or on the eve of a decisive battle sacrifice a horse, divining the issue from the manner in which it falls.’ Similarly, Plutarch questions the purpose of the ritual in *Roman Questions* (97): ‘Is it, as some say, that they believe Troy to have been taken by means of a horse; and therefore they punish it (...) Or is it because the horse is a spirited, warlike, and martial beast, and they sacrifice to the gods creatures that are particularly pleasing and appropriate for them...’

¹⁷⁸ Pascal, ‘October Horse’, 280: ‘When, therefore, the Mamili [of the Subura] or latter-day partisans strive to capture the head of the October Horse, there seems to have been a historical basis to their claim to this emblem of royalty [the horse’s head].’

concludes that there are ‘no indications that the rituals of many old festivals attracted a large audience.’¹⁷⁹ The scarcity of source material may therefore serve to indicate that the *equus october* did not play a significant role for the soldier in the preamble and aftermath of battle.

The *armilustrum*, the ‘purification of the arms’ as Varro accounts, took place four days after the October Horse.¹⁸⁰ The ritual is addressed remarkably little by the ancient authors and our understanding of the ceremony is mostly derived from Varro, who notes that ‘armed men perform the ceremony in the *armilustrum* (...) this word comes from *ludere* ‘to play’ or from *lustrum* ‘purification’...’¹⁸¹ The ‘armed men’ Varro is referring to can be identified as the *Salii*, an ancient college of priests that performed rites and processions while armed and dressed as archaic warriors.¹⁸² They apparently performed the ceremony in a space similarly named the ‘*armilustrum*’, as we can infer from a passage in Livy.¹⁸³ As Rüpke (1990) rightly notes, we cannot assume that the complete collection of weaponry of the Roman military was stored here, and neither was it all purified during the *armilustrum*.¹⁸⁴ Unfortunately, there is remarkably little reference to the ritual in the ancient sources.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ J. Rüpke, ‘Communicating with the Gods’, in: N.S. Rosenstein & R. Morstein-Marx, *A companion to the Roman Republic* (Blackwell, 2006), 224.

¹⁸⁰ Var. *Lat. Lan.* 5.153.

¹⁸¹ Var. *Lat. Lan.* 6.22.

¹⁸² Livy records how Numa Pompilius (r. 716-673 BCE) founded the priests: ‘Similarly he chose twelve ‘*Salii*’ for Mars Gradivus, and assigned to them the distinctive dress of an embroidered tunic and over it a brazen cuirass. They were instructed to march in solemn procession through the City, carrying the twelve shields called the ‘*Ancilia*,’ and singing hymns accompanied by a solemn dance in triple time.’ (1.20.4).

¹⁸³ Livy writes of several omens that occurred in 207 BCE, in which he mentions the *armilustrum* as a space on the Aventine Hill: ‘Then again the nine days of rites were repeated, because in the *Armilustrum* men saw a rain of stones.’ (27.37.4). It should also be noted that a *vicus armilustri* existed in the 13th region in Rome, which likely corresponded with the sacred space on the Aventine. The sacred shields, the *ancilia*, were likely stored and retrieved here during the ceremony.

¹⁸⁴ Rüpke, *Domus Militiae*, 28. Soldiers likely cleaned and prepared their weaponry before wartime, but this had little to do with the *armilustrum*, nor does it appear to have happened in any ceremonial fashion whatsoever. I believe the *armilustrum* may have archaically served the purpose of purifying the Roman weaponry, but this use disappeared with the growth of Rome’s inhabitants.

¹⁸⁵ Of note is a passage in Polybius (21.13.10-14). In his account of Scipio’s campaign against Antiochus in 190 BCE, he comments how Scipio ‘could not change his residence’ because the *Salii* were performing their sacrifices in Rome – a period covering thirty days. ‘The consequence was that he was separated from his army and stopped behind in Europe’, Polybius notes. Even though the ceremony of the *Salii* took place far removed from Scipio and his legions, it does seem to have impeded military matters at the front. Scipio’s legions reportedly had to wait for his return, until which they remained inactive. Polybius provides an interesting example of the far-reaching consequences of rituals that were performed in the capital. It remains somewhat difficult to ascertain if Polybius referred to the *armilustrum* or *tubilustrum*, or simply to the festival of Mars that took place on the kalends of March. I believe it is plausible to assume that Polybius referred to the events taking place in the month March (11 ceremonies/festivities can be discerned in that month). The thirty days’ wait of Scipio could simply refer to the whole month. Polybius provides no clue as to whether such ceremonies were synchronically performed in the armies encamped overseas.

The *tubilustrium*, the ‘purification of the trumpets’, as Varro notes, took place biannually on March 23rd and May 23rd.¹⁸⁶ I believe we face a similar situation as with the *armilustrium*. The *tubae* Varro is referring to can be identified as the ceremonial trumpets used in sacrifices, or the military trumpets used by the army.¹⁸⁷ As with the *armilustrium*, the *Salii* were likely the ones performing the rites and sacrifice, as John the Lydian (6th century CE) seems to suggest.¹⁸⁸ However, as Rüpke (2011) argued, the *tubicines sacrorum* – the priests of the *tubae* – could also have been responsible for the task.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, I believe the *tubilustrium* should be understood on par with the *armilustrium*: a ceremonial ritual taking place in the urban religious landscape of Rome, and since early times on disconnected from the direct conduct of war. Neither Varro, Ovid, nor John the Lydian, seem to imply that any military personnel was involved in the ceremony.¹⁹⁰ As Ogilvie (1961) rightly notes then, ‘the Tubilustrium and the Armilustrium will at first have been performed irregularly as and when occasion demanded but with the gradual systematization of the religious calendar they became annual festivals celebrated regularly on stated days.’¹⁹¹ I believe this celebration was of little to no importance for the soldier at war.

I believe we may now have sufficiently reviewed the corpus of Roman martial rituals, or at least: the corpus and ‘religious whole’ as brought forward in scholarly debate. From this review, a selection emerged of five rituals that will feature more prominently in this thesis. I have based this selection in accordance with the scope of this thesis – a scope that is concerned with rituals that the Roman soldier could have performed or directly witnessed. Hence, I believe this selection may be justified from this perspective. The following two paragraphs will discuss the

¹⁸⁶ Var. *Lat. Lan.* 6.14: ‘The *Tubilustrium* ‘Purification of the Trumpets’ is named from the fact that on this day the *tubae* ‘trumpets’ used in the ceremonies *lustrantur* ‘are purified’ in Shoemaker’s Hall.’ The ‘Shoemaker’s Hall’ can unfortunately not be allocated, but this can perhaps be found somewhere near the *armilustrium* on the Aventine.

¹⁸⁷ Scullard, H.H., *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (London, 1981), 94.

¹⁸⁸ He notes how the *Salii* were active on this day, but it cannot directly be related to the performance of the *tubilustrium* (*De Mensibus* 4.60).

¹⁸⁹ J. Rüpke, *The Roman Calendar from Numa to Constantine: Time, History, and the Fasti* (translated, London, 2011), 28. Rüpke even suggested that the *tubilustrium* took place monthly, as it was concerned with the occurrence of the full moon. This would suggest a ritual even more regular, yet more disconnected from the Roman military apparatus.

¹⁹⁰ Ovid provides only a brief reference to the *tubilustrium* (*Fasti* 5.725): ‘The next day belongs to Vulcan; they call it Tubilustria. The trumpets which he makes are then cleansed and purified.’

¹⁹¹ Ogilvie, ‘Lustrum Condere’, 35. One could, for example, hypothesize that the soldier would be present in the cityscape of Rome after he entered by mode of triumph. However, since the triumph was not restricted to a set day, such a hypothesis cannot be substantiated.

rituals of the *lustratio* and *auspicium*. These accordingly took place in the preamble to battle and may therefore be addressed first. The rituals of the *devotio hostium*, *passum sub iugum*, and *triumphus* – rituals that took place after the event of battle – will be discussed in the following chapter. I believe a chronological approach to these rituals in this thesis, similarly as to how these would have appeared in the Roman conduct of war, facilitates a comprehensible narrative.

§2.3 Purifying the army: the *lustratio*

‘Upon the completion of the census, which had been expedited by fear of a law that threatened with death and imprisonment those who failed to register, Servius issued a proclamation calling on all Roman citizens, both horse and foot, to assemble at daybreak, each in his own century, in the Campus Martius. There the whole army was drawn up, and a sacrifice of a pig, a sheep, and a bull was offered by the king for its purification. This was termed the “closing of the lustrum,” because it was the last act in the enrolment.’

- Livy, *History of Rome*.¹⁹²

Dating to the reign of Servius Tullius (ca. 566 BCE), Livy provides reference to the first performance of what was known as the *lustratio exercitus*: the ‘lustration’ of the Roman troops. After the census was completed, a feat Livy attributes to Servius’ reign as well, the whole military apparatus, both horse and foot, was mustered at the Campus Martius.¹⁹³ There, we read, the *suovetaurilia* was performed: the sacrifice of a pig, sheep, and bull – thereby purifying the troops and closing the quinquennial lustrum. We may infer then the recurrent character of the *lustratio*, for it concluded the five-yearly census as a final ceremony. Varro (116-27 BCE), consulting and quoting the records of the censors in *On the Latin language*, confirms this connection between the lustration and the census. After the specified grounds had been consecrated, he informs, the censors called forth the soldiers and citizens with an *inclinium*: a call for invitation, attesting to the solemnity and formality of participation. Thereupon, when the soldiers and citizens were mustered, the ‘censors cast lots with each other, as to which one of them shall conduct the ceremony of purification.’¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Liv. 1.44.1-2. Livy cites Fabius Pictor (254 – ca. 200 BCE) as his source for this passage: ‘Eighty thousand citizens are said to have been registered in that census; the most ancient of historians, Fabius Pictor, adds that this was the number of those capable of bearing arms.’

¹⁹³ For a detailed description of the census, see: Dion. Hal. 4.16-21.

¹⁹⁴ Var. *Lat. Lan.* 6.9.86. Clearly, there were some practical problems with the censors’ call, for not everyone would be able to directly hear and respond to this. Varro too, questioned the effectiveness of the *inclinium*, and later reports the following to have been the case: ‘Likewise in what pertains to those who have received from the

If we continue reading Varro, we may get an impression of the *lustratio* as a ritual performed even more regularly. The dictators and consuls, he elaborates, were entitled to perform the *lustratio* as well:

‘The censor, the consul, the dictator, the interrex can, because the censor arranges in centuries the citizen-army for a period of five years, when he must ceremonially purify it and lead it to the city under its standards; the dictator and the consul do so every year, because the latter can order the citizen-army where it is to go, a thing which they are accustomed to order on account of the centurionate assembly.’¹⁹⁵

From this passage we may infer the *yearly* character of the ritual, rather than the quinquennial picture that emerged from Livy. Thus, the lustration did not solely relate to the census, but appears to have been closely linked to the mustering of the Roman soldiers each year at the start of the campaigning season. Consequently, performing the lustration was not just reserved for the censor, but also entitled to the consul, dictator, interrex, and in fact: rex, if we parallel Livy’s account of Servius’ *lustratio*. In short then, the lustration was performed by those *cum imperio*.¹⁹⁶

A third passage by Appian, in his narrative of the Second Punic War (218-201 BCE), provides another impression of the *lustratio* – this time taking place far beyond the sacred boundaries of the capital:

‘Taking the forces already there, and joining them in one body with those he brought, he [Scipio Africanus] performed a lustration, and made the same kind of grandiloquent speech to them that he made at home.’¹⁹⁷

The passages from Livy and Varro emphasize the connection with the Campus Martius, the extra-pomerial mustering field from which the Roman armies set out on campaign. In Appian,

censors the contract for the trumpeter who gives the summons to the centurionate assembly, they shall see to it that on that day, on which the assembly shall take place, the trumpeters shall sound the trumpet on the Citadel and around the walls, and shall sound it before the house-entrance of this accursed Titus Quintius Trogus, and that he be present in the Campus Martius at daybreak.’ (6.9.92). Though this instance specifically refers to the trial of Trogus, we may get a sense of the practical side of things.

¹⁹⁵ Var. *Lat. Lan.* 6.9.93.

¹⁹⁶ F.K. Drogula, ‘Imperium, Potestas, and the Pomerium in the Roman Republic’, *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 56.4 (2007), 419. Hence do we read of the presence of lictors, the civil servants to those who held *imperium* (App. *Civ.* 4.134; Plut. *Brut.* 39.2).

¹⁹⁷ App. *Span.* 19.

however, we read of a lustration being performed far outside the capital, on the shores of the Iberian Peninsula. Furthermore, we may question if the Iberian lustration was the only ceremony performed. Appian informs that Scipio made the ‘same kind of grandiloquent speech’ in Rome before he sailed out with the first part of his army.¹⁹⁸ A picture emerges of a more ‘mobile’ ritual then, since the *lustratio* appears to have been performed on any location where it was possible and permitted. This changes the character of the ritual significantly, for its performance ‘abroad’ is disconnected from the quinquennial census, as well as from its urban character. This changes the nature of the military lustration into one more *ad hoc* and suited to the specific situation – a ritual that was performed in direct relation to the prospect of warfare, instead of one performed because of annual custom.¹⁹⁹

The *lustratio exercitus* – the military lustration we are concerned with here – was performed on determinate occasions, we have seen.²⁰⁰ Before discussing these occasions, it would be worthwhile to further address the details of the ceremony. The central component of the lustration was the *suovetaurilia*: the sacrifice of the pig, sheep, and bull. The details of this sacrifice are best recorded by Cato the Elder (234-149 BCE) in his manual *On Agriculture*. Cato prescribes how a lustration for purifying the agrarian land is performed by addressing ‘Manius, to take care to purify my farm, my land, my ground with this *suovetaurilia*, in whatever part thou thinkest best for them to be driven or carried around.’²⁰¹ Consequently, Janus, Jupiter, and Mars are invoked as well, to ‘remove sickness, seen and unseen, barrenness, and destruction, ruin and unseasonable influence’ from the land. After the *suovetaurilia* has been led around three times, the victims are offered, primarily in dedication to Mars.²⁰² Thus, the *suovetaurilia*

¹⁹⁸ App. *Span.* 18: ‘...he called the assembly together again, and repeated what he had said before, declaring that his youth would be no impediment, but he added that if any of his elders wished to assume the task he would willingly yield it to them. When nobody offered to take it, he was praised and admired still more, and he set forth with 10,000 foot and 500 horse.’

¹⁹⁹ Clearly, warfare could be considered an annual custom as well. I will address the annual rhythm of warfare more elaborately in the fifth chapter.

²⁰⁰ The Roman *lustratio* has often been compared to the Macedonian festival of the Xandika, an annual occasion in the month Xandikos (parallel to March), in which the purification of the army took place. Livy 40.6.1-6 provides the best description of the Macedonian ritual. He describes how a dog was cut in two pieces; one half was thrown to the right, the other to the left. The army consequently marched through the parts, after which they would engage in manoeuvres and a mock-battle. The dog is often regarded as a purifying agent. See: J. Mazzorin & C. Minniti, ‘Dog Sacrifice in the Ancient World: A Ritual Passage?’, in: L.M. Snyder & E.A. Moore (eds.), *Dogs and People in Social, Working, Economic or Symbolic Interaction* (Oxford, 2006), 63. For additional accounts of the Macedonian lustration, see Curtus Rufius (10.9.11) and Polybius (23.10). For the oldest reference to the ritual of the lustration, see the Iguvine Tablets 6a.

²⁰¹ Manius likely refers to the *manes*: the spirits of the dead members of his family. See: E.E. Burris, ‘The Religious Life on a Roman Farm as Reflected in the De Agricultura of Marcus Porcius Cato’, *The Classical Weekly* 21.4 (1927), 29.

²⁰² Cat. *Agri.* 141.1-4.

circumambulated around that which it concerned.²⁰³ The entrails of the victims were likely burnt on an altar, though it has been argued that these offerings were buried, as can be interpreted from ‘*lustrum condere*’, ‘to bury the *lustrum*’, and the maritime lustration in which the entrails were thrown into the sea.²⁰⁴ However, I do not believe this to have been the case, for the communication of offerings to the gods was thought to occur through the fumes of the sacrifice, and maritime deities would commonly be addressed by depositing offerings in the sea.²⁰⁵ Evidently, the *lustratio classis*, the ‘lustration of the fleet’, required some creativity. To imitate the circumambulatory movement, altars were erected on the shore around which the ships circled. Consequently, the priests would carry around the offerings in skiffs around the fleet, as can be read in a passage Appian, introduced before.²⁰⁶ Of additional interest, are Appian’s remarks on the soundscape of the ritual.²⁰⁷ He notes how ‘profound silence’ was observed during the circumambulation, whereas the ‘multitude chant in unison’ during the burning of the entrails. Appian is the only author referring to these aspects but, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, it is perfectly common to presume that silence was of importance.

²⁰³ Burriss (1927) suggested it to be likely that the participants of the procession were adorned with laurel garlands and wore olive branches. Burriss, ‘The Religious Life on a Roman Farm as Reflected in the De Agricultura of Marcus Porcius Cato’, 28. Laurel was used for purificatory purposes (see: Plin. *Nat. His.* 15.40). Burriss’ presupposition is therefore certainly fair. Also, note Appian *Civ.* 4.134: ‘When Cassius was performing a lustration for his army his lictor placed his garland upon him wrong side up...’

²⁰⁴ H. Usener, ‘Italische Mythen’, *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 30 (1875), 204; K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (München, 1960), 119. The *lustratio classis*, the ‘lustration of the fleet’, will be discussed shortly. A case could be made that the entrails were of animistic nature, hence that they were disposed in the sea or burnt on an altar.

²⁰⁵ See: F.S. Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods: Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods* (Oxford, 2015), vii. Ogilvie (1961) disputes the burying of these offerings as well: R.M. Ogilvie, ‘Lustrum Condere’, *The Journal of Roman Studies* 51.1. (1961), 35-36. It has been thought that the victims contained the polluted elements and were therefore to be disposed of, but there is no profound reason to suspect this. Additionally, if the victims were buried, we might also expect to find some trace of this on the depictions of the *suovetaurilia* on Trajan’s Column and the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, which is not the case (see: Ogilvie, 37-38). There has been philological discussion on the use of *lustrum condere* and *lustrum facere*. For this discussion, see: Ogilvie, ‘Lustrum Condere’; H.S. Versnel, ‘Sacrificium Lustrale: The Death of Mettius Fufetius (Livy I.28)’, *Mededelingen van het Nederlands Historisch Instituut te Rome*, 37 (1975), 97-117.

²⁰⁶ App. *Civ.* 5.96.

²⁰⁷ For a take on sound in the ancient world, see: S. Butler & S. Nooter (eds.), *Sound and the Ancient Senses* (Routledge, 2018). Additionally, of note is a passage in Diogenes Laërtius (3rd century CE): ‘We should not pay equal worship to gods and heroes, but to the gods always, with reverent silence, in white robes, and after purification, to the heroes only from midday onwards. Purification is by cleansing, baptism and lustration, and by keeping clean from all deaths and births and all pollution...’ (8.33). Also, see Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 3.436-438: ‘Thrice in silence did they accomplish the march, thrice does the touch the sad armour and raiment of the men, and throw the lustral offerings behind him in the sea; the rest is consumed by the devouring flames.’

Besides the conduct of the *suovetaurilia*, there is little hint as to what constituted the *lustratio exercitus* and in what ways it differed from the ‘civil’ lustration. As we have examined before, those *cum imperio* were allowed to perform the lustration of the army. In 191 BCE, Gaius Livius ‘performed the lustration of the fleet’; in 146 BCE, Scipio ‘threw the raw entrails of a victim into the sea’ from the commander’s ship; and in 53 BCE, Crassus ‘was making the customary sacrifice of purification for the army’.²⁰⁸ Thus, the commander appears to have had a performative role in the ceremony. However, there appears to have been a special place for soldiers with ‘names of good omen’ as well, as Cicero interestingly notes. He writes:

‘So too, when the sacred ceremony of purification was held by one starting on an expedition to found a colony, or when the commander-in-chief was reviewing his army, or the censor was taking his census, it was the rule to choose men with names of good omen to lead the victims.’²⁰⁹

Cicero seems to suggest that men with fortunate names could be called forward to lead the lustral procession.²¹⁰ This would change the role of the soldier – or at least, the lucky soldier – for now he might lead the procession (of course, if he was not present in the procession already). The presence of priests is suggested as well, as Appian indicates. He writes how ‘the priests who perform the ceremony offer the sacrifice while standing at the water’s edge, and carry the expiatory offerings in skiffs three times round the fleet, the generals sailing with them...’²¹¹ Appian is clear about the central presence of both priests and generals in the ceremony. Plutarch adds to the picture by stating that these priests, or ‘seers’, additionally read the entrails of the victims.²¹² A detailed illustration of the care and attention that was paid to the ‘reading’ of the victim’s entrails during the lustration can be found in Lucan’s (39-65 CE) *Pharsalia*, who notes

²⁰⁸ Liv. 36.42.2; 29.27.5; Plut. *Cras.* 19.6.

²⁰⁹ Cic. *Div.* 1.45.

²¹⁰ E.g. Ennius (‘the predestined’), or Felix (‘the lucky’). Cicero later adds that ‘the consuls in making a levy of troops take pains to see that the first soldier enlisted is one with a lucky name.’ Superstition clearly played an important role in Roman ritual conduct, as reflected in the various ominous signs that could occur during the performance of ritual (we discussed this at the beginning of this chapter).

²¹¹ App. *Civ.* 5.96.

²¹² Plut. *Cras.* 19.6: ‘...and the seer placed the viscera in his hands...’, and Plut. *Caes.* 43.3: ‘...the seer at once told him that within three days there would be a decisive battle with the enemy.’

an ‘Etruscan seer’ to have been present at the ceremony.²¹³ Lucan’s account is likely to be fictional, but it nevertheless portrays a lustration as he would have envisioned.²¹⁴

We may grasp the various aspects of the lustration now.²¹⁵ It involved the circumambulatory movement of the *suovetaurilia* around that which it concerned, presumably led by the priests, commanders, and lucky soldiers.²¹⁶ Consequently, the victims were sacrificed at an altar, where the entrails would have been read by seers, and thrown into a fire – or sea – to communicate with the addressed deities (primarily Mars, additionally Jupiter, Janus, or the Manes). I would like to refer to appendix I for a full list. Now that we have seen *what* the lustration embodied, we may investigate *when* it was performed. I shall elaborate by discussing four notable themes.

First and foremost, the lustration was performed at the start of a campaign or shortly before a prospective battle. Livy accounts that the ritual was performed before the Roman general Fabius Vibulanus set out against the Volscian town of Antium in 483 BCE, as well as when a fleet under the command of Livius Salinator embarked for the east in 191 BCE.²¹⁷ Dionysius of Halicarnassus provides a similar account dating to the Sabine Wars (468 BCE),

²¹³ ‘Their very colour alarmed him, the organs, black with congealed gore, were marked with signs of malignant sickness, covered everywhere with dull patches, and spots of blood. The liver, he saw, was flabby and rotten, with ominous streak son its exposed part. The branches of the panting lungs were indistinct, with only a thin membrane separating the vital organs. The heart was flattened, the flesh exuded corrupted blood through gaping cracks, and the bowels betrayed their hiding place. Behold, he saw a horror never once witnessed in a victim’s entrails without disaster following; a vast second lobe grew on the lobe of the liver, so that one part hung flabby with sickness, while the other quivered and its veins trembled to an a-rhythmic beat. Perceiving the prediction of profound disaster, he cried aloud: ‘I scarcely dare to reveal to man the evil the gods prepare. My sacrifice finds favour, not with mighty Jove but with the infernal gods who enter the body of this dead bull. We feared the worst, but what follows will be worse than our fears. May the gods re-cast what we saw, the entrails prove false, and the arts of our founder Tages mere invention!’ So the Etruscan seer spoke of the tortuous future, veiling and hiding it in profound ambiguity.’ (Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.615-637). The Etruscan seer, the *haruspex*, was responsible for predicting future events by reading the victim’s entrails. Among the Romans, it was considered one of the most ancient practices.

²¹⁴ M.J. DiLuzio, *A Place at the Altar: Priestesses in Republican Rome* (Princeton, 2016), 214. Lucan might have witnessed a lustration in 56 CE, when the temples of Jupiter and Minerva were struck with lightning, and were accordingly purified in the manner.

²¹⁵ Fowler (1911) notes some interesting survivals of the ritual of the *lustratio* in modern times, see: W.W. Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (London, 1899), 127-128.

²¹⁶ Cassius Dio provides an interesting reference to the pure state of the performer. He writes: ‘...neither the high priest is forbidden to look at a corpse, nor the censor, either, except when he is about to complete the census; but if he looks upon a corpse then, before his purification, all his work has to be done over again.’ (54.28.4). It remains difficult however to directly link this passage to the *lustratio exercitus*.

²¹⁷ On Vibulanus: ‘When the allies came to the day already appointed, the consul pitches his camp outside the Capuan gate. Then, after the army was purified, he set out for Antium, and encamped not far from the town...’ (3.22). On Salinator: ‘When he had picked up six vessels which had been sent by Carthage and the ships which Regium and Locris and the other cities under the same treaty obligation had contributed he performed the lustration of the fleet and put out to sea.’ (36.42).

in which he writes that ‘the consuls, after they had offered upon their vows to the gods and performed the lustration of the army, set out against their enemies.’²¹⁸ In Plutarch’s *Life of Marcellus*, we also read how the commander set out for war ‘after the ceremonies of sacrifice and purification which the seers prescribed had been performed’ (ca. 209/208 BCE), as well as in Appian’s account of the Second Punic War, as introduced before.²¹⁹ Preceding the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE, the accounts of Appian, Plutarch, and Cassius Dio all seem to suggest lustrations took place on both factions’ sides. Dio writes of Cassius’ army that ‘they had offered inside their camp the sacrifice of purification, which regularly precedes a conflict...’²²⁰ Of Octavian’s army, both Appian and Plutarch make note of the handing out of a donative to the individual soldiers when the lustration was performed.²²¹ The Battle of Philippi makes an interesting case, for when two Roman armies oppose each other – and in fact, two armies that have every interest in acting ‘Roman’ in the context of a civil war – both sides perform their lustrations. Clearly then, from the accounts summarized here, it may be evident that the *lustratio* had significance pertaining to prospective hostilities. It was *particularly* performed before battle, and therefore must have had *particular* significance in relation to the conduct of warfare and the incentive towards combat.

Second, the *lustratio* appears to have held some connection to the crossing of geographical space. In Appian’s account of the Second Punic War, we have read how Scipio performed the lustration soon *after* his army embarked on Iberian soil.²²² It appears somewhat difficult to explain this discrepancy, for Scipio departed from Rome and we would expect him to have performed the lustration there (as did Gaius Livius in 191 BCE, Scipio Aemilianus in 149 BCE, and Octavian in 40 BCE).²²³ Apparently then, the lustration did not always have to be performed before sailing out, but could also be performed once arrived ashore. Nevertheless, I believe it may be apparent that in both cases the element of geographical transition was involved. In the *Annals*, a work covering the Roman Empire from Tiberius to Nero, Tacitus provides another account of the *lustratio* in 35 CE – one of the two instances that can be dated to imperial times. He writes:

²¹⁸ Dion. Hal. 9.57.

²¹⁹ Plut. *Marc.* 19; App. *Span.* 19.

²²⁰ Cass. Dio 47.38.

²²¹ App. *Civ.* 4.89; Plut. *Brut.* 39.

²²² App. *Span.* 19.

²²³ Liv. 36.42 & 29.27; App. *Civ.* 5.96.

‘Vitellius, now that Artabanus was in flight and the sentiments of his countrymen were inclining to a change of sovereigns, advised Tiridates to embrace the opportunity presented, and marched the flower of his legions and auxiliaries to the bank of the Euphrates. During the sacrifice, while the Roman was paying the national offering to Mars and the Parthian had prepared a horse to placate the river, word was brought by the people of the neighbourhood that, without any downpour of rain, the Euphrates was rising spontaneously and to a remarkable height: at the same time, the whitening foam was wreathing itself into circles after the fashion of a diadem – an omen of a happy crossing.’²²⁴

The ‘national offering to Mars’ Tacitus refers to is perhaps better understood in its original Latin form: *more Romano suovetaurilia daret* – the ‘Roman way’ of performing the sacrifice.²²⁵ Of importance in this excerpt however, is the role of the Euphrates. Both the Roman and the Parthian were inclined to perform a sacrifice before attempting to cross the river. For Vitellius, the *suovetaurilia* offered the hoped-for outcome: the Euphrates rose in level and produced white foam – an omen for a ‘happy crossing’. Though Tacitus makes no explicit mention of the *lustratio* (nor the verb *lustrare* in any form), we may plausibly make this connection, for the performance of the *suovetaurilia* in the presence of the army – which can be confirmed in this case – nearly always constituted a lustration. Tacitus refers to causality between the *lustratio* and the rising of the Euphrates then, for Vitellius made the decision to perform the ritual before crossing. As with Appian’s account discussed before, geographical transition appears to have been a catalyst for performing the lustration in some instances. The case of the Euphrates may also suggest that the *lustratio* was performed when a dangerous endeavour was nigh.

Third, there appears to have been an intricate connection between the general in command and the performing of the lustration. We may somewhat derive this from the fact that the consuls in command of the army performed the lustration at the start of their active command, as read in Livy and Varro.²²⁶ This becomes more evident however, when we have a closer look at several passages in Livy and Plutarch. Of the campaign against the Italic tribe of the Ligures in the early second century BCE, Livy writes:

²²⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 6.37.

²²⁵ As becomes clear from this passage, we must take caution when interpreting and translating references to the *suovetaurilia* and the *lustratio*. This will be addressed in the fifth chapter.

²²⁶ Interestingly, ceremonies of the transfer of command may be found frequently in the military nowadays.

‘On receiving the despatch C. Claudius left Liguria and handed over his army to the consul at the Campi Macri. A few days later the other consul, C. Valerius arrived. Here, before the two armies separated, a lustration was completed for them both.’²²⁷

After the death of consul Scipio Hispallus, Gaius Valerius – the man mentioned above – took over his command as ‘suffect consul’, the term used for consuls serving the remainder of the year of their predecessor. Valerius would thus have entered office at a rather irregular date, somewhere during the year of Hispallus’ consulship. Thus, we may derive that the lustration was not solely connected with the beginning of the campaigning season, but notably too with the general’s accession of command. This may similarly be inferred from Plutarch’s account on the Third Macedonian War in 168 BCE. Plutarch, quoting the words of Aemilius, writes: ‘...in another five days, I took command of the forces in Macedonia, and after the usual lustration and review of them I proceeded at once to action...’²²⁸ Two decades earlier in 189 BCE, we may derive similar causality between the accession of command and the lustration in an excerpt from Livy. Of consul Manlius Vulso he writes that ‘he went to Ephesus at the beginning of spring and took over the troops from L. Scipio. After holding a review of the army he addressed the soldiers.’²²⁹

Lastly, it appears to have been vital for the whole army to be present at the lustration. Vibulanus waited until ‘the Allies came to the day already appointed’, Scipio joined his forces ‘in one body’, and Caesar lustrated ‘his entire army’.²³⁰ There seems to have been made no distinction between the body of ‘Roman’ soldiers and auxiliary allies as well. These features can also be attested by several reliefs dating from the reigns of Augustus (albeit concerning a civil lustration), Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius (see appendix V). The *suovetaurilia*-scenes on Trajan’s Column, for instance, suggest that the lustration was performed solely in the presence of the soldiers and priests – there are no civilians. The relief of Marcus Aurelius suggests

²²⁷ Liv. 41.18.6-7.

²²⁸ Plut. *Aem.* 36.

²²⁹ Liv. 38.12.2. The *lustratio* is sometimes translated as ‘review’, referring to a more pragmatic essence. I would like to point out that the Latin use, in this instance *exercitu lustrato*, is consistently concerned with the verb *lustrare*. Hence, I make no distinction between ‘lustration’ and ‘review’, for the Latin from which it derives is unanimous. For a discussion of the modes by which the *lustratio* could be conducted (*facere* or *condere*), see: R.M. Ogilvie, ‘Lustrum Condere’, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 51.1-2 (1961).

²³⁰ Liv. 3.22; App. *Span.* 19; Hirt. *Afr.* 56. The authorship of *On the African War* remains uncertain. Aulus Hirtius (90-43 BCE), a commander under Caesar, has frequently been brought forward as the author or editor and compiler of the material. Hirtius as editor of the African corpus seems most feasible, see: L.W. Daly, ‘Aulus Hirtius and the Corpus Caesarianum’, *The Classical Weekly*, 44.8 (1951), 117.

similarly.²³¹ In the *lustratio classis*, the lustration of the fleet, there seems to have been emphasis on the totality of the participants as well. In the campaign against Antiochus III in 191 BCE, Livius Salinator ‘picked up six vessels which had been sent by Carthage and the ships which Regium and Locris (...) contributed’, before performing the lustration.²³² In Appian’s account of the lustration performed by Augustus, as introduced before, we get a better sense of the practicalities of the ritual. He notes how ‘the multitude’ of ships circle around the erected altars, which – in view of the information Appian provided before – must have contributed to around 100 ships.²³³ Clearly, we should question such claims and consider the practical aspect of the ritual. Could the *lustratio* be performed in the presence of the whole body of soldiers, and could the ceremony circumambulate this body? Both the literary accounts and imperial reliefs seem to suggest this, but it remains questionable if this was the case. Noteworthy, however, is the case of Philippi in 42 BCE, of which both Plutarch and Cassius Dio provide an account.²³⁴ It is reported by them that Octavian and Antony performed a lustration *inside* their camp, by which they ‘showed signs of fear’, rather than the usual performance in the open field.²³⁵ Thus, we may infer that the lustration was customarily performed outside the castrum, likely circling around the camp and soldiers (this may be interpreted from the imperial reliefs as well). As Poultny (1959) suggested, ‘it is altogether likely that they would have been expected to remain in formation until the whole lustration was completed.’²³⁶ I believe it cannot be argued that every soldier was within this circle, this would simply be impractical. However, we can conclude that it was requisite for the lustration that the complete army was mobilised, and that it was of such magnitude that almost all, either directly or indirectly, witnessed or underwent the circumambulatory ceremony.

I have discussed and identified four notable features of the *lustratio exercitus*. Firstly, there seems to be a clear connection with the marching out of armies or sailing out of fleets. Evidently then, the performance of the lustration pertained to the hostilities to come. Secondly, I have

²³¹ Ogilvie, ‘Lustrum Condere’, 36.

²³² Liv. 36.42.2.

²³³ App. *Civ.* 5.95: ‘Nevertheless, they made an exchange with each other, Antony giving to Octavian 120 ships, which he sent at once and delivered at Tarentum...’

²³⁴ Plutarch’s work was known to Dio, and it can be argued that Dio’s account is based on Plutarch’s. Nevertheless, Dio rarely makes mention of his sources – as well in his account of the Battle of Philippi. For more information on Dio’s use of Plutarch, see: G.J.D. Aalders, ‘Cassius Dio and the Greek World’, *Mnemosyne*, 39.3/4 (1986), 292-293.

²³⁵ Plut. *Brut.* 39; Cass. Dio 47.38.

²³⁶ J.W. Poultny, *The Bronze Tables of Iguvium* (Baltimore, 1959), 281.

discussed some instances that make strong reference to the theme of geographical transition; the theme of passage. Thirdly, the command of the consul appears to have held intricate connection with the lustration. And lastly, we have seen that the ritual was performed once the full army was mobilized and present. Evidently then, the *lustratio* appears to have been concerned with the notion of transformation: it was performed when armies marched for battle, before spatial boundaries were crossed, or when a new social hierarchy came in place (e.g. a new commander). Before, we have discussed the *suovetaurilia*: the central component of the lustration. The circumambulatory movement naturally designates the centre of focus of the ritual: the army which it circled thrice. We can plausibly argue for the participatory role of the soldier, whether directly in the procession, or indirectly in the circled body of soldiers. It did not purify an already present malicious element, for it was solely performed before the advent of change. We may therefore logically conclude that the *lustratio* held effect with regard to that which was to come. It may have served to avert future danger by sanctifying the soldier into a status anew. For now, we may conclude that the *lustratio* took a significant place in the preamble to battle, and the plotline of warfare.

§2.4 Predicting victory: the *auspicium*

‘However this may be, auguries and the augural priesthood so increased in honour that nothing was afterwards done, in the field or at home, unless the auspices had first been taken: popular assemblies, musterings of the army, acts of supreme importance – all were put off when the birds refused their consent.’²³⁷

Since the reign of Tarquinius Priscus (616-578 BCE), Livy accounts, no acts of importance were undertaken without having witnessed the auspices beforehand. Taking these auspices, a ritual known as the *auspicium*, was done by witnessing the flight of birds or the behaviour of the sacred chickens, known as the *pulli*.²³⁸ Through these birds, it was believed, the gods expressed their approval or disapproval for future actions. The practice of witnessing the auspices was conducted by the augurs, a priestly college reserved for patricians, until 300 BCE, when plebeians were admitted as well. Cicero, for example, was an augur himself, and was

²³⁷ Liv. 1.36.6.

²³⁸ Rasmussen, *Public Portents in Republican Rome*, 153. *Auspicium* from *avis* and *specio*: to watch the birds. The *auspicium* was likely borrowed from the Etruscans. Cicero, not sure about this fact, refers to various other nations that conducted similar practices (*Div.* 2.35.38).

therefore well-informed on the topic. In his work *On Divination*, he similarly refers to the gravity of the *auspicium*. He notes how ‘our ancestors would not undertake any military enterprise without consulting the auspices’, something which was not as much the case in his days, he remarks.²³⁹ Thus, both Cicero and Livy surmised that the *auspicium* was of essential importance to military success and seem to suggest that the auspices were witnessed before any military undertaking. It would be worthwhile then, to investigate the prevalence and particulars of the ritual, and see where and how the *auspicium* features in the Roman conduct of war.

Firstly, it should be noted that there were two types of *auspicia*: those that were requested by performing the *auspicium* (the ‘*auspicia impetrativa*’), and those that occurred without request (the ‘*auspicia oblativa*’).²⁴⁰ The former occurred by setting up a *templum* in the sky, in which the flight of the birds was accordingly observed, whereas the latter concerned omens and portents such as lightning strikes or, much simpler, a sneeze or stumble. It may be apparent that the *auspicia impetrativa* are of interest here, for this was a deliberately performed ritual. This fits the ritual pattern that this paper is concerned with.

Secondly, it appears that the *auspicium* was not solely performed in military matters, but also featured in Roman political decision-making and elections.²⁴¹ Additionally, the auspices might also be taken when founding new cities or colonies, or when military *castra* were erected.²⁴² In short then, the *auspicium* was performed in the prospect of change and transformation and provided divine approval to sanctify this change. Thus, if we wish to investigate those *auspicia* that were performed in the conduct of war, we are required to make some sort of a selection. Fortunately, such a division was already manifest for the Romans, since the *auspicium ex tripudiis* was solely performed by the army, supplemented by the

²³⁹ Cic. *Div.* 2.36.76. He writes: ‘...but now, for many years, our wars have been conducted by pro-consuls and pro-praetors, who do not have the right to take auspices.’ The pro-consuls and pro-praetors were those that would act in the place of a consul or praetor. Usually, these positions were reserved for senior figures. During the First and Second Punic Wars, these positions appear to have become more popular and customary.

²⁴⁰ There is scholarly consensus on this division, see for example: Lintott (1999), Rasmussen (2003), and Rosenberger (2007).

²⁴¹ See, for example, Livy’s account of the inauguration of king Numa in 716 BCE: ‘Father Jupiter, if it be heaven’s will that this Numa Pompilius, whose head I hold, should be king of Rome, do thou signify it to us by sure signs within those boundaries which I have traced.’ Then he described in the usual formula the augury which he desired should be sent. They were sent, and Numa being by them manifested to be king, came down from the ‘templum.’ (1.18.9-10).

²⁴² See, for example, Liv. 41.18.5: ‘It was certain that Valerius cast his lot auspiciously, because he was in the consecrated ground; the augurs afterwards announced that there was this defect in the case of Petillius, that he himself when outside the consecrated ground cast his lot into the urn, which was subsequently brought into the sacred place. They then began their march in different directions...’ Petillius suffered the consequences of pitching his camp in an inauspicious lot: ‘...he was pierced through with a javelin, and fell.’ (41.18.7).

auspiciū ex avibus, which was also performed in the civil sphere.²⁴³ The former was concerned with the feeding of the sacred chickens, who were kept in a cage by the *pullarius*. When the occasion demanded, the chickens were released from their cages and offered grain or corn. Cicero explains that ‘according to the writings of you augurs, a *tripudium* results if any of the food should fall to the ground...’²⁴⁴ The *tripudium* was accordingly interpreted as a favourable omen. If the chickens refused to eat, or simply displayed odd behaviour, this was considered a bad omen. We may be reminded of the case of Claudius, discussed before. The *auspiciū ex avibus* is best explained by Varro. He notes how a square in the sky – the *templum* – was demarcated, in which the birds would consequently be witnessed and inspected:

‘Whatever place the eyes had *intuiti* ‘gazed on’, was originally called a *templum* ‘temple’, from *tueri* ‘to gaze’; therefore the sky, where we *attuimur* ‘gaze at’ it, got the name *templum*...’²⁴⁵

The *templum* formed the spatial arrangement in which the birds would be witnessed by the augur. He would divide the *templum* in four quarters and assign one to be the entry for the birds, as Varro continues. The borders of the *templum* were absolute and the augur was expected to maintain strong focus in discerning these borders (a tree might for example offer guidance as to where a border was). Consequently, he would determine which direction would be favourable for the birds to fly to or from.²⁴⁶

We have clarified the type of *auspiciū* that we are concerned with here, namely the *auspiciā impetratīva* – ‘on request’ – and in the form of the *tripudiis* and *avibus* – the feeding of chickens and the flight of birds. Thus, we may now question when and where it was performed. Where does the *auspiciū* position in the soldier’s preamble to combat? I refer to appendix II for a list of recorded *auspiciā* that were performed before battle. Livy’s account of the Battle of Aquilonia in 293 BCE provides a good illustration. He writes how the commander Papirius Cursor deferred the attack for one night, because the auspices had to be taken first:

²⁴³ A distinction can be made of roughly five categories of *auspiciā*: 1) *ex caelo* (thunder and lightning in the sky), 2) *ex avibus* (the flight of certain birds), 3) *ex tripudiis* (the feeding of chickens), 4) *ex quadrupedibus* (from footed animals), and 5) *ex diris* (every kind of augury that did not fall in the other categories). See: ‘Augur, Augurium’, in: W. Smith (ed.), *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London, 1875), 174-179.

²⁴⁴ Cic. *Div.* 1.25.18.

²⁴⁵ Var. *Lat. Lan.* 7.7. Only certain birds were fit for the *auspiciū ex avibus*. Pliny carefully explains the characteristics of certain birds, and explains why some are suited for the augury, and some not. See: *Nat. His.* 7.1-75.

²⁴⁶ This direction was no preset, as Cicero (1.39.85) notes: ‘Why does an augur think it a favourable omen when a raven flies to the right, or a crow to the left?’ He admits he has no plausible answer to this question.

‘...Papirius rose quietly in the third watch of the night and set a pullarius to observe the omens. There was not a man, whatever his rank or condition, in the camp who was not seized by the passion for battle (...) the general was watching the excited looks of the men, the men were looking at their general, the universal excitement extended even to those who were engaged in observing the sacred chickens. The chickens refused to eat, but the pullarius ventured to misrepresent matters, and reported to the consul that they had eaten so greedily that the corn dropped from their mouths on to the ground. The consul, delighted at the news, gave out that the omens could not have been more favourable; they were going to engage the enemy under the guidance and blessing of heaven.’²⁴⁷

The *auspicium* that was performed in 293 BCE did not enjoy much appreciation amongst the consul and his soldiers, who were eager for battle and loath for any delay. Their excitement was, however, further strengthened by the positive news the *pullarius* presented – or rather, misrepresented. Livy later adds that news of this error reached the more senior cavalry, who consequently voiced their concerns to the consul. Papirius Cursor paid no heed to their concerns however, for he was convinced that the *pullarius* erred by his misreading, ‘as far as I am concerned, I have received the formal intimation that the chickens ate eagerly’, he explained. Thus, the commander does not seem to worry about the disputed outcome, for the rites have been performed correctly.²⁴⁸ The *pullarius* was consequently placed in front of the first ranks, and tragically met his fate by ‘a chance javelin’.²⁴⁹ Livy’s passage reflects on the pivotal role of the *auspicium*, thereby making it a revered and sometimes unwelcome act.²⁵⁰ Additionally, this may result from the fact that a favourable *auspicium* was considered to be valid for one day, thus adding some pressure to the situation.²⁵¹ Communication about the outcome of the augury appears to have been reserved for the priests and commanders at first, after which the

²⁴⁷ Liv. 10.40.2-5.

²⁴⁸ J. Scheid, ‘Livy and Religion’, in: B. Mineo, *A Companion to Livy* (Oxford, 2014), 85.

²⁴⁹ Liv. 10.40.12-14. Upon which Papirius Cursor remarked: ‘The gods are taking their part in the battle, the guilty man has met with his punishment.’ A faulty outcome of the *auspicium* nearly always rested with the augur, there were hardly doubts about the system of divination. See: Rosenberger, ‘Republican Nobles: Controlling the Res Publica’, 300. Cicero too, remarks: ‘Signs of future events are manifested by the gods; men may have mistaken these signs, but the fault lay with man’s powers of inference, not with the divine nature.’ (*Nat. Gods* 2.4.12).

²⁵⁰ As Linderski (1985) rightly notes: ‘This was uncomfortable, especially when divine will had to be ascertained swiftly and reliably, as before a battle. Thus, first in military practice, chickens started to be employed for that purpose. They were kept hungry in a cage so that when they were given food they ate so greedily that crumbs were bound to fall from their beaks.’ See: Linderski, J., ‘The Libri Reconditi’, in: Bailey, D.R.S. (ed.), *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, Volume 89 (Harvard, 1985), 226.

²⁵¹ Rasmussen, *Public Portents in Republican Rome*, 299.

consul publicly shared the news with the soldiers. Yet, since the cavalry somehow became informed of the actual outcome, we may presume that such weighty information was prone to have leaked among the soldiers.²⁵² If the actual witnessing took place in a secluded space, we may not ascertain. But, as we have discussed before, we may assume that such a solemn affair required peaceful circumstances. Cicero refers to the ‘silence’ that was required when the *auspicium* was taken, a term by which he means ‘free of every augural defect.’ It remains somewhat unclear what this would imply: ‘To understand that belongs to a perfect augur’, he explains.²⁵³ A passage in Plutarch’s *Life of Crassus* may add to the picture:

‘The seers, also, quietly let it become known that the omens for Crassus which came from their sacrifices were always bad and inauspicious. But Crassus paid no heed to them, nor to those who advised anything else except to press forward.’²⁵⁴

From this passage we may conclude that the outcome of the augury was regularly kept secret. However, since Crassus apparently kept ignoring ill omens, the seers decided to take matters into their own hands by ‘quietly’ bringing out the news. Thus, it remains somewhat unclear to what degree the *auspicium* was public.²⁵⁵ Additionally, witnessing the birds could only have been meaningful to the augurs who knew how to interpret them, as Cicero already hinted. And in fact, those who were able to interpret the signs represented a rather specific class, as Rosenberger points out: ‘Since the priests dealing with the signs came from the Roman nobility, their interpretation expressed the consensus within the Roman elite.’²⁵⁶ I therefore believe the soldier had little to do in this process. The proclamation of the outcome, however, appears to have been a public affair, which evidently must have been a tense and anticipated moment. Nevertheless, this all required transparent communication on behalf of the commander, which was clearly not always the case. The consul Petilius Spurinus was allegedly not even aware of

²⁵² We should also keep in mind Livy’s moralising interests. Throughout his work, he often reminds the reader of the piety of his ancestors and the older generations, and the lack of this among the younger generation. In the same passage he writes of a ‘young man, born in an age when men were not yet taught to despise the gods...’ (10.40.10). The fact that the cavalry – which generally consisted of more senior men – was suspicious of the outcome of the *auspicium* in 293 BCE, contributes to the morale of Livy’s work. See: W. Liebeschuetz, ‘The Religious Position of Livy’s History’, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 57.1/2 (1967), 48-51.

²⁵³ Cic. *Div.* 2.34.71-72.

²⁵⁴ Plut. *Crass.* 18.5.

²⁵⁵ As also remarked by Rosenberger, see: Rosenberger, ‘Republican Nobiles: Controlling the Res Publica’, 300.

²⁵⁶ Rosenberger, ‘Republican Nobiles’, 301.

the unfavourable auspices when he set out for battle in 176 BCE, eventually leading to his demise.²⁵⁷

When discussing the *auspicium*, we should be aware of its literary function in the narratives of writers such as Livy and Cicero. Livy might note a positive outcome in order to justify a certain battle, or Cicero might as well account for unfavourable auspices to explain a Roman defeat. The *auspicium* may serve as a powerful retrospective tool to strengthen the narrative of a battle. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that there are victories recorded which were achieved with unfavourable auspices, as well as defeats that were preceded by a favourable *auspicium*.²⁵⁸ But it is not the place here to engage in a debate on the narratological use of the *auspicium* in ancient texts. Rather, what is of importance, is the fact that the augury appears to have been performed recurrently preceding a conflict, and that its outcome was commonly known amongst the soldiers. It was, in a sense, significant public news that influenced the future course of actions. A favourable *auspicium* provided approval for the next action and, even more so, guaranteed a positive result to that action, for it was sanctified by the gods. Vice versa, venturing against an unfavourable augury would therefore evoke divine wrath. Florus (74-130 CE) provides an interesting interpretation of such consequences in his version of the well-known case of Claudius and his chickens:

‘In the consulship of Appius Claudius the Romans were defeated not by the enemy but by the gods, whose auspices he had despised, their fleet being immediately sunk on the spot where Appius Claudius had ordered the sacred chickens to be thrown overboard...’²⁵⁹

Florus emphasizes that the Romans suffered a defeat by the hands of the gods, not the enemy Carthaginian fleet. This is interesting to note, for it suggests that actions without a *tripudium* evoked divine wrath, and not necessarily enemy wrath. It attests to a fate even more inevitable and metaphysical. Florus leaves the impression that any designated action undertaken after an unfavourable *auspicium* was ultimately futile.

²⁵⁷ Liv. 41.18.13.

²⁵⁸ E.g. the defeat of Aemilius Paullus at Cannae, as Cicero already remarks: ‘But a year later Paulus did obey them; and did he not lose his army and his life in the battle of Cannae?’ (*Div.* 2.33.71). Cicero is critical towards the *auspicium ex tripudiis*, which according to him is a forced and lesser form of divination. In the first book he presents a notion of divination which seems more correct to him: “Notwithstanding what has happened,” said he [Deiotarus of Galatia], “I do not regret that the auspices favoured my joining Pompey. By so doing I enlisted my military power in defence of senatorial authority, Roman liberty, and the supremacy of the empire. The birds, at whose instance I followed the course of duty and of honour, counselled well, for I value my good name more than riches.” His conception of augury, it seems to me, is the correct one.’ (*Div.* 1.15.26).

²⁵⁹ Flor. *Epit.* 2.18.29.

The *auspiciu*m appears to have been a regular component of the Roman preamble to battle, as stressed frequently by writers such as Livy and Cicero. The *auspiciu*m *ex tripudiis*, the variant most often performed in military matters, may be encountered recurrently in the sources. Nevertheless, I believe we have seen that the ritual was of a less communal nature. Rather, the witnessing of the birds was performed by the augurs in the company of the commanding staff, who consequently decided on the information that was made public. It is difficult to assign any participating role of the soldier to this process – whether directly or indirectly – but I believe it may be evident that it did relate to the actions of the soldier. Unfavourable omens could stall or even cancel campaigns and marches, whereas a favourable *auspiciu*m provided positive reinforcement for the actions to come and was publicly presented as such, as Livy’s account on the Battle of Aquilonia suggests. Thus, the *auspiciu*m communicated the moral situation in which the soldier was located to him. It could ensure him of the future course of actions or deter him from erring in an immoral course of actions. The *auspiciu*m therefore served as a cue that predicted the occurrence of another event, e.g. a victorious or unsuccessful battle. It may be evident that its pivotal character made the *auspiciu*m most eventful in the conduct of warfare.

§2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced the position of ritual in the Roman religious and military landscape. I have provided an interpretation of ritual that allowed its consequent study. In the review of the corpus of martial rituals we have discussed the relevance of each ritual and concluded on the position it may have held in the soldier’s preamble to, or summation of, battle. I have explained why I believe the rituals of the *lustratio*, *auspiciu*m, *devotio hostium*, *passum sub iugum*, and *triumphus*, required further analysis. The *lustratio* appears to have been performed regularly before hostilities would commence. The ancient authors stress its purificatory character, and thereby they simultaneously hint at action or event that required a ‘purified’ body of soldiers. We have seen that the ceremony was performed when battle was nigh, when a new commander took over, or when perceived geographical spaces were crossed. Thus, when the ritual was performed, it predicted the occurrence of a future course of actions that was significantly different from that of the present. The *auspiciu*m would serve to ratify this future course. We have seen that the augurs were consulted when hostilities were perceived to be imminent. The *auspiciu*m would thereby offer a plausible prediction of the future. The following chapter will discuss the three rituals that took place after battle.

III – Rituals of Closure: The Transition From Battle

Ritual was a solemn affair, we have seen. It involved organization, care, caution, and moreover: peace, in its direct environment. In order for a sacrifice to be performed correctly, silence, calm, and accuracy were required – we may argue, it required everything opposite to the stir of battle. For rituals to be performed after combat then, hostilities must have reached a conclusive end. The rituals that will be discussed next both required and emphasized conclusion.

This chapter discusses various ritualized acts that were performed both after battle and the campaign. It is concerned with those rituals that concluded hostilities and the greater narrative of the campaign in which these took place. Firstly, I will discuss the ritual of the *devotio hostium*. Secondly, I will expand on the act of the passing under the yoke. And thirdly, a topic more familiar, the triumph, will take stage. Clearly, the triumph has received extensive scholarly attention and it is not the place here to engage with this discussion. Rather, I will be concerned with the experience of the soldier in the triumph; of participation, performance, and the notion of re-entry into the civil sphere. I will conclude the chapter with some final remarks.

§3.1 Concluding battle: the *devotio hostium*

The ancient authors regularly inform of a specific sacrifice that was performed by the Romans after they had concluded battle victoriously. The enemy arms and armour were allegedly collected and heaped upon a pyre, which was consequently ritually sacrificed and devoted to a deity. Plutarch (46-120 CE) provides the most detailed account of what we might refer to as the *devotio hostium*:

‘After the battle, Marius collected such of the arms and spoils of the Barbarians as were handsome, entire, and fitted to make a show in his triumphal procession; all the rest he heaped up on a huge pyre and set on foot a magnificent sacrifice. The soldiers had taken their stand about the pyre in arms, with chaplets on their heads, and Marius himself, having put on his purple-bordered robe and girt it about him, as the custom was, had taken a lighted torch, held it up towards heaven with both hands, (...) [and] he set fire to the pyre and completed the sacrifice.’ – Plutarch, *Life of Marius*.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ Plut. *Mar.* 22.

In his account of the life of Gaius Marius, Plutarch describes the aftermath of the Battle of Aquae Sextiae in 102 BCE. After hostilities had ceased, Marius, in command of the army, ordered for the enemy arms and armour to be collected. A part he saved for his personal triumph, and a part he gathered on a ‘huge pyre’, designated to be ignited and sacrificed to the gods. With the soldiers wearing ‘chaplets’ on their heads and Marius dressed in the consular toga, the sacrifice was accordingly completed, thereby solemnly concluding the preceding hostilities. Plutarch provides an interesting account of the *devotio hostium*.²⁶¹

To get a more profound understanding of the prevalence and significance of the sacrifice, we may consult the complete body of evidence – I refer to appendix III.²⁶² Various authors make mention of the custom, from which a chronological timeline can be inferred that roughly spans 590-86 BCE. For most allusions to the ritual, we may consult Livy, of which the first can be dated to the Sabine War in c. 590-585 BCE. Livy writes that ‘the spoils of the enemy had been devoted to Vulcan, they were accordingly collected into an enormous pile and burnt...’²⁶³ His account of the post-battle sacrifice relates to the fifth king of Rome, Tarquinius Priscus, after his victory over the Sabines. In the excerpt we read how he collected the enemy spoils and devoted these to Vulcan in a sacrifice. Later, during the war with the Privernates and Antiates in 341 BCE, Livy appoints Lua Mater as the beneficiary.²⁶⁴ And in 295 BCE, after the Battle of Sentinum, Jupiter Victor appears to have been the recipient of the sacrifice.²⁶⁵ In Appian too, we frequently encounter the *devotio hostium*. In the *Punic Wars*, he writes how Scipio Africanus ‘girded himself as for a sacrifice and burned the less valuable spoils of the enemy, as is the custom of the Roman generals.’, after the Battle of Zama in 202 BCE.²⁶⁶ In the *Spanish Wars*, Mummius Achaicus was the one devoting the spoils ‘to the gods of war’.²⁶⁷ The ritual sacrifice can be dated last to 86 BCE, when Sulla too, after the Battle of Chaeronea,

²⁶¹ I believe the ‘*devotio hostium*’ accurately describes the ritual that we are concerned with there. As addressed before, Versnel (1976) identified the *devotio hostium* as a separate rite. I refer to paragraph 2.2.

²⁶² As with the *lustratio*, the list in the appendix is compiled by the author. No encompassing overview of the ritual and its prevalence exists, nor has it been the primary subject of any academic work. Collection and selection was done by using certain keywords and scanning various ancient texts. As a starting point, those instances collected by Rose (1922) and Rich (2013) were used. See: H.J. Rose, ‘Lua Mater: Fire, Rust, and War in Early Roman Cult’, *The Classical Review*, 36.1/2 (1922), 15; Rich, ‘Roman Rituals of War’, 677.

²⁶³ Liv. 1.37.5. Versnel suggests that ‘it is not improbable that it was invented for the capture of Vei [396 BCE]’ (‘Two Types of Roman *devotio*, 383). However, Livy refers to a *devotio hostium* dating a century earlier. Clearly, Livy may have projected the *devotio hostium* too far in history, but I believe Versnel might not be entirely right. It nevertheless remains difficult to ascertain.

²⁶⁴ Liv. 8.1.6.

²⁶⁵ Liv. 10.29.18.

²⁶⁶ App. *Pun.* 8.48.

²⁶⁷ App. *Span.* 10.57.

‘girded himself according to the Roman custom and burned it [the pyre] as a sacrifice to the gods of war’.²⁶⁸ In total, at least fifteen instances can be identified where the *devotio hostium* was performed (see appendix III). Before discussing the place of the sacrifice within the Roman religious landscape, it would be worthwhile to further discuss the details of the event.

Firstly, it is important to reflect on the nature of the sacrifice. As Versnel (1976) remarked, the sacrifice of enemy arms and armour should be seen as a *devotio*: the fulfilment of a vow.²⁶⁹ The vow was made by the general, and he would consequently fulfil this by sacrificing that which he promised in honour of the deity. After the Battle of Cannae, for example, Livy notes how the spoils were burnt ‘in fulfilment of a vow to Vulcan.’²⁷⁰ Whereas after the Battle of Pydna, the vow was made towards ‘Mars and Minerva and Lua Mater and the other deities to whom the spoils taken from the enemy must be solemnly dedicated.’²⁷¹ Evidently, in order to fulfil a vow, one has to make the vow first. Frankly, there is no reference to the making of these vows before battle. However, as Derks (1995) concluded on the ritual of the vow in the Gallo-Roman religious landscape, ‘the making of the vow was often a strictly personal matter between dedicator and deity (...) the fulfilment of the vow always had an open nature.’²⁷² In the absence of evidence, I believe we may conclude similarly on the *devotio hostium*.

Secondly, it may be apparent that the sacrifice was a communal event that was performed rather directly after combat. The battlefield was searched for arms and armour by the soldiers, who were accordingly ordered to collect them on a single pile. As Livy accounts, ‘a large amount of spoil (...) was picked up on the battlefield, and the Master of the Horse had this collected into a huge heap’.²⁷³ Consequently, as we can infer from both Plutarch and Livy, the soldiers – and they seem to suggest, *all* the soldiers – stood around the pyre that was lighted. At Pydna, there appears to have been a multitude of pyres, which was ignited by a multitude of military tribunes. We may expect that at cases practicalities would require more men to ignite the pyres. The sacrifice was a collective performance then: the soldiers collecting and piling the spoils, and the commander(s) uttering prayers and igniting the pyre. Thus, the general would

²⁶⁸ App. *Mithr.* 6.45.

²⁶⁹ Versnel, ‘Two Types of Roman *devotio*’, 400-409.

²⁷⁰ Liv. 23.46.5.

²⁷¹ Liv. 45.33.1-2.

²⁷² T. Derks, ‘The Ritual of the Vow in Gallo-Roman Religion’, in: J. Metzler, et al. (eds.), *Integration in the Early Roman West: The Role of Culture and Ideology* (Luxembourg, 1995), 126.

²⁷³ Liv. 8.30.8.

hereby publicly fulfil his vow. I suspect this aspect to have been most fundamental to the *devotio hostium*.

Thirdly, I would like to stress the ceremonious and meticulous character of the sacrifice. In the previous chapter I have already emphasized the care and caution that accompanied Roman rituals. Of the *devotio hostium*, we may detect the same: for the general it was required to gird himself in the ‘sacrificial cincture’, as can be read in Appian (*Pun.* 8.48, 20.133, *Mithr.* 6.45) and Plutarch (*Marius* 22.1). Livy, frankly, makes no mention of this dress, and I think we may therefore have reason to attribute this feat to the fact that Appian and Plutarch were both Greek, and thus could only note things Roman that must have appeared ubiquitous to Livy. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that the person in charge was required to wear the sacrificial dress. Plutarch’s account of the sacrifice at Aquae Sextiae is of further interest, for he mentions Marius to have been dressed in a ‘purple-bordered robe’. Here, he likely refers to the *toga praetexta*, a robe which indicated the wearer to be in the possession of *imperium*, and in fact, a civil dress. Additionally, Plutarch mentions that the soldiers wore ‘chaplets on their heads’, which could be a reference to the leaf-like garland as worn by victors.²⁷⁴ I believe it is therefore worthwhile to further investigate Plutarch’s account, for it might reveal interesting features about the nature of the ritual.

Plutarch, writing his *Parallel Lives* at the beginning of the second century CE, consulted a wide array of material for his work: philosopher’s treatises, comedy’s, antiquarian texts, and official records.²⁷⁵ However, due to the detailed and rather personal accounts he provides, it has been suggested that other biographies formed his sources.²⁷⁶ This must have been the case with Marius too. Nevertheless, Plutarch is concerned with morality rather than history, and his aim is to depict both moral decay and excellence in the lives of his characters. Thus, we are left somewhat puzzled with the passage that is of concern here: would there be any reason for Plutarch to mention the purple-bordered toga and chaplets, or could he simply be reciting his sources? I would like to argue that the purple toga is perfectly in place here. As Livy reveals, performing the sacrifice was much related to honour: of the sacrifice in 324 BCE, he writes how the Master of the Horse hastily collected the enemy spoils for he did not want his colleague, the Dictator, to reap ‘the fruits of his glory’.²⁷⁷ Clearly, there must have rested a sense of prestige in the size of the sacrifice, for we read how most piles reached ‘enormous’,

²⁷⁴ Plut. *Mar.* 22.1.

²⁷⁵ D.A. Russell, ‘On Reading Plutarch’s ‘Lives’, *Greece & Rome*, 13.2 (1966), 148.

²⁷⁶ R.E. Smith, ‘Plutarch’s Biographical Sources in the Roman Lives’, *The Classical Quarterly*, 34.1/2 (1940), 2.

²⁷⁷ Liv. 8.30.8.

‘magnificent’, or ‘great’, sizes. In that sense, the sacrifice could be regarded not just as the fulfilment of a vow, but also as a claim to victory. We may assume this to have been an impressive ordeal to both perform and witness then. Marius’ purple-bordered toga signified *imperium* – legal power – and would be most in place in a situation where rank, hierarchy, ceremony, and the claim to victory, were of concern.²⁷⁸ It would be perfectly reasonable to assume that Marcellus, Scipio, Sulla, and Mummius, took on similar dress in their sacrifices.

In explaining the ‘chaplets’ on the soldiers’ heads, Pliny might be of help. In his *Natural History*, he reflects on the strict rules that applied to wearing chaplets – they were considered most prestigious and could only be granted for serious accomplishments. Those wearing them unjustly were liable to serious punishment.²⁷⁹ We cannot expect all of Marius’ soldiers to have worn such chaplets then, for it was a most prestigious award. Plutarch must therefore be referring to the military decorations that were earned by soldiers: the *coronae*. Soldiers that demonstrated their bravery in combat could have earned various crowns or ‘chaplets’.²⁸⁰ These symbols of valour were most significant within the military landscape and we would have every reason to believe that during ceremonies, such as the *devotio hostium*, these symbols of valour would be worn and displayed purposely (hence they stood around the pyre ‘in arms’).²⁸¹ Similarly, soldiers or veterans would wear their military decorations during festivities in Rome. Along this line of thought, we may well consider the *devotio hostium* to have been of celebratory nature. Plutarch describes Marius’ *devotio hostium* as a ‘celebration of their victory’, which may give away much about the sentiment during the sacrifice. The sacrifice may emphasize triumph then and serve as a clear attestation to the narrative of victory.

The sacrificial burning of enemy arms appears to be rather unique and exceptional to the Roman rule of sacrificial conduct. The Roman sacrifice, as touched upon in the previous chapter, was

²⁷⁸ The *toga praetexta* was worn by those in the possession of *imperium*, freeborn boys before they came of age, and several priesthoods. Since Marius was clearly of age, and not yet appointed a priesthood (this happened in 98 BCE), the *toga praetexta* must have signified the *imperium* he held.

²⁷⁹ For example, Pliny accounts how Lucius Fulvius, a banker, was imprisoned by the State for wearing a chaplet of roses on his head when standing on the balcony of his house on the Forum. See: Plin. *Nat. His.* 21.6. It should be added that imprisonment was a sentence most unusual for the Romans, and in fact only sentenced to serious enemies of the State.

²⁸⁰ For these decorations, see: V.A. Maxfield, *The Military Decorations of the Roman Army* (California UP, 1981).

²⁸¹ As an additional explanation, the chaplets could refer to wreaths of laurel. Of interest then, is a passage in Pliny (15.40): ‘The laurel is employed in purifications...’ If the soldiers wore laurel-chaplets on their heads, the sacrifice would distinct itself as a purificatory ceremony. This would indeed be very interesting, but I do not see reason that this was the case, since it is not mentioned in any other account. Nor is it likely that armies carried with them laurel crowns for the occasion of the sacrifice after battle.

always concerned with animal victims or foodstuffs.²⁸² The priest and his assistants would circle around an altar on which a fire burned. As Cato the Elder (234-149 BCE) instructs in *On Agriculture*, wine or incense was poured into the hearth as introduction.²⁸³ Consequently, the animal victim (within the range of domestic animals) was immolated, the entrails being inspected, divided, and partly burned in the fire and partly saved for consummation. Sacrificial burning then, was restricted to the spectrum of wine, incense, meat, fruits, grain, and items as such. The smoke emerging from the fire accordingly reached the addressed deity, thereby providing communication between the worshipper and worshipped.²⁸⁴ In this mode, items that were burned in the sacrifice were conveyed to the gods. Why is it that the enemy spoils were sacrificed in this manner as well then? Frankly, I am not the first to question this anomaly, for it has also been noted by Plutarch. In his *Roman Questions*, Plutarch engages in a guessing game, providing each question posed with several possible answers. Of the *devotio hostium*, he inquires:

‘Why is it that of all the things dedicated to the gods it is the custom to allow only spoils of war to disintegrate with the passage of time, and not to move them beforehand nor repair them?’²⁸⁵

As Plutarch rightly notes, those items that were presented to the gods were decorated in temples; they were taken, repaired or embellished, and accordingly put on display.²⁸⁶ Why is it then, that certain spoils of war were burnt and thereby left untouched and unrestored?²⁸⁷ Plutarch offers

²⁸² J. Scheid, ‘Sacrifices for Gods and Ancestors’, in: Rüpke, *Blackwell Companion to Roman Religion*, 263-264. Instances of human sacrifice have been recorded in Roman history but were far from customary. Livy (22.57.5-6) provides an account of the sacrifice of four people from Gaul and Greece: ‘In the meantime, by the direction of the Books of Fate, some unusual sacrifices were offered; amongst others a Gaulish man and woman and a Greek man and woman were buried alive in the Cattle Market, in a place walled in with stone, which even before this time had been defiled with human victims, a sacrifice wholly alien to the Roman spirit.’ But clearly, as Livy already notes, this type of sacrifice was alien to the Roman custom. Plin. *Nat. His.* 30.3) informs that a law was passed in 97 BCE, prohibiting human sacrifice: ‘At last, in the year of the City 657, Cneius Cornelius Lentulus and P. Licinius Crassus being consuls, a decree forbidding human sacrifices was passed by the senate; from which period the celebration of these horrid rites ceased in public, and, for some time, altogether.’

²⁸³ Cat. *Agri.* 141.

²⁸⁴ F.S. Naiden, *Smoke Signals for the Gods: Ancient Greek Sacrifice from the Archaic through Roman Periods* (Oxford, 2015), vii; Rose, ‘Lua Mater: Fire, Rust, and War in Early Roman Cult’, 17.

²⁸⁵ Plut. *RQ* 37.

²⁸⁶ I. Ostenberg, *Staging the World: Spoils, Captives, and Representations in the Roman Triumphal Procession* (Oxford, 2009), 27-28.

²⁸⁷ Large pyres of wood, iron, and other stronger materials tend to leave archaeological trace. It would be very interesting if such pyres surfaced in archaeological surveys, but – to my knowledge – no such thing has been discovered thus far.

two plausible explanations, of which we can only question if the correct answer is among them. Nevertheless, it may help us in understanding the particularity of the *devotio hostium*. Firstly, Plutarch notes, it could be a form of *damnatio memoriae*, serving to erase the memory of the defeated by destroying that which lends them their valour and identity: their weapons and armour, and thus, an end to the story. Or secondly, Plutarch poses, because it was considered malicious to restore or renew trophies – something which was interestingly also the case in his home country: ‘Nor among the Greeks, either, do they that first erected a trophy of stone or bronze stand in good repute.’²⁸⁸ The trophy Plutarch refers to, the *tropaion*, was erected on Greek battlefields as a memory and attestation to the victory. Often it was placed on the spot where a battle turned decisive (e.g. where a phalanx broke), serving as the materialization of experience.²⁸⁹ Frankly, the Romans did not take over this custom. Florus (74-130 CE) comments:

‘...both Domitius Ahenobarbus and Fabius Maximus set up towers of stone on the actual sites of the battles which they had fought, and fixed on the top of them trophies adorned with the enemy’s arms. This practice was unusual with our generals; for the Roman people never cast their defeats in the teeth of their conquered enemies.’²⁹⁰

Of casting defeats in the teeth of conquered enemies, Florus might not have been entirely right, as the next paragraph will illustrate. However, with regard to the construction of more permanent trophies, Florus was – to quite a degree – right. The only other account mentioning this sort of trophy comes from Tacitus’ *Annals*, in which he attributes a mound ‘decked with arms in the fashion of a trophy’ to the reign of Tiberius.²⁹¹ One might also call to mind the *tropaeum Traiani* in present-day Romania, but since this concerns a heavily monumentalized structure that was raised several years after the battles it commemorates, I believe it is of no concern here. The same might be said of the *tropaeum Alpium* in southern France, which was created by Augustus in 6 BCE to commemorate his victory over the Alpine tribes. Rather, such monuments might be placed on par with triumphal arches, for they lack the ad hoc character of the *devotio hostium*.²⁹²

²⁸⁸ Plut. *RQ* 37.

²⁸⁹ De Vivo, ‘The Memory of Greek Battle: Material Culture and/as Narrative of Combat’, 173-175.

²⁹⁰ Flor. *Epit.* 1.37.2.

²⁹¹ Tac. *Ann.* 2.18.

²⁹² Of interest is an odd passage in Florus (2.24.9), which refers to the breaking of enemy arms and throwing them in a river: ‘The arms of the conquered enemy were not burnt, as was the usual custom in war, but broken to pieces and hurled into the current, that the fame of Caesar might thus be announced to those who were still resisting.’

Evidently then, there was something particular to the spoils of war. As Rich (2013) already noted, we get the impression of them to be some form of taboo.²⁹³ Yet if the spoils were believed to possess some malicious powers, we would expect them to be treated as such – and, in fact, to be *all* treated as such. As becomes clear from most cases, selection took place in collecting the spoils. Polybius (200-120 BCE), in his account of the Sack of Thermos in 189 BCE, provides an illustration:

‘For that night the army bivouacked on the spot laden with booty of every description; but the next morning they selected the most valuable and portable part of it, and making the rest into a heap in front of their tents, set fire to it. So also in regard to the dedicated arms which were hanging up in the porticoes – those of them which were valuable they took down and carried off, some they exchanged for their own, while the rest they collected together and burnt. The number of these was more than fifteen thousand.’²⁹⁴

Clearly then, it was customary to save the better spoils for triumph or as personal prize, while the rest was collected and sacrificed in dedication to a deity. This seems to be done on the simple grounds of value and aesthetics. The most valuable items were saved for triumph or exchanged for armour already owned, whereas the remaining became the subject of sacrifice.²⁹⁵ It may be apparent that, when certain items could be taken and others were reserved for sacrifice, there could not have been a general rule as to the taboo. For if all enemy items were rendered malicious, should they not all be cleansed or dedicated? This complicates our understanding of the nature of those items reserved for the sacrifice. I believe we may therefore reconsider the first answer Plutarch posed to his question, with regard to the erasure of memory and power. A discussion of the deities that were addressed in the sacrifice offers more insight into this notion, for if destruction and removal were its goals, we might expect this to be reflected in type of deities that were addressed.

As could be noted from the excerpts introduced before, the post-battle sacrifice was often dedicated to a multitude of deities. At the Battle of Pydna (168 BCE), for example, Mars,

This strange event is not reflected in any other source and, as Florus already notes himself, was rather uncommon when compared to the ‘usual custom in war’. For a discussion on the meaning of this, see: P. Forisek, ‘An Extraordinary Military Sacrifice in Florus? A Note on Florus, Epitome II. 24.’, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 43.1/2 (2003), 107-112.

²⁹³ Rich, ‘Roman Rituals of War’, 677.

²⁹⁴ Poly. 5.8.

²⁹⁵ For more information on the different categories of *spolia*, see: Ostenberg, *Staging the World*, 27-29.

Minerva, and Lua Mater were the recipients.²⁹⁶ At the Siege of Carthage in 146 BCE, Mars and Minerva were the addressed deities.²⁹⁷ Whereas at the Battle of Chaeronea in 86 BCE, Appian simply refers to the ‘gods of war’ as the recipients.²⁹⁸ When considering the full corpus of source material, it becomes clear that Mars, Jupiter Victor, Vulcan, Minerva, and Lua Mater were the customary deities to which the post-battle sacrifice was dedicated. Livy, in fact, hints at the importance of this: ‘Mars and Minerva and Lua Mater and the other deities to whom the spoil taken from the enemy *must* be solemnly dedicated.’²⁹⁹ We may take a closer look at these deities.

The relation between Mars and warfare needs little explanation. Mars, both the warrior-god and protector of the harvest, functioned as the guardian of the soldier.³⁰⁰ As with the *lustratio*, *armilustrium*, *tubulustrium*, *equus october*, and triumph, Mars took centre stage in the rituals of the soldier. Jupiter Victor, having the power to conquer, was in a sense an extension of the virtues of Mars. He embodied victory and moreover had the power to grant it – its place in the sacrifice seems justified. Vulcan too, appears right in place when discussing the burning of arms: he represented fire and destruction. Though he was affiliated with metalworks and the forge, his power mostly rested in the purifying virtue of the element of fire.³⁰¹ Minerva appears somewhat out of place and, according to Rose (1922) and Grimal (1990), must have been confused with Nerio. This must have been the result of Livy and Appian using Polybius as a source, who erroneously translated Athena to Minerva.³⁰² Nerio, then, was the wife of Mars and embodied the notion of valour, as Aulus Gellius (130-180 CE) interestingly inferred ‘from the mouth of a soldier’.³⁰³ In the presence of Nerio, the *devotio hostium* was likely regarded as an attestation of the survivor’s valour. For Lua Mater – ‘one of the obscurest and most puzzling figures in the Roman pantheon’, as Rose writes – further discussion would be in place.³⁰⁴ The ancient sources are remarkably brief when it concerns the goddess, as well is its place in modern

²⁹⁶ Liv. 45.33.1.

²⁹⁷ App. *Pun.* 20.133.

²⁹⁸ App. *Mithr.* 6.45.

²⁹⁹ Liv. 45.33.1. In the original version, Livy writes: ‘*edito ludicro clupeisque aereis in naves impositis cetera omnis generis arma cumulata in ingentem acervum, precatus Martem, Minervam Luamque matrem et ceteros deos, quibus spolia hostium dicare ius fasque est, ipse imperator face subdita succendit; deinde circumstantes tribuni militum pro se quisque ignes coniecerunt.*’

³⁰⁰ J. Roberts, *Oxford Dictionary of the Classical World* (Oxford, 2007), ‘Mars’.

³⁰¹ Rose, ‘Lua Mater: Fire, Rust, and War in Early Roman Cult’, 18. Of further note is the fact that Vulcan had a temple located in the Campus Martius by at least 214 BCE (see: Liv. 24.10.9).

³⁰² Rose, ‘Lua Mater’, 16; P. Grimal, et al. (eds.), *A Concise Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (Blackwell, 1990), 292.

³⁰³ Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 13.23.

³⁰⁴ Rose, ‘Lua Mater’, 15.

historiographical discourse. No images of the deity survive, and neither is there any archaeological trace in the form of an altar, shrine, or temple. The fact that the goddess is primarily related to the *devotio hostium* attests to the particular nature of both the deity and the sacrifice, we might argue. It attests to a sense of irregularity, or distinctness, for the act of burning spoils was unusual – hence Plutarch’s question – and connected to a deity unusual. Additionally, Lua has also been identified to be the consort of Saturn. As Lua Saturni, she would automatically adopt her husband’s traits as an agricultural deity. When investigating the etymology of her name, a stronger case could be made for her affiliations with agriculture. Lua being derived from *lue*; a disease or disaster, or *luere*; to atone or expiate – we may consider the relation between disease, fire, and agriculture (e.g. blight). One could even argue that the post-battle sacrifice to Lua Mater was intended as expiation to prevent harm to the crops. We could substantiate this argument if we consider the sacrifice to Mars to be of agricultural character as well. For Mars was as much concerned with warfare as with harvests – as Rosivach (1983) notes: ‘The appearance of Mars as protector in both military and agricultural contexts suggests a broader definition in his role, viz. as protector of his people against evils in general.’³⁰⁵ Of the deities involved, the themes of warfare, fire, destruction, and agriculture emerge.

I would like to argue that there is compelling reason to consider the *devotio hostium* as the conclusion of battle, and not just an aspect of its summation. The sacrifice features recurrently in the ancient accounts and often is its customary character emphasized. The *devotio hostium* would erase the remaining memory of the enemy by destroying their weapons and armour – in a sense, the embodiment of their power. The sacrifice would offer the commander opportunity to claim his victory and demonstrate his truthful relations with the gods – and we have seen, rather particular gods. He fulfilled his vow, of which his soldiers would be witness, thus demonstrating his piety. Additionally, we have seen that the soldiers were tasked with collecting and piling the spoils of the enemy. Their presence and participation in the ritual is confirmed by the various accounts.

The *devotio hostium* embodied the conclusion of battle. The collection and destruction of that which lent the enemy their martial identity, the commander’s claim to victory, and the fulfilment of the vow towards the gods of war – all these elements contributed to conveying the end of the narrative of battle.

³⁰⁵ V.J. Rosivach, ‘Mars, the Lustral God’, *Latomus*, 42.3 (1983), 518.

§3.2 Performing victory and defeat: the *passum sub iugum*

“...that he wanted not the blood of the Aequans: that they were allowed to depart; but that the confession may be at length extorted, that their nation was defeated and subdued, that they should pass under the yoke.” The yoke is formed with three spears, two fixed in the ground, and one tied across between the upper ends of them. Under this yoke the dictator sent the Aequans.’ – Livy, *History of Rome*.³⁰⁶

After a victory over the Aequans at Mount Algidus in 457 BCE, the Roman dictator Cincinnatus dismissed the enemy prisoners by sending them under a ‘yoke’ formed of three spears. As Livy writes, the act of the *passum sub iugum*, the ‘passing under the yoke’, was performed to confirm the defeat and repression of the enemy. After the enemy soldiers had passed under this yoke, one by one, they were allowed to return to their homes freely – freely, but clearly defeated. This particular, or rather peculiar, ritual, was clearly understood to be grave and consequential. Appian concluded that the Romans ‘considered the disgrace of passing under the yoke worse than death’, which – if he judged correctly – must hint at a greater underlying significance.³⁰⁷ It is the aim of this paragraph to further investigate the circumstances in which this ritual was performed; to analyze its role in the Roman military-religious landscape; and to reveal the significance of this act and its influence on the experience of both the victor and the defeated of the preceding battle.

The ritual is attested by various authors – at least thirteen historical references can be identified, for which I refer to appendix IV.³⁰⁸ To label these instances as ‘historical’, or at least attribute them with some degree of historicity, we must clearly be cautious and moreover: specific, for ancient authors were already familiar with the metaphor of ‘being under one’s yoke’.³⁰⁹ In all these instances, the authors referred to the physical act of passing under a yoke, often specified in what circumstances this was done. The chronological range to which these cases are attributed roughly spans 500 years. This spread, as well as the detailed descriptions, makes the ritual of the yoke altogether plausibly historical. The first time the ritual was performed then, dates to 459 BCE, where, interestingly, the Tuscians, aided by the Romans,

³⁰⁶ Liv. 3.28.10.

³⁰⁷ App. *Sam.* 1.6-10.

³⁰⁸ As with the *lustratio* and *devotio hostium*, the list in the appendix is compiled by the author. No encompassing overview of the ritual and its prevalence exists, nor has it been the primary subject of any academic work. Collection and selection was done by using certain keywords and scanning various ancient texts.

³⁰⁹ I will elaborate later.

made the defeated Aequi pass under a yoke. Livy, the only account on this event, explains how the Aequi were made to pass under the yoke ‘unarmed and naked’.³¹⁰ Two years later, a Roman army defeated the remaining Aequi near Mount Algidus and made the survivors pass under a yoke, as read in Livy, Dionysius, and Florus.³¹¹ From 459 BCE to 62 CE, thirteen of such instances are recorded by various authors. Of these, the Romans performed the ritual on their defeated enemies six times (459 BCE included); once was the ritual performed by Romans on Romans; and five times was the ritual allegedly performed by others on defeated Romans (among which Jugurtha, Hannibal, and Tiridates). At least eight of the rituals were performed on Italic soil. In his account of the Battle of Luceria in 319 BCE, Livy refers to the notion of expiation: ‘the Samnite general-in-chief, was sent with the rest under the yoke, to expiate the humiliation of the consuls...’³¹² This may be a passage of interest, for this is not mentioned by the other authors.³¹³

What becomes evident from the collected material is its prevalence among conflicts between the Romans and Samnites (443-293 BCE): five times were the Samnites forced to pass under the Roman yoke, whereas only once this order was reversed. Of further interest is Livy’s account on Gaius Matienus: in 138 BCE, he stood accused of desertion in front of the Spanish legions. After being condemned, Matienus was ‘sent under the yoke, chastised with rods, and sold for one sesterce.’³¹⁴ This is the only historical account in which a Roman was allegedly sent under the yoke by his peers.

The act of the *passum sub iugum* is frequently addressed in the ancient sources. Clearly, we may be somewhat puzzled by the purpose and meaning of this ritual. Straightforwardly speaking, releasing able prisoners after they have passed under a yoke seems of little pragmatic value. It is, at a glance, simply ineffective, the tactician might argue. To understand the meaning and significance of the yoke, we may examine the pseudo-historical case of the Horatii and the Curiatii, which, allegedly, was the earliest occasion in which a (mythical) person was made to pass under a yoke. This case may serve to illustrate what the act of the passing under the yoke entailed.

After his fight against the Curiatii, Horatius returned home a victor. Approaching the Roman city gates, however, he found his sister mourning for the death of her husband, who

³¹⁰ Liv. 3.23.5.

³¹¹ Liv. 3.28.10; Flor. *Epit.* 1.5.13; Dion. Hal. 10.24.8.

³¹² Liv. 9.15.8.

³¹³ Livy refers to the humiliation of the consuls at the Caudine Forks, two years earlier.

³¹⁴ Liv. *Peri.* 55.1-2.

was, tragically, among the slain Curiatii. Enraged by this sight, Horatius raised his sword and murdered his sister, famously proclaiming ‘So perish every Roman woman who mourns for an enemy!’³¹⁵ Horatius committed a burdensome crime – Livy writes:

‘But since a murder in broad daylight demanded some expiation, the father was commanded to make an atonement for his son at the cost of the State. After offering certain expiatory sacrifices he erected a beam across the street and made the young man pass under it, as under a yoke, with his head covered. This beam exists to-day, having always been kept in repair by the State: it is called ‘The Sister’s Beam.’³¹⁶

Up to his own days, Livy accounts, the ‘Sister’s Beam’, or *sororium tigillum*, existed as the physical attestation of a mythical past. It served as a reminder to a long-gone past; a moral keepsake to inform the Romans of Livy’s time, we may argue. More importantly however, we may question the authenticity of this beam, and clearly, the historicity of the events we read in Livy: we are dealing with the common Roman amalgam of myth and history, and we must accordingly interpret it so.³¹⁷ However, it may be worthwhile to briefly consider the position the myth of Horatius held in Roman society.

As Solodow (1979) has pointed out, we may believe the myth to have predated Livy for two clear reasons: firstly, Ennius (239-169 BCE) provides reference to the Horatii and Curiatii brothers two centuries earlier in his *Annals*, and secondly, Livy himself already attests to the old roots of the myth in 1.24: ‘That they were Horatii and Curiatii is generally allowed, and scarcely any other ancient tradition is better known...’³¹⁸ Based on these references, we may safely infer the popularity of the story even before the time of Livy and Dionysius, and therefore too, the familiarity with the meaning of the yoke – especially if we consider the physical existence of the *sororium tigillum* in Rome. It can be argued then, that the story of Horatius and the yoke must have been common knowledge in the Republic from some point on (which unfortunately remains undated). This familiarity may further be stressed by the frequent metaphoric use of the ‘yoke’. The yoke, a wooden beam used to provide support and bind

³¹⁵ Liv. 1.26.5.

³¹⁶ Liv. 1.26.12.

³¹⁷ It has proven impossible to retrieve the original texts on which Livy directly based his account. See: F. Münzer, ‘Horatius, 2’, *RE* VIII.2 (1913), 2322-2327. Solodow (1979) confirms this, see: J.B. Solodow, ‘Livy and the Story of Horatius, 1.24-26’, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 109 (1979), 262. Dionysius of Halicarnassus provides a parallel – and in fact more detailed – account of the myth, but he too remains reticent about his sources.

³¹⁸ Solodow, ‘Livy and the Story of Horatius, 1.24-26’, 262. For Ennius, see: *Annals* 131-135. Also, see Liv. 1.24.

together beasts of burden, clearly carries strong symbolic connotations.³¹⁹ It refers to burden, subjugation (hence the Latin: *sub iugum*), and power: to be under the yoke, is to be under one's control. We encounter frequent metaphoric use of the term in Seneca, Cicero, Livy, and Tacitus, by which they denote power and control.³²⁰ The theme of slavery too, is often expressed in terms of the yoke.³²¹ It follows then, that the figure of the yoke invoked cultural references more profound than might appear at first sight.

The ritual of the passing under the yoke appears to be of a rather complicated nature. The myth of Horatius may have served as the ultimate precedent, we have seen that the story was known to the Romans from an early date on. Additionally, we have discussed the apparent historical prevalence of the ritual, of which I identified thirteen cases of note. It would be worthwhile to further address the occasion on which enemies were sent under the yoke, and the position the soldier may have held in the affair.

Firstly, it becomes clear that the ritual was performed as soon as the adversary had resigned. Livy seems to imply that the yoke was part of the conditions of surrender, which is similarly suggested by Sallust.³²² This would add a somewhat official character to the yoke, for it resulted as a condition of surrender from negotiations between the two parties in dispute. This may be most evident in a passage in Livy, in which he reflects on the Senate's refusal to grant a Marcus Atilius his triumph in 294 BCE: 'He requested to be allowed a triumph, but this honor was refused him on the ground that he had lost so many thousands of men, and also because he had sent his prisoners under the yoke without its having been made a condition of their surrender.'³²³ Evidently then, it was requisite for the enemy to declare their consent on the conditions that were presented to them. Thus, when the conditions of surrender were accepted, the yoke was formed, and the defeated were sent under it.

³¹⁹ For a discussion of the meaning the material of the yoke and the meaning that it may have evoked to the Roman, see: Versnel, *Triumphus*, 138-152. Versnel also provides a profound discussion of the *sororium tigillum*.

³²⁰ To list all metaphoric references to the yoke would be impossible. Wickham (2014) provides a good representation: Sen. *Dial.* 1.4.6; 2.14.3; 21.6; 3.16.1; *De Clem.* 1.16.5. *Orat.* 1.6; *Rep.* 2.46; Liv. 3.15.9; Sen. *Herc. Fur.* 432; *Troad.* 747; *Dial.* 4.14.4; SHA *Aurel.* 41.8; Stat. *Silv.* 3.4.34; Tac. *Agr.* 31; Val. Max. 8.9.2.

³²¹ Wickham, *The Enslavement of War Captives by the Romans to 146 BC*, PhD dissertation University of Liverpool (2014), 36.

³²² Liv. 9.42.7: '...their surrender was accepted on condition that the Samnites should be dismissed with one garment apiece after they had all passed under the yoke.'; Sall. *Jug.* 38.9: '...if Aulus would make a treaty with him, he would let them all go free after passing under the yoke, provided Aulus would leave Numidia within ten days. Although the conditions were hard and shameful, yet because they were offered in exchange for the fear of death, peace was accepted on the king's terms.'

³²³ Liv. 10.36.19.

Secondly, there appear to have been clear procedures for their passing under the yoke. Foremost, they were deprived of their arms and armor. This is mentioned by nearly all authors accounting for the ritual.³²⁴ Additionally, Livy frequently mentions that the defeated were allowed to wear only a single garment (the *tunica* or *subligaculum*, which was, as Fowler noted, rather the dress of slaves than of soldiers).³²⁵ The wearing of a single garment might have been a customary rule for the release of prisoners in most circumstances, as Livy accounts.³²⁶ As may be inferred from the story of Horatius, we may wonder if it was customary that those who had to pass had to have their head bent. A bent head could indicate a sense of guilt towards the standing victor, or perhaps even towards a higher entity.³²⁷ It remains unknown whether friendly or enemy spears were used, and it is left to argue if this was of any importance.³²⁸ In addition to these requirements, it is made clear that the defeated were made to pass under the yoke individually, one by one, which implies that it was regarded important that each and every survivor passed correctly. Clearly, this raises some practical issues: if we are to believe Dionysius, 40,000 men were made to pass under the yoke at the Caudine Forks, and if we are to believe Livy, 7,800 men were made to pass at Interamna.³²⁹ How and if all these men were to made pass under a single yoke remains somewhat questionable. We may also question whether the ritual was performed peacefully: of the Caudine Forks, Livy tells us the Samnites could not contain themselves and resorted to mockery, threatening, and eventually killing.³³⁰ We should bear in mind that this mostly serves Livy's portrayal of the Samnites as a savage

³²⁴ Versnel suggested that the act of disarmament should be considered an independent ritual: 'The rite of *mittere sub iugum, sub Tigillum*, was accompanied by other rites, disarming and undressing in the former, *piacularia sacra* in the latter case.' See: *Triumphus* (1976), 150.

³²⁵ Fowler, *Passing Under the Yoke*, 48.

³²⁶ See Liv. 22.6.11: 'Maharbal —who with all the cavalry had overtaken them in the night —pledged his word that if they delivered up their arms, he would let them go, with a single garment each, and they surrendered.', or Liv. 31.17.3-4: '...that they be permitted to leave the city with one garment each.' In these cases no reference is made to the ritual of the yoke.

³²⁷ W. Burkert, 'Ritual', in: E. Stavrianopoulou (ed.), *Ritual and Communication in the Graeco-Roman World* (Liege, 2013), 31. We may experimentally reach a conclusion about whether those that passed under the yoke had their head bent: the *hasta* used in the Republic was approximately two meters in length, which — fixed in the ground — would result in a slightly reduced height. The spear affixed horizontally was probably attached somewhere at the top, suggesting the yoke to be about 1.50-1.80m. For the average man then, it was quite a safe height.

³²⁸ One could argue that passing under enemy spears was considered an even greater disgrace and therefore commonplace. See: M. Cary & A.D. Nock, 'Magic Spears', *The Classical Quarterly*, 21.3/4 (1927), 122-127. Fowler suggests that the *sororium tigillum* consisted of three spears as well, but was later replaced by more durable materials. See: Fowler, *Passing Under the Yoke*, 49.

³²⁹ Dion. Hal. 16.1.4; Liv. 10.36.14.

³³⁰ Liv. 9.6.1.

and dishonorable people.³³¹ Of all instances recorded, those that passed under the yoke were eventually offered free passage home.

Thirdly, no priests appear to have been involved in the ceremony, nor any reference to the divine – it seems to have been an affair solely concerned with the commanders and the soldiers. The myth of Horatius, as recorded by Livy and Dionysius, clearly served to expiate his crimes and purify him of his guilt. This was achieved under priestly observance, by the erection of altars on either side of the beam, and the explicitly mentioned purpose of appeasing the gods. Naturally then, we may expect comparative source material to support this notion. In other words, we may expect the theme of purification to be recurrent in the majority of references, as featured in Livy, Dionysius, Appian, Caesar, and others. Frankly, such a picture may not be derived from the sources. The notion of purification or expiation is not reflected in the sources – except for one passage in Livy, previously introduced, where ‘Pontius the son of Herennius, the Samnite general-in-chief, was sent with the rest under the yoke, to expiate the humiliation of the consuls...’³³² The expiation (*expiaret*) Livy mentions could indeed refer to things considered more sacred or divine, or perhaps the notion of bloodguilt, yet there seems no sufficient basis for this.³³³ Rather, I believe we should understand this reference in terms of retaliation or vindication, for two years earlier the Roman consuls were forced to pass under the yoke by the Samnites at the Caudine Forks in 321 BCE. The ritual of yoke does not seem to have been ‘religiously’ institutionalized then – at least, not in the sense that may be witnessed in the *lustratio* or *auspicium*.

These three characteristics of the *passum sub iugum* may serve to elaborate on the nature of the ritual. It was performed as part of the official conditions of surrender and required no priestly supervision. Those who passed under the yoke were required to do so individually, deprived of their arms and armor, and wearing a single garment. We may now investigate the role of the Roman soldier in the affair and infer a sense of the sentiment that the ritual may have evoked.

The passing under the yoke appears to have been a public event. The sources suggest that it involved both armies: the defeated, each and every one, passing under the yoke, the

³³¹ E.T. Salmon, *Samnium and the Samnites* (Cambridge, 1967), 111.

³³² Liv. 9.15.8. In the original version, Livy writes: ‘*Pontius Herenni filius, Samnitium imperator, ut expiaret consulum ignominiam, sub iugum cum ceteris est missus.*’

³³³ However, of note is a passage in Frontinus (*Strat.* 4.1.19): ‘The consul Otacilius Crassus ordered those who had been sent under the yoke by Hannibal and had then returned, to camp outside the entrenchments...’ We may not be able to ascertain why the soldiers had to camp outside the fortifications: is it because the yoke rendered them *sacer* or tainted, or would it be mere humiliation by the consul for their defeat? This passage may provide grounds for further research into the perceived status of ‘yoked’ soldiers.

victors standing about, forming an aisle. Appian informs how the victors would form ‘a passage from the defile’, and Livy adds that ‘the enemy under arms stood on either side, reviling them and mocking them.’³³⁴ The defeated would wear a single garment each, or were perhaps even naked, as Livy seems to suggest.³³⁵ It may be apparent that a clear distinction was made between the victor and the defeated. By depriving the warrior of his arms and armor he would be rendered harmless: he was deprived of that which provided him with power. Dionysius remarks that this served as a ‘token that men have come under the power of others.’³³⁶ Caesar describes the situation as ‘a signal calamity’, and Festus notes that the yoke ‘defiled with utmost infamy the military oaths of the Roman army.’³³⁷ Evidently, the ritual of the yoke evoked strong emotions in the ancient authors, often noting that there is nothing more disgraceful than passing under the yoke. But how would the ritual have been understood by those performing or witnessing it?

I argue that there would have been little reason to perform this peculiar ritual without its commonly understood context – without its reference to myth.³³⁸ We may not, of course, safely presume that this reference to myth was commonly understood by everyone. But

³³⁴ App. *Sam.* 1.6; Liv. 9.6.1.

³³⁵ Liv. 3.23.5.

³³⁶ Dion. Hal. 16.1.4.

³³⁷ Caes. *Gall.* 1.12; Fest. 20.

³³⁸ Previous studies have reached brief and preliminary conclusions on the significance of the ritual. Fowler (1913) and Halliday (1924), the first and few to study the subject, viewed the ritual as an ancient Italic practice that served to purify and deprive the enemy of its malignant powers. Its design, they argued, mirrored that of the *porta triumphalis* in Rome: the gate through which victorious soldiers entered the city and by which they were allegedly removed of their bloodguilt. This notion, of bloodguilt, played an important part in the ritual, thereby making it a transitional act of purification. However, this is solely attested by Fest. 104 L (117 M): ‘Laurel-wreathed soldiers followed the triumphal chariot, in order to enter the city as if purged of bloodguilt.’ See: W.W. Fowler, ‘Passing under the Yoke’, *Classical Review*, 27.2 (1917), 48-51; W.R. Halliday, ‘Passing under the Yoke’, *Folklore*, 35.1 (1924), 93-95. Fowler and Halliday applied Van Gennep’s famous theoretical framework of the *rite de passage* (1909): a rite of passage by which an individual enters a new social status. By crossing this specified border in a ritualized manner, this person accordingly moves from one state into another – in the case of the yoke, redeeming that person of his guilt. In the case of Horatius, as described by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, we may easily infer this idea (Livy writes (1.26.12): ‘But since a murder in broad daylight demanded some expiation, the father was commanded to make an atonement for his son at the cost of the State. After offering certain expiatory sacrifices he erected a beam across the street...’ In Dionysius of Halicarnassus we read (III.22.6): ‘This they call a yoke; and it was the last of the customary expiatory ceremonies used upon this occasion by those who purified Horatius.’). See: A. van Gennep, *Les Rites des Passage* (Paris, 1909). Woodard (2013), bridging the century-long historiographical gap, continued with Fowler and Halliday’s ideas. The purificatory purpose of the ritual was evident, he argued, as was demonstrated by the story of Horatius. See: R.D. Woodard, *Myth, Ritual, and the Warrior in Roman and Indo-European Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2013). Wickham (2014), in his dissertation on the enslavement of war captives (and frankly, the only one addressing the historicity of the ritual), explains how the release of war captives in the early Republic was rather common – the passing under the yoke was a symbolic addition to that act. See: Wickham, *The Enslavement of War Captives by the Romans to 146 BC* (2014).

nevertheless, the specifically detailed nature of the ritual of the passing under the yoke *could* only refer to its mythical precedent. No cultural parallels in which a similar ritual was performed existed.³³⁹ This directly explains why the yoke was only performed by, on, or in company of Italic cultures.³⁴⁰ The instances in which Jugurtha, Hannibal, and Tiridates made the Romans pass under the yoke likely resulted from their knowledge on Roman history, or are perhaps even based on hearsay – it would, after all, offer enemies an excellent tool to humiliate the Romans. Of note is the fact that the Roman Senate was unwilling to ratify the peace treatments in which Romans were made to pass under the yoke (at least at the Caudine Forks and Jugurthine Wars). ‘For they considered the disgrace of passing under the yoke worse than death.’, Appian explains.³⁴¹ This may explain why the appropriation of the ritual of the yoke by foreign kings was not received well.³⁴² Nearly all instances of the yoke are confined to the Republican Era, yet interestingly, several coins have been found dating to the reign of Titus on which the yoke is featured in the shape of an arch (I refer to appendix V). Stamped ‘JVDEA CAPTA’, the symbolism between defeat and the yoke must have been evident, still in the time of Titus.

In closer examination, I believe the ritual of the yoke may have served clear purposes in denoting the victor and the defeated. The myth of Horatius may have served to substantiate this. We may not safely presume that the yoke featured regularly in the aftermath of battle. It was part of the official conditions of surrender, on which both parties had to agree first. But we should bear in mind that Roman generals would not always adhere to the rules of warfare, as we have read in Livy’s narrative of Marcus Atilius. It remains difficult to ascertain whether the notions of expiation or purification were still in place.³⁴³ Nevertheless, the ancient authors agree on the gravity of its symbolism, and I believe there is tenable reason to assume that those who witnessed or participated in the ritual were aware of its connotations. In that sense, the act of the passing under the yoke ritualized the notion of defeat. It denoted, emphasized, and symbolized victory, and the mythical precedent of Horatius could only have provided more weight to the situation, as – at least to the Romans – it must have invoked strong cultural connotations. With the defeated exposed to the vulnerability of their bareness and individuality,

³³⁹ Halliday (1924) found only one cultural parallel, a ritual performed by the Tatars in 1246 CE – which unfortunately did not offer much resemblance.

³⁴⁰ The ritual was performed most in the Roman-Samnite Wars.

³⁴¹ App. *Sam.* 1.6.

³⁴² Both Pontius and Jugurtha were brutally killed while on display in the triumph in Rome. Though unknown if this directly relates to the fact that they previously made the Romans pass under the yoke, we may safely assume that this act had something to do with their standing towards the Romans.

³⁴³ Notwithstanding, it could be argued that it was simply presumed but not mentioned.

the ritual provided a statement of identity: it denoted those to pass as the defeated, and those to stand as the victors.

§3.3 Affirming victory: the *triumphus*

Any scholar dealing with the topic of Roman martial rituals, is somehow and somewhere required to discuss the topic of the *triumphus* – the Roman triumphal procession. The triumph, it can be argued, is perhaps the most famous and notable Roman ritual, but its place here in this paper is no result of that. Rather, I have included the *triumphus* because it concerns the scope of this paper; because it was both witnessed and experienced by the individual soldier, likely on a recurrent basis. I will therefore only be concerned with certain aspects of the triumph, that is to say the perspective of the soldier. First, however, a brief introduction to the topic would be commonplace.

The Roman triumph has been studied extensively because of both its recurrent and prominent place in Roman history. Moreover, a vast array of material has survived attesting to its importance and allowing for its consequent historiographical review. The *Fasti Triumphales*, for example, the calendar noting all Roman magistrates that were awarded a triumph, provides a unique overview of its recurrence.³⁴⁴ Furthermore, in the works of Livy, Pliny, Appian, Plutarch, and Cassius Dio, the triumph is frequently accounted for. Livy, for instance, notes that over thirty-eight triumphs occurred during the years 211-168 BCE.³⁴⁵ And Orosius concludes in the early fifth century CE, that at least 320 triumphs had been awarded before him.³⁴⁶ Additionally, the triumphal arches scattered around the Roman urban landscape attest to the centrality of the ritual.³⁴⁷ Clearly then, the study of the *triumphus* is no cursory ordeal – especially, since the source material is far from unanimous on the characteristics of the procession. Rather, the triumph appears to have been a changeable and evolving ceremony. To grasp the role of the soldier in the triumph, is therefore a difficult task. In our attempt, we may therefore discuss the triumph by adhering to the various phases that have been identified in scholarly review.

³⁴⁴ For a discussion of the *Fasti Triumphales*, see: M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, 2007), 61-67.

³⁴⁵ For a collection of the material in Livy, see: J.E. Phillips, 'Form and Language in Livy's Triumph Notices', *Classical Philology*, 69.4 (1974), 266-267. Additionally, Beard (2007) notes: 'On the usual calculation, the triumph was celebrated more than three hundred times in the thousand-or-so-year history of the ancient city of Rome.' (p.4).

³⁴⁶ Oros. *His. Pag.* 7.9.

³⁴⁷ For a discussion, see: M.L. Popkin, *The Architecture of the Roman Triumph: Monuments, Memory, and Identity* (Cambridge, 2016).

The origins of the triumph have been traced back to the Etruscan kings, or even earlier: a pre-Etruscan phase.³⁴⁸ It has generally been proposed that the earliest model of the triumph, an archaic ritual, served to purify soldiers of their bloodguilt (which they ‘contracted’ by killing) and facilitate their return into society.³⁴⁹ They would return from their campaigns bearing the spoils of the enemy and be granted a symbolic re-entry into society.³⁵⁰ It should be noted that the ‘soldier’ was no defined entity by then, but merely the farmer who took up arms during the campaigning season.³⁵¹ To understand the earliest form of the triumph, we may consider Plutarch’s account of the triumph of Romulus, dating to a far and archaic past:

‘Then he himself, girding his raiment about him and wreathing his flowing locks with laurel, set the trophy on his right shoulder, where it was held erect, and began a triumphal march, leading off in a paean of victory which his army sang as it followed under arms, and being received by the citizens with joyful amazement. This procession was the origin and model of all subsequent triumphs...’³⁵²

Plutarch’s account of Romulus – a mythical king – should clearly be read with scepticism, but his notion of the origin of the triumph is of interest. Apparently, the returning commander entered the city while bearing the spoils of the defeated, followed by his army, chanting songs. Dionysius of Halicarnassus provides an account of Romulus’ triumph as well, in which Romulus ‘rode in a chariot drawn by four horses’ and the ‘rest of his army, both foot and horse, followed, ranged in their several divisions, praising the gods in songs...’³⁵³ Plutarch disagrees with Dionysius over the mode of transport (e.g. by chariot or on foot), but they both seem to agree on the fact that the general brought his soldiers with him, and led them through the city while chanting and celebrating. Of purification, the sole reference is made by Festus in the fourth century CE. He writes: ‘Laurel-wreathed soldiers followed the triumphal chariot, in order to enter the city as if purged of bloodguilt.’ – note ‘as if’.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁸ L. Bonfante Warren, ‘Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings: The Changing Face of the Triumph’, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 60 (1970), 49-66; Versnel, *Triumphus* (1970).

³⁴⁹ Bonfante Warren, ‘Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings’, 66.

³⁵⁰ G. Charles-Picard, *Les Trophées romains: Contribution à l’histoire de la religion et de l’art triomphal de Rome* (Paris, 1957), 130–132.

³⁵¹ Bonfante Warren, ‘Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings’, 54.

³⁵² Plut. *Rom.* 16.5-6.

³⁵³ Dion. Hal. 2.34.2.

³⁵⁴ Fest. 104L (117M). It has been thought that each triumph was followed by a purificatory sacrifice, resembling the *lustratio*. This may be inferred from a brief passage in Plutarch (*Cam.* 30.3): ‘...Camillus had made sacrifices to the gods and purified the city...’ However, this passage should be read in light of the preceding sack of Rome

During the reign of the Etruscan kings, it is thought the triumph became a vehicle for the kings to signify and express their rule.³⁵⁵ Armstrong (2013) aptly writes that ‘the triumph may be seen as a ritual welcoming back into the community of the triumphant warleader and his forces and ritual affirmation by the community of the correctness of the grant of *imperium* given to the warleader.’³⁵⁶ In that sense, the emphasis shifted towards personal glorification and the consolidation of power, whereby the triumph would be somewhat reduced in its sacral character. Strabo (63 BCE – 23 CE) suggests that under Tarquinius Priscus (r. 616-578 BCE) ‘the triumphal, and consular, adornment, and, in a word, that of all the rulers, was transferred to Rome from Tarquinii’.³⁵⁷ Florus adds that Priscus was responsible for introducing ‘the practice of riding in triumph in a gilded car drawn by four horses, embroidered robes and tunics adorned with palms’.³⁵⁸ We may derive that the Etruscan triumph was marked by more lavish embellishment. Versnel (1970) rightly noted that much of the characteristics of the Roman Republican and Imperial triumph originated from this period.³⁵⁹

In the accounts of the early Republican triumphs, the soldier re-enters the stage. In 480 BCE, for instance, Fabius Vibulanus proposed that his soldiers triumphed without him, for he was mourning the loss of his brother and colleague.³⁶⁰ In 211 BCE, Marcus Marcellus was facing a situation quite the opposite. When he arrived at the Senate to request a triumph, Livy writes:

‘...he complained gently, not more on his own account than that of the soldiers, because even after completing his task in the province, he had not been permitted to bring home his army, and he demanded that he be permitted to enter the city in triumph. That request was not granted.’³⁶¹

in 390 BCE, in which the city was destroyed by the Gauls. The purification here had no connection to the triumph then, but was a response to the seven-months occupation of the Gauls.

³⁵⁵ This has been posed by Bonfante Warren (1970) and Versnel (1970).

³⁵⁶ J. Armstrong, ‘Claiming Victory: The Early Roman Triumph’, in: A. Spalinger & J. Armstrong (eds.), *Rituals of Triumph in the Mediterranean World* (Leiden, 2013), 19.

³⁵⁷ Strab. *Geo.* 5.2.2.

³⁵⁸ Flor. *Epit.* 1.5.6.

³⁵⁹ Versnel, *Triumphus* (1970).

³⁶⁰ Liv. 2.47.10.

³⁶¹ Liv. 26.21.2-3.

Marcellus was eventually granted the *ovatio*, a triumph considered of significant lesser prestige because the general entered the city either on foot or horseback, rather than the chariot.³⁶² But even his *ovatio* was not joined by the soldiers. They remained in the provinces and were not granted passage towards Rome. A case could be made that such instances were rather exceptional, but it should be kept in mind that shipping in an entire army, leading it to the gates of Rome, and parading it around through a heated crowd, is no simple task. Additionally, it required approval from the Senate: triumphs were granted, not taken.³⁶³ To triumph, then, requires determination, approval, and organization. The issue is clearly illustrated by Servilius Geminus' plea for Aemilius Paullus' triumph in 167 BCE. Livy records, in the words of Geminus:

'This, indeed, is the peculiar case of the soldiers, who, themselves both crowned with laurel, and conspicuous for the presents each one has received, proclaim the triumph by name, and march in procession through the city, singing their own and their commander's praises. If, at any time, soldiers are not brought home from a province to such honours, they murmur; and yet, even in that case, they consider themselves distinguished, even in their absence, because by their hands the victory was obtained. Soldiers, if it should be asked, for what purpose you were brought home to Italy, and not disbanded immediately, when the business of the province was finished; why you came to Rome, in a body, round your standards; why you loiter here, and do not repair to your several homes: what other answer can you give, than that you wished to be seen triumphing? And, certainly, you have a right to show yourselves as conquerors.'³⁶⁴

We may wonder if Livy had the sources available to present such a detailed recitation of Geminus' speech, but nevertheless, we do get a clear impression of the debate that evolved around bringing in thousands of soldiers to the capital to triumph. Participation was much longed for, but not always granted. Commanders would customarily bring their soldiers with

³⁶² Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers an explanation of the differences between the regular triumph and the *ovatio*: 'It differs from the other, first, in this, that the general who triumphs in the manner called the ovation enters the city on foot, followed by the army, and not in a chariot like the other; and, in the next place, because he does not don the embroidered robe decorated with gold, with which the other is adorned, nor does he have the golden crown, but is clad in a white toga bordered with purple, the native dress of the consuls and praetors, and wears a crown of laurel; he is also inferior to the other in not holding a sceptre, but everything else is the same.' (5.47.3).

³⁶³ M.R.P. Pittenger, *Contested Triumphs: Politics, Pageantry, and Performance in Livy's Republican Rome* (Berkeley, 2008), 33-53. There were specific requirements for a general to triumph, see: M. Ramsay, 'Triumphus', in: W. Smith (ed.), *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London, 1875), 1163-1167.

³⁶⁴ Liv. 45.38.12-14.

them to the capital, yet there remained those who ‘are not brought home from a province to such honours’. We may infer that such situations may have roused mutiny – the soldiers start to ‘murmur’. Needless to say, Aemilius Paullus enjoyed a grand triumph, which frankly still caused much commotion in the capital. Livy notes how the people and Senate feared that Paullus’ soldiers would not confer the spoils they carried, for he ‘had made smaller donations out of the spoil, than they hoped to receive, since the treasures of the king were so large...’³⁶⁵ Evidently, a situation with so much wealth and manpower could escalate. For the soldier however, this meant that the triumph must have been an opportune affair.

To get an impression of the ceremony from the perspective of the individual, we may at last consult Flavius Josephus’ (ca. 37-100 CE) eyewitness account of the triumph of Vespasian and Titus in 71 CE. He writes how the soldiers already mobilized before dawn to prepare:

‘Now all the soldiery marched out beforehand by companies, and in their several ranks, under their several commanders, in the night time: and were about the gates, not of the upper palaces, but those near the temple of Isis. For there it was that the Emperors had rested the foregoing night.’³⁶⁶

Josephus portrays eager and joyful sentiment, as if the soldiers did not want to wait much longer. This can be inferred from the rest of his account of the triumph as well, of which he writes that the soldiers were filled with ‘acclamation[s] of joy’ and ‘attestations of their valour’.³⁶⁷ Once the soldiers had entered the city, the triumphators addressed them in a laudatory speech. Josephus notes this happened near ‘Octavian’s walks’, the *porticus Octavia*. Once the address was over, the ‘accustomed solemn prayers’ followed, after which the soldiers were dismissed for a dinner that was organized by the emperors. Unlike the accounts we have read before, this appears to have concluded the triumph for the soldiery, for both Vespasian and Titus changed to their triumphal garments and ‘sent the triumph forward’.

The *triumphus* requires – and invites – much more discussion, but I believe we may reach conclusions with regard to the scope of this paper. It may be apparent that the triumph was among the most complex and changeable rituals of the Roman world. It was a colourful

³⁶⁵ Liv. 45.35.6.

³⁶⁶ Flav. Jos. *Jew. War* 7.5.4.

³⁶⁷ Flav. Jos. 7.5.4. We should keep in mind that contemporary writers such as Josephus sought to glorify the triumphs which they supported.

collection of practices, uses, rites, objects, and persons, of which the ‘why’ can no longer be answered, Beard (2007) rightly notes.³⁶⁸ The triumph has evolved ever since its origin and reinvented itself through imitation and innovation. But what did the triumph entail for the Roman soldier? The archaic triumph may certainly have served to purify the soldiers of their bloodguilt and offer them a ritualized and communal re-entry into society. Evidently, this interpretation does not hold for the regnal, Republican, and Imperial triumph, for triumphs were clearly not always granted, and if they were, soldiers would still not always get the opportunity to participate.³⁶⁹ Additionally, what remains to be said of the armies that returned home after a defeat? For the soldier then, the triumph must have been an opportune and glorious event. He marched or sailed to Rome, camped outside, and consequently carried the spoils of the campaign in a procession in which he was applauded and lauded. He was rewarded both materially and immaterially – in donatives and communal praise. In short then, the triumph offered the Roman soldier the opportunity of conclusive acknowledgement and reward for the battles he fought.

However, I would like to make a few remarks that demonstrate why the *triumphus* was of a rather different and perhaps irregular character, when compared to the other rituals discussed before. Firstly, I would like to stress that the triumph often featured significantly later than the event of battle. It required approval of the Senate, it required an army to travel to the capital from whichever location they were, and consequently required significant logistical and organizational preparation. I believe this dislocates the triumph from the theatre of battle. Secondly, we have seen that the *triumphus* required approval of the Senate, and thus the agency in performing the triumph was, eventually, with the Senate. I would like to point out that, in essence, a thing that requires approval may not be taken for granted. In other words, the fact that the triumph required approval seems to imply an irregular nature. Thirdly, it should be noted that not all soldiers could or would go to Rome and appear in the triumph. Logistically and pragmatically too, this would seem somewhat inconceivable. And lastly and fourthly, I

³⁶⁸ Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, 333.

³⁶⁹ It is worthwhile to briefly touch upon the *porta triumphalis*, for it has been argued that this gate served as a purificatory entrance for the ‘blood-guilty’ soldiers (Fowler, ‘Passing under the Yoke’, 48-51; Halliday, ‘Passing under the yoke’, 93-95). Frankly, the only reference to the significance of passing under the arch is provided by Festus, as I have introduced before. Bonfante Warren (1970) too, suggested that the *porta triumphalis* solely served this purpose and, in fact, was opened solely for this occasion. However, from a pragmatic perspective, it is more likely that the gate was opened at all times (see: L. Richardson, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, 301). Furthermore, Cicero too seems to suggest that the gate was always opened in his letter to Piso (*Pis.* 55). It is more likely, especially since the triumph lost its purificatory purpose since the end of the Etruscan kings, that the *porta triumphalis* served as an honorific passageway in the vast triumphal landscape.

would like to point out that there is frequent mention of triumphs that were not granted. Thus, there is indication that it was *not* performed, in contrast to the rituals discussed before, of which there is no explicit mention that it was not performed.

I therefore reach the conclusion that the triumph differs from the rituals of the *lustratio*, *auspicium*, *devotio hostium*, and *passum sub iugum*. These rituals feature chronologically closer to the event of battle, and appear to have featured rather customarily, as opposed to a ritual that would be approved and granted. The triumph features prominently in Roman society, but will from now on feature less prominently here.

§3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed a variety of post-battle rituals that appear to have been regularly performed by the Roman army. The *devotio hostium*, we have seen, appears to have been performed frequently in the direct aftermath of battle. It solidified the notion of victory by collecting and depriving the enemy of their weapons and armour – symbols of identity, it could be argued – and dedicating them to Roman deities. The passing under the yoke, similarly, communally emphasized the notion of victory. It remains a peculiar ritual, but it may be apparent that it was considered to be a grave act. To pass under the yoke, was to signify defeat. Its connection to the religious sphere remains ambiguous, but it does seem to have been performed in a fashion rather ‘religious’: recurrent and meticulous. The triumph was clearly performed at a later stage and offered the soldier the chance to express his victory in society. We have seen that the triumph was not always guaranteed, and that this expression was therefore not always granted.

IV – Analysis

At the beginning of this paper I posed the question whether the synthesis of ritual and warfare could have been meaningful to the individual, and influential on his experience of warfare. Consequently, I introduced a theoretical framework that incorporated an interwoven interpretation of trauma, meaning, and narrative, and suggested a means of grasping the psychological experience of battle in the past: the study of narrativizing structures. In the previous two chapters, I have analysed various martial rituals extensively, exploring if – and how – these acts were of significance to the Roman soldier. The *lustratio*, as we have seen, appears to have been a communal ritual that was performed at the premonition of hostilities. Similarly, the *auspicium* took place in the short-term preamble to battle. It did not demonstrate the communal characteristics akin to the *lustratio*, but its pivotal role was certainly eventful for the awaiting soldier. The *devotio hostium*, embodying the fulfilment of the commander's vow, featured in the direct aftermath of battle. The sources indicate that the sacrifice was accomplished and performed in a communal setting. The ritual of the passing under the yoke may have occurred at a similar time. The event involved both armies and affirmed the position each party would be in – either that of the victor or the defeated. There is no indication that the ritual was religiously institutionalized, but I believe this does not directly attest to its insignificance. Nevertheless, it appears difficult to reach consensus on its regularity. The triumph featured at a later stage in the plotline of battle – in fact, at a stage difficult to reconstruct. The sources reveal that awarding a triumph has often been a point of debate, for there were strict prerequisites. We may therefore deduce that the triumph was no entirely regular successor to the event of battle. In the following analysis, I will therefore discuss the triumph to a lesser degree.

Some of these rituals already invite investigation much more extensive. Nevertheless, I believe we may have sufficiently addressed these rituals to continue and extend our analysis. To understand the significance and 'narrativizing' function of the ritual construct that featured in the Roman conduct of war, it is requisite to consider this construct whole. I believe we have seen that there is tenable reason for such consideration. The first paragraph will attempt to devise a supposition as to whether we can argue for a historical ritual pattern. Source criticism will pose as a focal point – how should we deem our findings with regard to literary invention and anachronism? The second paragraph will reintroduce the theoretical and methodological framework that I posed in the first chapter. More notably, I believe we may then have reached

sufficient footing for its implementation. In what ways could a ritual pattern have narrativized the Roman experience of battle? I believe we may then have reached an answer to the question that I posed in the introduction, of which I believe it may be worthwhile to present it a last time.

Could the structural prevalence of ritual in the Roman conduct of war have provided narrative meaning to the individual experience of battle, and thereby alleviated its psychological impact?

§4.1 Battle and the Roman ritual construct

Roman ritual custom is featured prominently in the accounts of the ancient authors. But custom does not straightforwardly reflect reality. What ought to be, is not necessarily what happened to be. A critical disposition is therefore requisite for the historian studying the historicity of Roman ritual conduct. I believe assorted rituals have been examined sufficiently to confidently discuss the topic of historicity now, and retrieve, in a sense, *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.³⁷⁰

Can we plausibly argue for the historicity of the discussed Roman martial rituals? I believe it has become clear that the ancient authors considered ritual to be a customary component in the conduct of warfare. Their familiarity with the rituals is displayed both by the ease and detailed way in which it is conveyed. Appian, for example, in his account of the *lustratio classis* in 37 BCE, takes detailed care in explaining to the reader the ‘way [in which] the Romans perform lustration of the fleet’.³⁷¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus adds a contemporary note to his description of the *lustratio*, explaining that the ‘Romans are to this day purified by this same expiatory sacrifice...’³⁷² Cicero, an augur himself, devotes the greater part of his books *On Divination* to the practice of the augurs, at times mostly even criticizing the cursory and careless ways in which it was performed in his days. And similarly, Livy’s narratives on the *devotio hostium*, the aftermath of battle, are presented in near formulaic manner, the sacrifice of enemy arms being a recurrent given, whereas Plutarch takes the care to transmit specific details of the sacrifice in his account of the Battle of Aquae Sextiae in 102 BCE. In short, the ancient authors convey a sense of command and familiarity with the topic – some informed by sources even older, others acquainted by contemporary discourse and his environs.

³⁷⁰ In the words of Leopold von Ranke. See: L. von Ranke, *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1535* (Leipzig, 1824), 118.

³⁷¹ App. Civ. 5.96.

³⁷² Dion. Hal. 4.22.2.

But evenly so, we should question the disparity in the ancient accounts. Why would Livy leave out the *lustratio* in his report of Scipio's landing in Spain in 210 BCE, when Appian does make mention? And why would Dionysius of Halicarnassus remain silent about the enemy passing under the yoke at the battles of Luceria, Allifae, and Interamna, as vividly described by Livy? In short, if ritual featured customarily in the Roman conduct of warfare, why would this have remained unmentioned by some? Such questions naturally enter the fore when attempting to answer the topic of historicity. However, I would like to point out that disparity does not oppose custom. In other words, that what is anticipated and expected – that what is perceived to be customary – may naturally invite little address by the author. As Keaveney (2007) aptly puts: 'The infrequent mention of such ceremonies [martial rituals] means, I believe, that they were carried out as a matter of course and required no especial comment. Where we do find allusion to them is precisely where we would expect to: occasion where they had special significance.'³⁷³ Such an interpretation of the source material that I have presented in this paper supports the notion of ritual custom, as it is forwarded by the ancient authors. If the rituals performed before and after battle were perceived to be customary, we need not pursue the ineffective quest for literary reference to the ubiquitous. That which is handed down by the author may be of specific use to his narrative. That which received little mention he may have considered to be common knowledge.³⁷⁴

Such a functionalist interpretation of the sources attributes a high degree of intent to texts. It rests on the assumption that every aspect of a text is written considerably and purposely, which may serve as a tool to signify and accentuate that what *is* written. Such reasoning may benefit the scholar in search of topics or patterns perceived to have been common knowledge, yet it may also deceive the scholar by erroneously magnifying certain topics or patterns. Thus, there are evident merits and demerits to this interpretation. But I think its line of thought may be of proper use here. I have collected all the sources that have a bearing on the specified rituals, from which a corpus of multiple authors from various timespans emerges. The strength may be in the multitude: it disseminates the notion that custom is infrequently mentioned over a variety of sources.³⁷⁵ In fact, I believe that appendices I, II, III, and IV already

³⁷³ Keaveney, A., *The Army in the Roman Revolution* (London, 2007), 12.

³⁷⁴ An interesting contemporary analysis of the notion of 'common knowledge', and perhaps too universality of this notion, can be found in: J.P. Dupuy, 'Common Knowledge, Common Sense', *Theory and Decision* (1989), 37-62.

³⁷⁵ A very basic principle aptly addressed in Tosh (1984): 'The procedure is to amass as many pieces of evidence as possible from a wide range of sources – preferably from *all* the sources that have a bearing on the problem at hand. In this way the inaccuracies and distortions of particular sources are more likely to be revealed, and the

suggest that there is compelling reason to assume that ritual custom was featured recurrently in the Roman course of battle. There is altogether tenable reason for this premise, and therefore tenable reason to further this assertion and discuss the ritual pattern more concretely.

Cassius Dio suggested that the *lustratio* ‘regularly preceded a conflict’; Cicero believed that no Roman military enterprise would be conducted ‘without consulting the auspices’; Appian noted that the *devotio hostium* was a ‘custom of the Roman generals’; Dionysius of Halicarnassus similarly suggested that the passing under the yoke was ‘customary among the Romans’; and Livy concluded the triumph to be habitually given, otherwise resulting in complain and ‘murmur’.³⁷⁶ Ritual, as the ancient authors convey, was custom, and custom was to be adhered to. It would be worthwhile to summarize how this is reflected in the historical evidence that I have brought forward throughout this thesis. Appendix I shows that we can discern 24 references to situations in which the *lustratio exercitus* was allegedly performed in the preamble to battle. Appendix II offers an overview of the events in which the *auspicium (ex tripudiis)* was performed, as indicated by the ancient authors. I have reached a sum of 12 instances. Appendix III notes 15 battles after which the *devotio hostium* was allegedly performed. Appendix IV accounts for 7 instances in which the Romans made their enemies pass under the yoke. This was reversely performed 5 times, the sources inform. The triumph, of which we need only look at the *Fasti Triumphales*, was likely performed in the hundreds. Since no scholar has previously placed these rituals on par in a chronological timeline, it may be worthwhile to do so here and consider the ritual construct, whole in its historical context.

Figure 1 features a chronological overview of the prevalence of the discussed rituals, as supported by the collected source material. First and foremost, it may be apparent that the greater part accentuates to the chronological confine of the Roman Republic (509-27 BCE). In the introduction I have already informed that this paper will be concerned with rituals as best accounted for, and that for this reason its chronological scope is directed towards the Republic – Figure 1 may serve to clarify this now. Livy suggested that the first lustration was performed under Servius Tullius in the 6th century BCE, whereas the last performed lustration can be inferred from Marcus Aurelius’ relief in ca. 176-180 CE. The first *auspicium* performed before the advent of battle can be dated to 484 BCE, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus seems to suggest, whereas the last instance accounted for in the sources appears to date to the Battle of Carrhae

inferences drawn by the historian can be corroborated.’ See: J. Tosh, *The Pursuit of History* (Edinburgh, 1984), 134.

³⁷⁶ Cass. Dio 47.38.4; Cic. *Div.* 2.36.76; App. *Pun.* 8.48; Dion. Hal. 3.22.6; Liv. 45.38.13.

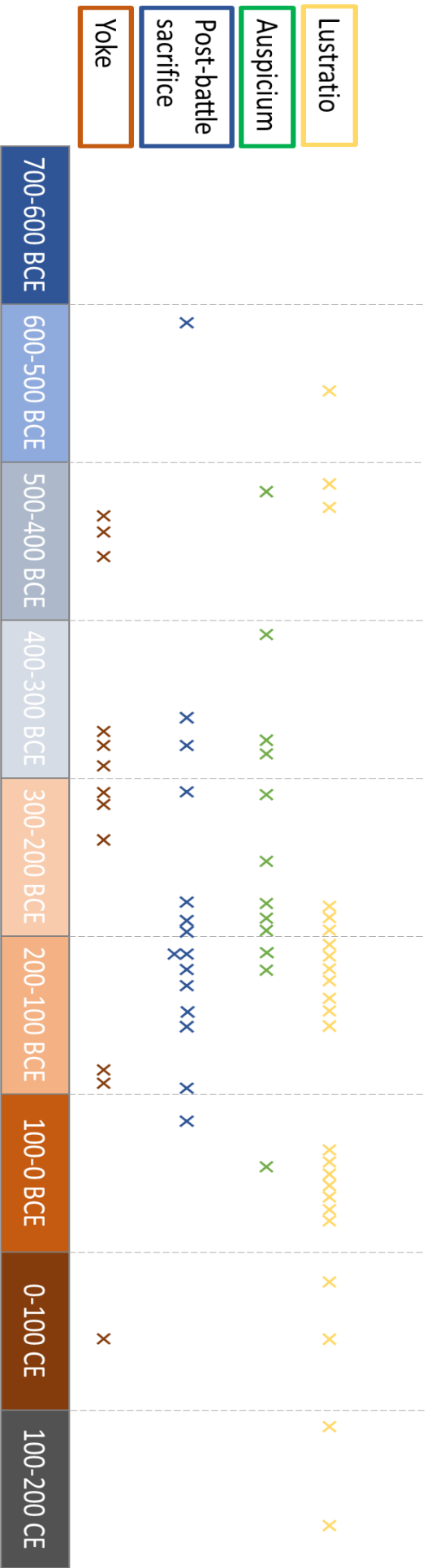


Figure 1: A chronological overview of the prevalence of the discussed rituals, as supported by the collected source material. The chronological confine results from the presented source material (e.g. the earliest case of the *passum sub iugum* taking place in 459 BCE, and the latest *lustratio* taking place in ca. 176-180 CE).

in 53 BCE.³⁷⁷ Livy suggests that the first sacrifice of enemy arms and armour was performed in the Sabine War in ca. 590 BCE, and Appian accounts for the last after the Battle of Chaeronea in 86 BCE. At the Siege of Tusculum in 459 BCE, enemies were sent under the yoke first, as Livy describes. At the Battle of Rhandeia in 62 CE, the yoke is last referred to, albeit were it the Roman ‘legions in Armenia [that] were sent under the yoke.’³⁷⁸ A glance at the chronology of these rituals implies a Republican trend.

Let us adopt another approach. The *lustratio* is most frequently referred to by Livy (8 times), followed by Plutarch (5), Appian (4), Caesar/Hirtius (3), Dionysius (2), Tacitus (2), Cassius Dio (2), imperial reliefs (2), and Cicero (1).³⁷⁹ The *auspiciu*m is addressed most by Livy (8), followed by Cicero (2), Plutarch (2), Dionysius (1), Suetonius (1), and Florus (1). The *devotio hostium* is accounted for most frequently by Livy (9), followed by Appian (5), Polybius (1), and Plutarch (1). The *passum sub iugum* is mentioned most often by Livy (11), followed by Dionysius (3), Caesar (2), Sallust (1), Appian (1), Tacitus (1), Suetonius (1), Cassius Dio (1), Florus (1), Festus (1), Frontinus (1), and Eutropius (1). From this inventory, it may be apparent that Livy accounts for most of the references. What would be his aim in portraying a more ‘ritualized’ Roman past? Livy’s work is known for its moralizing character. He is generally praiseful of the Republican past, and a recurrent religious morale made sure this message was conveyed to his readers. As with most of the authors of concern here, Livy wrote his work under the reign of the Roman emperors. Thus, we may similarly question: would Augustus have benefitted from an agenda like Livy’s?³⁸⁰ Additionally, we should be cautious of the imperial accounts that deal with the early Republican history. As Livy, for instance, notes: ‘in questions of such remote antiquity I should count it sufficient if what bears the stamp of probability be taken as true.’³⁸¹ Such presuppositions may favour colourful storytelling, but clearly not historical research.³⁸² Nevertheless, I believe it may be apparent that Livy’s potential agenda does not weigh up against the full collection of evidence, and the logical disregard the ancient authors may have had for accounting for the ubiquitous.

³⁷⁷ It is important to clarify that I am solely concerned with the *auspiciu*m (*ex tripudiis*) related to warfare. The first augury may be dated to the legendary founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus (Plut. *Rom.* 9.4-5).

³⁷⁸ Suet. *Nero* 39.1.

³⁷⁹ I have addressed the discussion on the authorship of the *Alexandrine War* and the *African War* briefly before. There appears to be some consensus on Hirtius as the (co-)author. Hirtius served as a commander under Caesar and become consul after his death in 43 BCE. In this summation, I therefore believe it is reasonable to view the accounts of Caesar and Hirtius as equals.

³⁸⁰ Especially since Augustus was known to have reinstated the college of the *fetiales*, becoming one himself.

³⁸¹ Liv. 5.21.9.

³⁸² But then, of course, Livy never claimed to be working along the lines of historical research.

§4.2 Ritual as a narrativizing element

This thesis has set forth with the aim of furthering our understanding of ritual conduct in the Roman way of war and investigating the socio-psychological significance a ritual pattern may have held for the individual's experience of battle. The attentive reader may have noticed that I have not provided a definition of 'battle', whereas it has featured as the primary motif throughout this thesis. Should we not reach consensus as to what constitutes a 'battle'? And moreover, can we study martial rituals confidently without a defined conception of battle? I shall offer an alternative explanation to these questions.

In review of a vast corpus of source material, we have reached a form of consensus on the positions the various martial rituals held in the scenario of 'battle'. The *lustratio*, we have seen, 'regularly precedes a conflict', as Cassius Dio informed.³⁸³ Similarly, the generals would consult the *auspicium*, 'as they are wont to be on the eve of an engagement', Livy wrote.³⁸⁴ Thereupon, the *devotio hostium* would be performed 'after the battle', as Plutarch noted.³⁸⁵ Furthermore, enemies would be sent under the yoke when they 'deliver up their arms and submit to their power', as Dionysius of Halicarnassus explained.³⁸⁶ We may inquire again: what is 'battle', then? I believe our definition can be found in the rituals that were performed afore and after; in the rituals that predicted and professed 'battle'; and thus, in the rituals that would only be performed as response to the stimulus of battle. In short, ritual narrativized battle by preceding and succeeding it – by signalling a beginning and an ending. In this paragraph I will address the triptych of ritual, narrative, and trauma. In this way, I believe the course of this thesis will be brought to a coalescent end.

The *lustratio exercitus* 'regularly precedes a conflict', Cassius Dio remarked.³⁸⁷ The sources confirm his premise: we have seen that an army would be lustrated when it marched for battle, or when a fleet sailed out. Additionally, we have established that the *lustratio* would be performed when a new general took over command, as well as when perceived geographical spaces were crossed. Thus, there appear to have been clear stimuli for the lustration of an army; clear events of which the *lustratio* was perceived to be a necessary precedent. I would like to stress the, perhaps, hidden importance of such causal reasoning. Evidently, the ritual was

³⁸³ Cass. Dio 47.38.4.

³⁸⁴ Liv. 9.14.3.

³⁸⁵ Plut. *Mar.* 22.1.

³⁸⁶ Dion. Hal. 3.22.6.

³⁸⁷ Cass. Dio 47.38.4.

performed because it was believed that it rendered the army capable of the consequent predicted course of events. Its purificatory character is stressed often in the ancient accounts, and thus we may wonder what it is that was purified: an already present malicious factor – such as fear or disunity? – that prevented an army from operating effectively, or did it protect an army from future danger? The meaning of the ritual may be somewhat difficult to ascertain, but I believe the occasion on which it was performed reveals much about its perceived effect. The successful performance of the *lustratio* suggested that an army would from thereon be fitted to deal with future danger, e.g. the notion of battle. I propose that besides the alleged ‘religious’ effect of the *suovetaurilia*, the physical circumambulatory act already conveyed ideas of social union. Hence, I believe that the *lustratio* functioned in two ways. Firstly, it predicted a future course of events that was regarded as dangerous, and it conveyed that an army would be capable of dealing with this danger after the ritual. For that reason, it was performed before prospective battles, campaigns, or spatial transitions. Secondly, the *lustratio* defined the army it circumambulated as a social entity and suggested that only *this* entity would be able to deal with the dangers ahead. Hence do the ancient sources hint at the importance of the presence of the full army during the *lustratio*, and can we explain the lustrations that were performed when a new commander entered the fore. In these two ways, the *lustratio* aided the individual in narrativizing his experiences: it suggested the beginning of a battle narrative of the social entity to which he belonged.

On the evening before an engagement, the generals would consult the *auspicium*, as Livy informs.³⁸⁸ Clearly, if and how this engagement would reveal itself was no given. Nevertheless, the *auspicium* was perceived to be valid for roughly one day.³⁸⁹ Thus, when the *auspicium* was performed, it conveyed the idea that the event of battle was near. More importantly however, the *auspicium* ‘claimed’ to provide a plausible prediction of the outcome of this event. It may have served as a cue that predicted the occurrence of another event. Theoretically, we may interpret such logic as ‘stimulus-stimulus expectancy’ (Kirsch, 1999): the ‘expectancy that a stimulus signals the probable occurrence of an external environmental event.’³⁹⁰ Along these lines, the *auspicium* created a psychological set of expectations, or ‘perceptual template’.³⁹¹ We may thus translate that a favourable *auspicium* would predict a

³⁸⁸ Liv. 9.14.3.

³⁸⁹ Rasmussen, *Public Portents in Republican Rome*, 299.

³⁹⁰ I. Kirsch (ed.), *How Expectancies Shape Experience* (Washington, 1999), 24. Also, see: I. Kirsch, ‘Response Expectancy as a Determinant of Experience and Behaviour’, *American Psychologist*, 40 (1985), 1189-1202.

³⁹¹ Kirsch, *How Expectancies Shape Experience*, 6-7.

positive course of future actions, whereas an unfavourable *auspicium* would foretell a negative unfolding if the planned actions were carried out. In a sense, it serves as positive reinforcement: a positive *auspicium* suggests that the desirable event of victory can be achieved if the desired behaviour is performed, e.g. the move to action. Thus, if the results of the *auspicium* are observed, victory is predetermined a fact. In summation, it generates a future perspective for two reasons. Firstly, *because* it was performed, it conveyed the premonition of battle. It suggested the coming of battle, and thereby created a future narrative of events. Secondly, it professed an outcome of the future event of battle, as sanctified by divine decree. It suggested that the future course of actions posed no break in the *pax deorum*. Hence, it had the potential to convey a victory narrative on the outset of battle, that might be confirmed on the offset.

When hostilities had ceased, the *devotio hostium* would be performed – or rather, the *devotio hostium* marked the end of these hostilities. I believe such reversal reasoning allows us to understand the socio-psychological significance it may have had for the persons present. As a rule, the sacrifice featured after the notion of battle. In fact, it *could* only feature after the notion of battle, for it involved the physical act of collecting the arms and armour of the enemy. Thereby, the enemy would be deprived of the items that would render their power. It may not so much be an act of humiliation – rather, one of confirmation. In his *Roman Questions*, Plutarch hypothesized on the purpose of this custom. Is it because ‘their reputes deserts them at the same time with the obliteration’, he questioned.³⁹² Regardless of the actual beliefs held, it may be evident that the *devotio hostium* emphatically communicated the *damnatio memoriae* of the enemy. The act of collecting and destroying the totems of martial identity served to enact this notion. Thus, the *devotio hostium* was of an inherently posterior character. By performing the sacrifice, the event that had passed was defined, signified, and settled. And in this manner, the *devotio hostium* construed the event of battle as a chapter that had passed and finished. ‘We expect stories to end’, Abbott (2008) writes in his cognitive analysis of narrative.³⁹³ To satisfy our narrative perception, conclusive elements are requisite. The *devotio hostium* conveyed the concluding constituents that might aid in the creation of a meaningful narrative of battle.

Whatever the event of battle may have comprised, its potential for chaos and confusion is indisputable. The ‘fog of war’, to refer to the disarray that develops when battle unfolds, may serve to refer to the ambiguous and fragmented experience one might have in this theatre.³⁹⁴

³⁹² Plut. *RQ* 57.

³⁹³ Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 56.

³⁹⁴ J. Lendering, *Oorlogsmist: Veldslagen en Propaganda uit de Oudheid* (Amsterdam, 2009), 9-10.

Polybius already remarked the importance of structure and clarity for the interviewer, in his attempt to assemble a clear narrative of battle from eyewitness accounts:

‘...in this task men of no experience are sure to be frequently deceived. For how is it possible to examine a person properly about a battle, a siege, or a sea-fight, or to understand the details of his narrative, if one has no clear ideas about these matters?’³⁹⁵

Polybius was familiar with the issues eyewitness narratives of battle could pose. A situation wherein death or injury features imminently, requires utmost concentration, and may involve irrepressible emotional responses.³⁹⁶ To comprehend and organize the piecemeal information that is transmitted to the participant may therefore require means beyond the bounds of possibility. It may lead to narrative jamming: a situation without overview, context, perspective, and meaning. My point is: the tumult of battle may obscure its course and deceive the combatant’s perception of time, space, role, hierarchy, and identity. The ritual of the *passum sub iugum* may function to clarify the ambiguity one might have experienced in battle, by offering a performative statement of identity. It may be worthwhile to further discuss this notion.

From our analysis of the ritual of the passing under the yoke, we may reconstruct its course as follows. Once the conditions of surrender had been accepted, a yoke would be ‘formed with three spears, two fixed in the ground, and one tied across between the upper ends of them.’³⁹⁷ A ‘passage from the defile’ would be opened, and ‘the enemy under arms stood on either side’.³⁹⁸ ‘Clad only in their tunics’, the defeated would consequently pass under the yoke, and return home.³⁹⁹ The ritual of the *passum sub iugum* is performative in nature. It requires the defeated to pass under a yoke – this would lead to its ‘completion’. There is a clear distinction between those to pass and those to stand. In that sense, the social arrangement of the ritual already signified the roles of the victor and the defeated. We have hypothesized before the idea that those who had to pass did so with a bent head. This may contribute to the social arrangement of the situation, for a bent head could indicate a sense of guilt towards the victor, or perhaps even the divine.⁴⁰⁰ The defeated were deprived of their weapons and armour –

³⁹⁵ Poly. 12.28a.8.

³⁹⁶ Lendering, *Oorlogsmist*, 110.

³⁹⁷ Liv. 3.28.10.

³⁹⁸ App. *Sam.* 1.6; Liv. 9.6.1.

³⁹⁹ Liv. 9.15.7.

⁴⁰⁰ Burkert, ‘Ritual’, 31.

symbolic of a martial identity – and were made to pass individually. Thus, it may be evident that the defeated enemy was reduced to his most vulnerable state: unarmed, naked, bent, and overpowered. Performing the ritual was therefore performing identity.⁴⁰¹ It denoted those to pass as the defeated, and those to stand as the victors. In that sense it may have clarified the ambiguity of battle by providing a new, conclusive, and mutually agreed upon, social standing. The ritual of the passing under the yoke may have conveyed and clarified the social arrangement that resulted from the preceding battle, and thereby established its outcome as a ritually attested fact.⁴⁰²

I have addressed the ways in which the occurrence of the event of ritual defines the event of battle. The rituals of the *lustratio* and *auspicium* conveyed the premonition of battle and thereby communicated a beginning. In that sense, it narrativized – it aided the individual in creating a structured narrative of events. The rituals of the *devotio hostium* and *passum sub iugum* conveyed the conclusion of battle. Thereby, these acts aided narrative perception by offering a close to the narrative of battle. The causal relation between ritual and battle reveals much about its perceived significance. That is what I hope to have demonstrated in the event analysis above. But clearly, we should also discuss *what* narrative these rituals communicated. In overview of source material, we may discern and discuss several recurrent themes.

First, the rituals discussed emphasize a certain social hierarchy. The role of the commander may be noticed foremost. We have seen that the *lustratio* would be performed when the command was taken over by a new consul. This transition thus served as a stimulus for the lustration of the troops, and thus it may be clear that it served to affirm and consolidate the commander's new position. Similarly, in the performance of the ritual, we may discern the central position of the commander. In 146 BCE for example, Livy notes how Scipio would perform the sacrifice of the *suovetaurilia* himself during the ceremony.⁴⁰³ Similarly, in 42 BCE,

⁴⁰¹ De Vivo, 'The Memory of Greek Battle', 175.

⁴⁰² In a parallel study, one might consider the 'traumatizing' effect of having to pass under the yoke in front of a violent crowd. Consider Liv. 9.6.1: '...first the consuls, little better than half —naked, were sent under the yoke, then their subordinates were humbled, each in the order of his rank; and then, one after another, the several legions. The enemy under arms stood on either side, reviling them and mocking them; many they actually threatened with the sword, and some, whose resentment of the outrage showing too plainly in their faces gave their conquerors offence, they wounded or slew outright. Thus, they were sent under the yoke, and, what was almost harder to bear, while their enemies looked on, on emerging from the pass, although they seemed like men raised from the dead, who beheld for the first time the light of day, yet the very light itself, which allowed them to see that dismal throng, was gloomier than any death.'

⁴⁰³ Liv. 29.27.5.

the sources imply that the ceremony of the lustration was largely conducted by the consuls.⁴⁰⁴ A similar hierarchy may be witnessed in the performing of the *auspicium*. The witnessing of the birds was largely reserved for the priests and the higher command of the army and the public announcement of the results appears to have been solely reserved for the commander. The *auspicium* then, was a clear demonstration that the general and his army were backed by the gods. The *devotio hostium* demonstrates comparable features. As much as the sacrifice is communally performed, it is personally claimed. The *votum* is the commander's, and by performing the sacrifice after battle he may demonstrate his close relations with the gods, while simultaneously appropriating the victory that he just achieved. The ritual of the passing under the yoke does not affirm the hierarchical relation between the commander the army. Rather, it appears to have affirmed quite the opposite. Livy notes how 'first the consuls, little better than half-naked, were sent under the yoke' in 321 BCE – they may have earned a first place in the line, but they were essentially placed on par with everyone else.⁴⁰⁵ The triumph may have served clear purposes as regards the position of the commander – in fact, the mid-late Republican triumph is generally and primarily regarded as *the* glorification of the general.

Second, I would like to stress the metaphysical narrative that the various rituals conveyed. The sacrifice in the *lustratio* was performed in honour of Mars, who would then function as a witness to the newly lustrated social entity. The *auspicium* added a clear metaphysical level to the course of actions, by suggesting an outcome that was guaranteed by the gods. Thus, offering a divinely sanctified future narrative absolves one of the agency and 'guilt' that he might have in the situation. In short, it offers a divine narrative by which the individual could narrate his – he merely operated in a cause that involved greater entities, c.q. deities. The *devotio hostium* may retrospectively have completed this narrative. The sacrifice devoted the spoils of the enemy, and thereby the victory that was won, to the designated deities. As we have seen, these deities often held strong connection to the notion of warfare, as did those called upon before in the *lustratio*. In that sense, the conclusion of battle by mode of the *devotio hostium* would offer closure on a more metaphysical level too, for the gods were made witness and support of the victory.

And third, the communal character of the discussed rituals may have become apparent. The *lustratio* was performed in the presence of the full body of soldiers, and moreover stressed this body as a defined social entity. The *auspicium* less so however: I believe it may primarily

⁴⁰⁴ Cass. Dio 47.38.4 & 47.40.7; App. *Civ.* 4.89 & 4.134; Plut. *Brut.* 39.1-2.

⁴⁰⁵ Liv. 9.15.7.

have served the commander, but clearly a favourable *auspicium* would also serve the commander in binding his troops to him. The ritual, after all, suggested that the commander enjoyed divine goodwill, and a divine cause is all the more likely to receive more support. The *devotio hostium* suggests a more communal character. The sacrificial pyre was created communally, and its ignition was accordingly witnessed communally. It involved socially connected others who had previously experienced the same event of battle. In that sense, it affirmed his social peers. On similar terms may we consider the passing under the yoke. The triumph fits this pattern as well, and besides the fact that it involved Roman soldiers, it also involved a wider community. In that sense, the soldier received communal acknowledgement of his experiences.⁴⁰⁶

How then, did Roman martial rituals narrativize the experience of battle? How did the rituals that preceded and succeeded battle convey meaning to the soldier? I believe these questions are no longer unanswered. The various rituals the Romans performed in the preamble and summation of battle held special significance to this event. They were performed solely because battle was perceived to be near, or no more. Thus, by their occurrence, these rituals signified the event that was to come, or that had passed. The rituals defined the event of battle, and thereby offered the psychological relief of opening and ending. It supplemented the notions of time, space, hierarchy, and identity, that the chaos of battle might lack. In that sense, the rituals performed before and after had the inherent potential to satisfy the soldier's narrative perception, and thereby the soldier's mode of understanding the things that he experienced. Ritual, narrative, and trauma, are intricately connected.

⁴⁰⁶ This notion has been explored in historiographical review, see: Versnel, *Triumphus* (1970); Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (2007).

Conclusion

As much as this thesis has answered the questions posed, so did it raise new ones. In the course of this thesis, the variety, ambiguity, and complexity of Roman martial rituals has become apparent. The approach that this thesis adopted has demonstrated its potential. I believe that the socio-psychological approach to Roman martial rituals offers interesting new insights of its perceived significance. Its findings, I believe, may have become apparent by now. In this conclusion, I would therefore like to briefly address the questions that this thesis has raised and make some suggestions for the direction of future research.

The various martial rituals that I have discussed in this thesis have generally received little scholarly attention, especially in comparative review. The resulting collections of relevant source material have therefore not been taken into consideration before. I hope that the appendices featured in this thesis may be of use in the future, for at a glance, they raise various questions. Why is it, for example, that the sources do not mention the observance of multiple martial rituals in the preamble and summation of battle? Why is it that certain authors seem to be more concerned with Roman martial rituals than others? How do we explain the re-entry of the yoke on the coins of Titus? And where does the *devotio hostium*, a seemingly un-Roman practice, originate? I believe questions like these invite further address.

I would like to briefly address one of the more apparent and intriguing results that the collection of source material has brought forth: a discernible Republican trend, emphasizing the 4th – 1st centuries BCE. Evidently, if we wish to further comprehend this trend, further address of martial rituals in the Roman empire is required. Fortunately, considerable works on the imperial cult, as well as the various ‘army cults’ (e.g. Mithras, Jupiter Dolichenus, and Christianity), have been written.⁴⁰⁷ The transition, revival, and transformation of Republican martial rituals in the Roman empire however, remains a field somewhat less explored. Thus, I believe that in order to fully grasp the Republican trend that has become apparent in this research, we need to adopt an even wider view. I would like to offer some suggestions on its directions however.

Firstly, the frequency of wars should be taken in consideration. When more battles are fought, more rituals will be recorded in the sources. The (intermittent) *pax romana* of the

⁴⁰⁷ For example: M.P., Speidel, *The Religion of Iuppiter Dolichenus in the Roman Army* (Leiden, 1978); Shean, *Soldiering for God: Christianity and the Roman Army* (2010); Panagiotidou & Beck, *The Roman Mithras Cult* (2017).

Roman emperors should surely be taken into consideration. In this light, the reliefs of the *lustratio* of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, the coins depicting the yoke under Titus, and the accounts of the Roman army that allegedly passed under the yoke in 62 CE, would be worthwhile of further investigation.⁴⁰⁸ Additionally, the fact that Rome gradually waged wars further overseas should be considered. The performance of religion and ritual stood, after all, in close contact with its centre in Rome.

Secondly, I would like stress the impact the Marian Reforms of 107 BCE might have had on the ritual conduct of the Roman army. This is worthwhile of investigation for it roughly coincides with the chronological trend that we have witnessed. The reforms expanded the citizen-body that qualified for military service, created a standing army, and reorganized the army structure. The second quality may be of especial interest here: a professional standing army would supposedly have less interest in rituals that predicted and concluded battle, for warfare was now their primary occupation.

Thirdly, I believe focus of attention should go to the accounts of the ancient authors. We have seen that most of the rituals accounted for, derived from writers living under the Roman emperors. Thus, I believe interesting results may be found there. Livy is clearly known for his presentation of a more ‘pious’ Republican past, and I think additional analysis of the accounts of the other ancient authors may serve to address the notions of contemporary reflection, literary fiction, and imperial agenda, more confidently. What would have been the purpose of specifically mentioning the observance of martial rituals?

In this thesis I have tried to explore the ways in which a socio-psychological approach to Roman ritual patterns can shed light on its significance. From the perspective of trauma studies, I think this research has proved its worth. I believe, and I hope, that the concept of narrative may fuel future research of the experience and conception of war in the ancient world.

⁴⁰⁸ I refer to the accounts of Tacitus (15.14), Suetonius (*Nero* 39.1), and Festus (*Lex*. 20).

Appendix

This appendix features four tables that provide a chronological overview of the rituals of the *lustratio*, *auspicium*, *devotio hostium*, and *passum sub iugum*. Collection of the material was done personally, based on extensive literate and close-readings of ancient texts review (using search-engines such as Perseus, Attalus, and ToposText). Additionally, appendix V features several images related to the *lustratio* and the yoke.

Appendix I – The *lustratio*

Date	Source(s)	Excerpt
575-535 BCE – Servian Reforms	Liv. 1.44.1-2	‘Upon the completion of the census, which had been expedited by fear of a law that threatened with death and imprisonment those who failed to register, Servius issued a proclamation calling on all Roman citizens, both horse and foot, to assemble at daybreak, each in his own century, in the Campus Martius. There the whole army was drawn up, and a sacrifice of a pig, a sheep, and a bull was offered by the king for its purification. This was termed the “closing of the lustrum,” because it was the last act in the enrolment.’
	Dion. Hal. 4.22.1-2	‘Thereupon Tullius, having completed the business of the census, commanded all the citizens to assemble in arms in the largest field before the city; and having drawn up the horse in their respective squadrons and the foot in their massed ranks, and placed the light-armed troops each in their own centuries, he performed an expiatory sacrifice for them with a bull, a ram and a boar. These victims he ordered to be led three times round the army and then sacrificed them to Mars, to whom that field is consecrated. The Romans are to this day purified by this same expiatory sacrifice, after the completion of each census, by those who are invested with the most sacred magistracy, and they call the purification a lustrum.’
483 BCE – War with Volscians	Liv. 3.22.4	‘When the allies came to the day already appointed, the consul pitches his camp outside the Capuan gate. Then, after the army was purified, he set out for Antium, and encamped not far from the town...’
468 BCE – Sabine Wars	Dion. Hal. 9.57.1	‘Thereupon the consuls, after they had offered upon their vows to the gods and performed the lustration of the army, set out against their enemies.’
210 BCE – Second Punic War	App. <i>Span.</i> 4.19	‘Taking the forces already there, and joining them in one body with those he brought, he performed a lustration, and made the same kind of grandiloquent speech to them that he made at home.’
208 BCE – Second Punic War	Plut. <i>Marc.</i> 29.1	‘However, after the ceremonies of sacrifice and purification which the seers prescribed had been performed, he set out with his colleague for the war...’
207 BCE – Battle of Lake Trasimene	Cic. <i>Div.</i> 1.35.77	‘For, after a review of the army, he had moved his camp and was marching towards Arretium to meet Hannibal...’

191 BCE – Roman-Seleucid War	Liv. 36.42.2	‘When he had picked up six vessels which had been sent by Carthage and the ships which Regium and Locris and the other cities under the same treaty obligation had contributed he performed the lustration of the fleet and put out to sea.’
190 BCE – Roman-Seleucid War	Liv. 37.14.4	‘On his arrival at Samos, Aemilius took over the fleet from Livius, and after the customary sacrifices had been duly offered he called a council of war.’
189 BCE – Galatian Wars	Liv. 38.12.1-4	The consul went to Ephesus at the beginning of spring and took over the troops from L. Scipio. After holding a review of the army he addressed the soldiers. He began by eulogising their valour in bringing the war with Antiochus to a close in a single battle, and went on to encourage them to begin a fresh war against the Gauls (...) The soldiers were delighted and frequently applauded him...
188 BCE – Roman-Seleucid War	Liv. 38.37.8	‘At the beginning of spring, therefore, after performing the lustrations on behalf of his army, he commenced his march, and after eight days reached Apamea.’
176 BCE – War against Ligures	Liv. 41.18.6-7	‘On receiving the despatch C. Claudius left Liguria and handed over his army to the consul at the Campi Macri. A few days later the other consul, C. Valerius, arrived. Here, before the two armies separated, a lustration was completed for them both.’
168 BCE – Third Macedonian War	Plut. <i>Aem.</i> 36.4	“For in one day,” said he, “I crossed the Ionian Sea from Brundisium and put in at Corcyra; thence, in five days, I came to Delphi and sacrificed to the god; and again, in another five days, I took command of the forces in Macedonia, and after the usual lustration and review of them I proceeded at once to action, and in another fifteen days brought the war to the most glorious issue.”
146 BCE – Siege of Carthage	Liv. 29.27.5	‘After these prayers, he threw the raw entrails of a victim into the sea, according to custom, and, with the sound of a trumpet, gave the signal for sailing.’
53 BCE – Battle of Carrhae	Plut. <i>Cras.</i> 19.6	‘And finally, when he was making the customary sacrifice of purification for the army, and the seer placed the viscera in his hands, he let them fall to the ground...’
51 BCE – Gallic Wars	Caes. <i>Gall.</i> 18.52	‘...and having ordered all his legions to march from winter quarters to the territories of the Treviri, he went thither and reviewed them.’
48 BCE – Battle of Pharsalus	Plut. <i>Caes.</i> 43.3	‘Then the soldiers besought him with loud cries not to wait for the troops, but rather to contrive and manoeuvre to come to close quarters with the enemy as soon as possible. As he was holding a lustration and review of his forces and had sacrificed the first victim, the seer at once told him that within three days there would be a decisive battle with the enemy.’
47 BCE – Battle of Ruspina	Hirt. <i>Alex.</i> 56	‘This done, he reviewed his entire army and then despatched to the point of embarkation the legions he intended to take into Africa, with their auxiliary troops.’
46 BCE – Battle of Thapsus	Hirt. <i>Afr.</i> 75	‘Caesar, having reviewed his army the twelfth day before the calends of April, advanced the next day, with all his forces, five miles beyond his camp...’
42 BCE – Battle of Philippi	Cass. Dio 47.38.4	‘The troops, however, composed mostly of subject nations, were vexed by the delay and despised their antagonists because they had offered inside their camp the sacrifice of

		purification, which regularly precedes a conflict, and thus showed signs of fear...'
	Cass. Dio 47.40.7	'In Macedonia, of which Mt. Pangaeum and the territory surrounding it are regarded as a part, bees in swarms surrounded the camp of Cassius, and in the course of the purification of the camp someone set the garland upon his head wrong end foremost, and a boy fell down while carrying a Victory in a procession such as the soldiers hold.'
	App. Civ. 4.89	'After performing a lustration for the army, they completed the payment of the promised donative still due to the soldiers.'
	App. Civ. 4.134	'When Cassius was performing a lustration for his army his lictor placed his garland upon him wrong side up...'
	Plut. Brut. 39.1-2	'Octavius and Antony now made a lustration of their armies in their camps, and then distributed a little meal and five drachmas to every man for a sacrifice; but Brutus and Cassius, despising their enemies' poverty or parsimony, first made lustration of their armies in the open field, as the custom is, and then distributed great numbers of cattle for sacrifice among their cohorts, and fifty drachmas to every soldier, and thus, in the goodwill and zeal of their forces, they were at an advantage. However, it was thought that Cassius had a baleful sign during the lustration; for the lictor brought him his wreath turned upside down.'
37 BCE – Sicilian Revolt	App. Civ. 5.96	'When the fleet was ready, Octavian performed a lustration for it in the following manner. The altars are erected on the margin of the sea, and the multitude ranger around them in a circle of ships, observing the most profound silence. The priests who perform the ceremony offer the sacrifice while standing at the water's edge, and carry the expiatory offerings in skiffs three times round the fleet, the generals sailing with them, beseeching the gods to turn the bad omens against the victims instead of the fleet. Then, dividing the entrails, they cast a part of them into the sea, and put the remainder on the altars and burn them, while the multitude chant in unison. In this way the Romans perform lustrations of the fleet.'
35 CE – Crossing the River Euphrates	Tac. Ann. 6.37	'During the sacrifice, while the Roman was paying the national offering to Mars and the Parthian had prepared a horse to placate the river, word was brought by the people of the neighbourhood that, without any downpour of rain, the Euphrates was rising spontaneously and to a remarkable height: at the same time, the whitening foam was wreathing itself into circles after the fashion of a diadem – an omen of a happy crossing.'
63 CE – Roman-Parthian War	Tac. Ann. 15.26	'After the usual act of purification, he summoned the army, and began his address to them with a florid reference to the emperor's power and his own exploits...'
101-106 CE – Dacian Wars	Trajan's Column, scene 8	See appendix V.
176-180 CE – Marcomannic Wars	Arch of Constantine,	See appendix V.

	relief of Marcus Aurelius	
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Appendix II – The *auspicium*

Date	Source(s)	Excerpt
484 BCE – War with the Volscians	Dion. Hal. 8.86.7	‘Since, however, the victims and omens were not favourable when he offered sacrifice and consulted the auspices, but the gods opposed his setting out, he himself remained behind, but chose out and sent his best cohorts to his colleague.’
396 BCE – Siege of Veii	Liv. 5.21.1	‘An enormous crowd went and filled the camp. After the Dictator had taken the auspices and issued orders for the soldiers to arm for battle, he uttered this prayer...’
324 BCE – Second Samnite War	Liv. 8.30.2	‘The expedition into Samnium was attended with ambiguous auspices; but the flaw in them took effect, not in the outcome of the war, which was waged successfully, but in the animosities and madness of the generals. For Papirius, the dictator, as he was setting out for Rome, on the advice of the keeper of the sacred chickens, to take the auspices afresh, warned the master of the horse to remain in his position...’
320 BCE – Battle of Luceria	Liv. 9.14.3-4	‘The consuls were busy with matters pertaining to gods and men, as they are wont to be on the eve of an engagement, when the envoys from Tarentum approached them to receive their answer; to whom Papirius replied, “Tarentines, the keeper of the chickens reports that the signs are favourable; the sacrifice too has been exceedingly auspicious; as you see, the gods are with us at our going into action.”’
293 BCE – Battle of Aquilonia	Liv. 10.40.4-6	‘Papirius rose quietly in the third watch of the night and sent a pullarius to observe the omens. There was not a man, whatever his rank or condition, in the camp who was not seized by the passion for battle, the highest and lowest alike were eagerly looking forward to it; the general was watching the excited looks of the men, the men were looking at their general, the universal excitement extended even to those who were engaged in observing the sacred birds. The chickens refused to eat, but the pullarius ventured to misrepresent matters, and reported to the consul that they had eaten so greedily that the corn dropped from their mouths on to the ground. The consul, delighted at the news, gave out that the omens could not have been more favourable; they were going to engage the enemy under the guidance and blessing of heaven. He then gave the signal for battle.’
249 BCE – Battle of Drepana	Cic. Div. 2.3.7	‘Claudius merely in jest mocked at the gods: when the chickens on being released from their cage refused to feed, he ordered them to be thrown into the water, so that as they would not eat they might drink; but the joke cost the jester himself many tears and the Roman people a great disaster, for the fleet was severely defeated.’
	Liv. 19	‘Claudius Pulcher, consul, obstinately persisting, notwithstanding the omens were inauspicious, engages the enemy’s fleet, and is beaten; drowns the sacred chickens which would not feed...’

	Suet. <i>Tib.</i> 2.2	‘Claudius Pulcher began a sea-fight off Sicily, though the sacred chickens would not eat when he took the auspices, throwing them into the sea in defiance of the omen, and saying that they might drink, since they would not eat.’
	Flor. <i>Epit.</i> 2.18.29	‘In the consulship of Appius Claudius the Romans were defeated not by the enemy but by the gods, whose auspices he had despised, their fleet being immediately sunk on the spot where Appius Claudius had ordered the sacred chickens to be thrown overboard...’
216 BCE – Battle of Cannae	Liv. 22.42.8-10	‘Paulus himself wished to delay; and when the sacred fowls had refused their sanction, he gave orders to notify his colleague, who was just setting forth with the standards from the gate. Varro was greatly vexed at this, but the recent disaster of Flaminius and the memorable defeat at sea of the consul Claudius, in the first Punic War made him fearful of offending the heavenly powers.’
209 BCE – Second Punic War	Plut. <i>Fab. Max.</i> 19.6	‘These letters moved Fabius to action, and he proposed to take a part of his force and set out by night. Then he got unfavourable auspices and was turned from his purpose by them...’
207 BCE – Battle of Lake Trasimene	Cic. <i>Div.</i> 1.35.77	‘Again, after the auspices by means of the tripudium had been taken, the keeper of the sacred chickens advised the postponement of battle.’
189 BCE – Galatian Wars	Liv. 38.20.6	‘...the following day, having offered sacrifice and obtained favourable omens from the first victims, he (...) began the advance against the enemy.’
176 BCE – War against the Ligures	Liv. 41.18.13	‘In addition to his ill-omened words, to which his death gave a clear significance, it was gathered from what the “pullarius” said that the auspices had been unfavourable and that the consul was not aware of this.’
53 BCE – Battle of Carrhae	Plut. <i>Cras.</i> 18.5	‘The seers, also, quietly let it become known that the omens for Crassus which came from their sacrifices were always bad and inauspicious. But Crassus paid no heed to them, nor to those who advised anything else except to press forward.’

Appendix III – The *devotio hostium*

Date	Source(s)	Excerpt
ca. 590 BCE – Sabine War	Liv. 1.37.5	‘He sent the prisoners and booty to Rome; the spoils of the enemy had been devoted to Vulcan, they were accordingly collected into an enormous pile and burnt...’
341 BCE – First Samnite War	Liv. 8.1.6	‘An immense quantity of arms was found both amongst the dead on the field and in the camp. These the consul said he was offering to Lua Mater.’
324 BCE – Second Samnite War	Liv. 8.30.8-10	‘In consequence of the vast number slain, a large amount of spoil in the shape of armour and weapons was picked up on the battlefield, and the Master of the Horse had this collected into a huge heap and burnt. His object may have been to discharge a vow to some deity. But if we are to trust the authority of Fabius, he did this to prevent the Dictator from reaping the fruits of his glory, or carrying the spoils in his triumph and afterwards placing his name upon them.’

295 BCE – Battle Sentinum	Liv. 10.29.18	‘After sending out a search party to find his colleague's body, Fabius had the spoils of the enemy collected into a heap and burnt as a sacrifice to Jupiter Victor.’
216 BCE – Battle of Cannae	Liv. 23.46.5	‘The next day was spent by both sides in burying those killed in battle, under an informal truce. Marcellus burnt the spoils taken from the enemy in fulfilment of a vow to Vulcan.’
203 BCE – Battle of the Great Plains	Liv. 30.6.9	‘An enormous quantity of arms was secured, these the general devoted to Vulcan, and they were all burnt.’
202 BCE – Battle of Zama	App. <i>Pun.</i> 8.48	‘Now Scipio, having gained this splendid victory, girded himself as for a sacrifice and burned the less valuable spoils of the enemy, as is the custom of the Roman generals. (...) The remainder of the spoils he sold, and divided the proceeds among the troops.’
189 BCE – Battle of Mount Olympus	Liv. 38.23.10	‘The enemy's weapons were gathered into a heap and burnt, and the consul ordered the troops to collect the rest of the booty.’
	App. <i>Syr.</i> 7.42	‘He took 40,000 of them prisoners and burned their arms...’
189 BCE – Sack of Thermos	Poly. 5.8.8-9	‘For that night the army bivouacked on the spot laden with booty of every description; but the next morning they selected the most valuable and portable part of it, and making the rest into a heap in front of their tents, set fire to it. So also in regard to the dedicated arms which were hanging up in the porticoes – those of them which were valuable they took down and carried off, some they exchanged for their own, while the rest they collected together and burnt. The number of these was more than fifteen thousand.’
177 BCE – Campaign against Histrians	Liv. 41.12.6	‘The consul ordered all the arms to be collected on the following day and thrown into one heap. He then burnt them as an offering to Vulcan.’
168 BCE – Battle of Pydna	Liv. 45.33.1-2	‘When all the performances were ended and the bronze targets had been put on board the ships, the rest of the spoils were collected into enormous heaps. Then the commander offered up prayers to Mars and Minerva and Lua Mater and the other deities to whom the spoils taken from the enemy must be solemnly dedicated. He then applied a torch to the heap and the military tribunes standing round each cast a brand on the pile.’
152 BCE – Lusitanian War	App. <i>Span.</i> 10.57	‘All the booty that it was possible to carry he divided among the soldiers. The rest he devoted to the gods of war and burned. Having accomplished these results, Mummius returned to Rome and was awarded a triumph.’
146 BCE – Siege of Carthage	App. <i>Pun.</i> 20.133	‘He sold the rest of the spoils, and, in sacrificial cincture, burned the arms, engines, and useless ships as an offering to Mars and Minerva, according to the Roman custom.’
102 BCE – Battle of Aquae Sextiae	Plut. <i>Mar.</i> 22.1	‘After the battle, Marius collected such of the arms and spoils of the Barbarians as were handsome, entire, and fitted to make a show in his triumphal procession; all the rest he heaped up on a huge pyre and set on foot a magnificent sacrifice. The soldiers had taken their stand about the pyre in arms, with chaplets on their heads, and Marius himself, having put on his purple-bordered robe and girt it about him, as the custom was, had taken a lighted torch, held it up towards heaven with both hands, and was just about to set

		fire to the pyre, when some friends were seen riding swiftly towards him, and there was deep silence and expectancy on the part of all. But when the horsemen were near, they leaped to the ground and greeted Marius, bringing him the glad news that he had been elected consul for the fifth time, and giving him letters to that effect. This great cause for rejoicing having been added to the celebration of their victory, the soldiers, transported with delight, sent forth a universal shout, accompanied by the clash and clatter of their arms, and after his officers had crowned Marius afresh with wreaths of bay, he set fire to the pyre and completed the sacrifice.'
86 BCE – Battle of Chaeronea	App. <i>Mithr.</i> 6.45	'Sulla captured a large number of prisoners and a great quantity of arms and spoils, the useless part of which he put in a heap. Then he girded himself according to the Roman custom and burned it as a sacrifice to the gods of war.'

Appendix IV – The *passum sub iugum*

Date	Source(s)	Excerpt
c. 673-642 BCE – Fight of the Horatii and Curiatii	Liv. 1.26.12-14	'But since a murder in broad daylight demanded some expiation, the father was commanded to make an atonement for his son at the cost of the State. After offering certain expiatory sacrifices he erected a beam across the street and made the young man pass under it, as under a yoke, with his head covered. This beam exists to-day, having always been kept in repair by the State: it is called "The Sister's Beam." A tomb of hewn stone was constructed for Horatia on the spot where she was murdered.'
	Dion. Hal. 3.22.6	'Nevertheless, the king did not believe that the judgment thus passed upon Horatius by men was a sufficient atonement to satisfy those who desired to observe due reverence toward the gods; but sending for the pontiffs, he ordered them to appease the gods and other divinities and to purify Horatius with those lustrations with which it was customary for involuntary homicides to be expiated. The pontiffs erected two altars, one to Juno, to whom the care of sisters is allotted, and the other to a certain god or lesser divinity of the country called in their language Janus, to whom was now added the name Curiatius, derived from that of the cousins who had been slain by Horatius; and after they had offered certain sacrifices upon these altars, they finally, among other expiations, led Horatius under the yoke. It is customary among the Romans, when enemies deliver up their arms and submit to their power, to fix two pieces of wood upright in the ground and fasten a third to the top of them transversely, then to lead the captives under this structure, and after they have passed through, to grant them their liberty and leave to return home. This they call a yoke; and it was the last of the customary expiatory ceremonies used upon this occasion by those who purified Horatius. The place in the city where they performed this expiation is regarded by all the Romans as sacred; it is in the street that leads down from the Carinae as one goes towards Cuprius Street. Here the altars then erected still remain, and over them extends a beam which is fixed in

		each of the opposite walls; the beam lies over the heads of those who go out of this street and is called in the Roman tongue “the Sister's Beam.” This place, then, is still preserved in the city as a monument to this man's misfortune and honored by the Romans with sacrifices every year.’
459 BCE – Siege of Tusculum	Liv. 3.23.5	‘And when they came to this at last, they were all sent under the yoke by the Tusculans, unarmed and naked.’
457 BCE – Battle of Mount Algidus	Liv. 3.28.10	“...that he wanted not the blood of the Aequans: that they were allowed to depart; but that the confession may be at length extorted, that their nation was defeated and subdued, that they should pass under the yoke.” The yoke is formed with three spears, two fixed in the ground, and one tied across between the upper ends of them. Under this yoke the dictator sent the Aequans.’
	Flor. <i>Epit.</i> 1.5.13	‘...he made his conquered enemies pass like cattle under the yoke.’
	Dion. Hal. 10.24.8	‘They themselves, laying down their arms, left their camp and, pursuant to the general’s orders, marched through the Roman camp one by one under the yoke...’
443 BCE – Battle of Ardea	Liv. 4.10.4	‘...having given up their general and surrendered their arms, they are sent under the yoke and dismissed full of disgrace and suffering, with one garment each.’
321 BCE – Battle of the Caudine Forks	App. <i>Sam.</i> 1.6	‘...pass safe and sound under the yoke, this being the mark of shame they are accustomed to put upon others. (...) for they considered the disgrace of passing under the yoke worse than death. (...) When the oaths had been taken, Pontius opened a passage from the defile, and having fixed two spears in the ground and laid another across the top, caused the Romans to go under it as they passed out, one by one. (...) This method of dismissing prisoners, which they call sending under the yoke, seems to me to serve only to insult the vanquished.’
	Liv. 9.4.3	‘...and since they knew not how to admit their plight, even when beaten and made prisoners, he intended to send them unarmed and with a single garment each under the yoke...’
	Liv. 9.6.1	‘...first the consuls, little better than half —naked, were sent under the yoke, then their subordinates were humbled, each in the order of his rank; and then, one after another, the several legions. The enemy under arms stood on either side, reviling them and mocking them; many they actually threatened with the sword, and some, whose resentment of the outrage showing too plainly in their faces gave their conquerors offence, they wounded or slew outright. Thus, they were sent under the yoke, and, what was almost harder to bear, while their enemies looked on, on emerging from the pass, although they seemed like men raised from the dead, who beheld for the first time the light of day, yet the very light itself, which allowed them to see that dismal throng, was gloomier than any death.’
	Dion. Hal. 16.1.4	‘...about 40,000 in number (...) and leaving behind their arms and effects, they all passed under the yoke, which is a token that men have come under the power of others. But not long afterwards Pontius also suffered the same fate at the

		hands of the Romans, when both he himself and those with him passed under the yoke.'
	Cass. Dio 8.36.10	'...captured alive the entire Roman army, and sent them all under the yoke.'
319 BCE – Battle of Luceria	Liv. 9.15.7	'Papirius replied that they ought to have gone to Pontius, the son of Herennius, at whose instance they had sent the Romans under the yoke, to find out what the vanquished deserved to suffer; however, since they preferred that their enemies should decide on a just penalty for them, rather than propose one for themselves, he bade them take word to Luceria that they should leave their arms, packs, sumpter animals, and all the noncombatants, within the walls; the soldiers he intended to send under the yoke, clad only in their tunics, inflicting on them no new disgrace, but requiting that which had first been put upon the Romans. They made no objection, and seven thousand men were sent under the yoke. (...) there is scarce any other Roman victory more glorious for its sudden reversal of fortune, especially if it is true, as I find in certain annals, that Pontius the son of Herennius, the Samnite general-in-chief, was sent with the rest under the yoke, to expiate the humiliation of the consuls...'
307 BCE – Battle of Allifae	Liv. 9.42.7	'On the morrow while it was still twilight they made proposals for surrender, and their surrender was accepted on condition that the Samnites should be dismissed with one garment apiece after they had all passed under the yoke.'
294 BCE – Battle of Interamna	Liv. 10.36.14	'The latter amounted to 7800, these were all stripped and sent under the yoke. (...) He requested to be allowed a triumph, but this honor was refused him on the ground that he had lost so many thousands of men, and also because he had sent his prisoners under the yoke without its having been made a condition of their surrender.'
293 BCE – Battle of Duronia	Eutr. <i>Sum.</i> 2.9	'After this the Samnites were defeated by Lucius Papirius the consul, and seven thousand of them made to pass under the yoke.'
264 BCE – First Punic War	Front. <i>Strat.</i> 4.1.19	'The consul Otacilius Crassus ordered those who had been sent under the yoke by Hannibal and had then returned, to camp outside the entrenchments...'
138 BCE – Lusitanian War	Liv. <i>Peri.</i> 55.1-2	'...something happened in front of the recruits that served as an example: Gaius Matienus was accused before the tribunes because he had deserted the Spanish army, and was, after he had been condemned, sent under the yoke, chastised with rods, and sold for one sesterce.'
110 BCE – Jugurthine War	Sall. <i>Jug.</i> 38.9	'...Jugurtha held a conference with Aulus. He said that he had the general and his army at the mercy of starvation or the sword; yet in view of the uncertainty of human affairs, if Aulus would make a treaty with him, he would let them all go free after passing under the yoke, provided Aulus would leave Numidia within ten days. Although the conditions were hard and shameful, yet because they were offered in exchange for the fear of death, peace was accepted on the king's terms.'
	Liv. <i>Peri.</i> 64.3	'Deputy Aulus Postumius was defeated in battle by Jugurtha and added to this an dishonorable peace treaty, which the Senate preferred not to ratify.'

107 BCE – Battle of Burdigala	Caes. <i>Gall.</i> 1.7	‘Caesar, inasmuch as he kept in remembrance that Lucius Cassius, the consul, had been slain, and his army route and made to pass under the yoke by the Helvetii...’
	Caes. <i>Gall.</i> 1.12	‘This single canton (...) had slain Lucius Cassius the consul, and had made his army pass under the yoke. Thus, whether by chance, or by the design of the immortal gods, that part of the Helvetian state which had brought a signal calamity upon the Roman people, was the first to pay the penalty.’
62 CE – Battle of Rhandeia	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 15.14	‘Rumor added that the legions had been passed under the yoke...’
	Suet. <i>Nero</i> 39.1	‘...a shameful defeat in the Orient, in consequence of which the legions in Armenia were sent under the yoke and Syria was all but lost.’
	Fest. <i>Lex.</i> 20	‘Then two Roman legions, having been sent under the yoke by the Persians, defiled with the utmost infamy the military oaths of the Roman army.’

No material trace remains of the yoke except for three coins minted under the reign of Titus in the years 80-81 CE. See appendix V.

Appendix V – Images



Image: relief from Trajan's Column (scene 8), Rome.

Source: <http://www.trajans-column.org/> (public domain).

On this relief from Trajan's Column the *lustratio* can be witnessed. Trajan can be seen on the left, the *suovetaurilia* being performed in the middle and below. The relief confirms the circumambulatory movement of the sacrifice, as well as the participatory role of the soldiers.



Image: relief from Arch of Constantine (incorporated from Arch of Marcus Aurelius).

Source: http://employees.oneonta.edu/farberas/arth/arth200/politics/aurelian_panels.html (public domain).

On this relief from the Arch of Constantine another depiction of the *lustratio* may be seen. The person in the middle represents Marcus Aurelius (his head was refurbished to the likes of Trajan). Here, Aurelius appears to fulfil the role of the priest that would lead the ceremony. The three sacrificial victims can be seen on the foreground, the soldiers decorate the background.



Image: RIC II.1 Titus 500, 80-81 CE.

Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire (OCRE).

A sesterius (mint unknown, possibly Thrace) of which only one edition survives. The obverse notes IMP T CAES DIV VESP F AUG P M TR P P P COS VIII, whereas the reverse states IUD CAP S C. On the reverse a yoke can be seen (left side), with a helmet at its foot. A prisoner appears to be walking towards the yoke, his hands presumable cuffed behind his back. Frankly, the yoke does not seem to resemble the yoke as described by Livy: ‘...three spears, two fixed in the ground, and one tied across between the upper ends of them.’ (3.28.10). It remains difficult to explain this discrepancy. The man appears to be wearing a rather basic piece of cloth, which seems to confirm Fowler’s hypothesis of the *subligaculum* – the dress more akin to what a slave would wear.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, the helmet seems to confirm the notion that those who were sent under the yoke were stripped of their arms and armor. The veiled woman on the right likely portrays the *tyche* or personification of the city concerned.



Image: RIC II.1 Titus 501, 80-81 CE.

Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire (OCRE).

A sestertius (mint unknown, possibly Thrace) of which only one edition survives. The obverse notes IMP T CAES DIVI VESP F AUG P M TR P P P COS VIII, whereas the reverse states IUD CAP S C. The coin resembles Titus 500, but here the cuffed man is absent. The rest appears to imitate the series before.

⁴⁰⁹ Fowler, *Passing Under the Yoke*, 48.



Image: RIC II.1 Titus 504, 80-81 CE.

Source: Online Coins of the Roman Empire (OCRE).

A semis (mint unknown, possibly Thrace), of which two copies exist. The obverse notes IMP T CAESAR DIVI VESPAS F AUG, whereas the reverse states IUD CAP S C. The coin displays all the features of Titus 501. For other numismatic references to the yoke, see: RIC I Augustus 272, RIC II.1 Vespasian 943; Vespasian 944; and Vespasian 945. However, on these coins reference to the yoke is made in combination with a pair of oxen, which clearly attempts to invoke the theme of agriculture.

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