

ROMAN SOLDIERS ON THE SPOT: INTEGRATION AND ISSUES

A case study based on the province of Egypt (I-II century AD)

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by

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Abbreviations

Abbreviated references to classical authors and papyrological and epigraphic volumes follow the Oxford Classical Dictionary (4th Edition, 2012).

Introduction

The study of the Roman army's integration in the provincial system is a difficult terrain to deal with. The first, obvious, limit concerns how the different civilizations reacted to assimilation into the Roman influence: The Romanization process was either embraced or imposed after the subjugation, causing different social responses depending on the cultural features of the defeated. Indeed, such an issue exceeds the chronological limits of this text, given that Romans started to face the integration processes from their first expansion in continental Italy. Tyrrhenian cultures, for instance, had been easily absorbed since the V century BC, especially if compared to Samnites, who rejected any form of integration until their last and complete annihilation, during the Social war. According to these premises, we should not be surprised in noticing that this issue was constantly present after each Roman conquest. Romans did not face the problem using standard patterns, preferring time after time the purpose of different solutions. The issue could be extended to the provinces founded during the Imperial expansions. In this case, the processes affecting the integration pattern followed different features, coherent with the Roman institutional developments. The economic and social connections between the Roman Senate and the foreign aristocracies (representing a real cultural boost until, at least, the Hannibalic war) tended to lose any relevance, as soon as the Roman Republic became a Principate, and its inhabitants turned into subjects.

Given these differences, it is important to deliberate on what role the Roman army had in the integration process of the Egyptian province. In fact, Roman soldiers represented the first embodiment of Roman culture outside the Italian peninsula, the first element the local population came in contact with in the aftermath of the conquest. Given this, it is interesting to investigate whether the legionaries were aware of their cultural 'task', or if they were only acting as the military representation of the occupying power. The main features characterizing the latter type are well known: History recorded several cases of difficult cohabitation between soldiers and civilians in modern times. The most famous examples range from numerous Nazis' occupations during World War II, to the years spent by the French army in Algeria and the related war (1954-1962). In the case of ancient times, our task is decisively more complex, because it clashes against further

problems depending on chronology. Above all, the issue of sources is the most relevant. Specifically, the study of relationships between the aforementioned categories require evidence recording the everyday life in the Egyptian province. Luckily papyri offer very useful insights for this purpose (see below).

The cultural effects of this research are evident: the examination of the Roman perception by the local population has, in fact, ambivalent implications. Firstly, it requires a deep analysis of Roman ideology, namely how Roman elite justified their domination over so many different civilizations. Such a concept is nowadays defined as Roman Imperialism. This aspect can be extrapolated from ancient authors' testimonies, though we need to keep in mind that the concept of Imperialism has modern, post-capitalist origins, and cannot be semantically detected in the Greco-Latin world. Once the Roman mind-set has been analysed, it is necessary to switch to the local population. The second part of our investigation will therefore be conducted by collecting a series of selected evidence ranging from epigraphic data to papyri. The common denominator of such sources is the perspective on everyday life that connected soldiers and civilians. The final aim is to present, with reasonable precision, how the scenario of reciprocal interactions formed the image of the Roman soldier deployed in the provinces.

The previous theoretical trends concerning soldiers' relations with local civilians can be now considered briefly. It cannot be defined a real debate in a strict sense, since it is a topic usually investigated as collateral to more general studies or monographies. Given this, some exceptions can be detected. Already in 1918 J. Lesquier was raising doubts concerning the soldiers' behaviour in the Egyptian province. He was maybe the first historian who approached the topic in Egypt. Despite this, his negative theoretical position was limited to the problem of illegal requisitions.¹ Much more adverse is the judgment given by Campbell:

«The power of the Roman army, both in terms of the political subjection of an entire province and in the daily life of local communities, was seemingly all-pervasive, and much of provincial administration appeared to have a military aspect. Local people, unless rich and

¹ Lesquier, 1918, pp. 370. On illegal requisition see *'The issue of abuses'*, pp. 56.

*eminent, were protected only by luck or by the government's ability to enforce rules of proper conduct among its troops».*²

Campbell belongs to the current of thought evaluating the soldiers' action in the provinces with mainly negative connotations. The picture portrayed by this quote describes a situation of absolute anarchy, in which Roman soldiers were free to commit the worst crimes while remaining unpunished. The historian argues that abuse of the local populations was a systematic practice.³ On his same line of thought we find Adams in his work on *Land transport in the Egyptian province*. The author dedicated two chapter to the practice of animal requisitions and state grain transport, concluding that *«the fact that much of our evidence concerns correction of such action suggests that, first, such abuse was common, and second, more importantly, that the attempts by various prefects to correct abuses failed»*.⁴

The opposite theoretical trend evaluates the Roman soldiers in Egypt as more or less integrated:

« [...] The army as an institution was more closely integrated into the civil life of the province than modern experience would suggest. It played an important role in policing the province, especially the transportation of wheat down the Nile, supervising the working of mines and quarries by companies of contractors; officers appear as arbitrators in disputes, soldiers are assigned to duties in factories».⁵

² Campbell, 2002, pp. 91. See also Lewis, 1983, pp. 23 (refer to VI, SB 9636): *«[...] the native population did not always welcome an incoming veteran with open arms, nor regard his presence amongst them as an unmitigated blessing. Much would depend on the kind of person he was [...]. The peasantry's suspicion of soldiery, whether active or retired, was understandable. Generally, when military units or officers appears in the villages it was to demand something – billets, food, taxes, and so forth; and while such demands were usually authorized, the man under arms was often seen to line his own pockets as well, and the intimidated villagers were powerless to stop such extortions»*.

³ *Idem*.

⁴ Adams, 2007, pp. 140. In the same historiographical trend also Alston, 1995, pp. 58 can be placed.

⁵ Bowman, 1986, pp. 74. Despite this, the author adds slightly below that *«The less pleasant side of the picture emerges occasionally in reports of the extent to which the civilian populace was burdened, indeed often terrorised, by billeting and requisitions»*.

Bowman expressed a decisively more positive judgement on integration of the Roman army in the province. According to the author, the soldiers settled in the province fulfilled many different positive tasks, which were not simply limited to harassing the population.

In *The Roman Army*, Southern suggested to be cautious in approaching the relationships between soldiers and civilians. Most of the sources which can be collected concern complaints addressed to local authorities. As a consequence of it, historians' judgment on soldiers' allocation tends to be negative.⁶ Finally, it is important to mention Phang and her fundamental work about soldiers' family relationships.⁷ Although she focused more on the legal aspects of such unions, her multifaceted study analysed in depth many different types of emotional relationships linking soldiers to the local population. Phang's position on the problem of abuses is well explained in the conclusion of her book. According to the author, the harassment of civilians was more common in the 1st century AD in the decades after the conquest of many provinces. In the 2nd century soldiers would have started to interlace family relationship more frequently. Phang's opinion is mainly based on the illegitimate marriage rate detectable from her evidence in the first two centuries AD.⁸

The selected aforementioned authors expressed decisively different considerations on the topic of our study. Here the different theoretical trends have been compared to each other to offer a reliable starting point for our research. The most obvious results are the opposing arguments which have divided the historians in the past decades. Should we consider the Roman army in Egypt as a mere occupying force mainly involved in oppressing the local population? Or should we rather accept a substantial integration framework that lead soldiers and civilians to a peaceful coexistence? The aim of this research is addressed to answer these questions by the investigation of some of the available sources in Egypt. However, before turning to a more detailed analysis of the selected evidence, it is important to spend a few words about the structure of this dissertation.

⁶ Southern, 2006, pp. 80: «*The problem is that people do not usually record the good things or kind acts quite so often as they record their grievances. This is why the most common evidence of the relationship between the army and civilians concerns the arrogance and bullying tactics of the soldiers*».

⁷ Phang, *The marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC – AD 235)*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 389.

The next chapter will face the concepts of Roman imperialism and Romanization, and the relationship connecting them. The aim of this section is to fulfil the first part of our research: the investigation will therefore be aimed at detecting if Romans were consciously imperialist or not. The chapter is opened with a brief exposition of the main stages of the Roman expansion. Furthermore, a summary of the modern debate raised Roman imperialism since the XIX century has been included. A special focus will be put on the 'third way' theorised by Eckstein and Woolf. This new theoretical trend has relatively recent origins and stands opposite to the classical 'offensive' and 'defensive' doctrines. It represents a very useful tool to investigate the expression of Roman culture in the provinces. Our research will switch then to the investigation of Roman imperialism in the literary sources.

The second chapter is addressed to explain why a case study based on the province of Egypt has been chosen. Egypt represents a good testing ground with regards to this investigation, because it provides a formidable source: the papyri. They offer to historians a huge amount of information, on many different topics; the most important, for the reasons of this study, is the everyday life of soldiers and civilians, too often missing in the records of history. Papyri fill this gap efficiently, providing testimonies ranging from trading contracts to complaints and petitions.

Egypt had been officially acquired into Roman hegemony since 30 BC, in the aftermath of the Battle of Actium and Octavian's consecrations. The province inherited by the *princeps* was exceptional, as was the juridical status that he conferred to it. The main cities, such as Alexandria, were characterized by the coexistence of Egyptian, Greek and Jewish communities. The countryside was extremely fertile (delta and Nile valley), thanks to the Nile river which inundated its banks on annual bases. This led the province to become the main producer of grain in the Roman empire. The economy was wealthy and the urban fabric developed: Alexandria owned the largest port on the Mediterranean Sea. A further important data concerns the urban fabric: the province inherited by Octavian was fully urbanized.⁹ For all these reasons, Egypt represents the perfect subject for this investigation.

⁹ The estimations concerning the size of Roman Egypt divide the historians. Among the most recently published works we suggest Lo Cascio, 1999, pp. 425-447, who assumed 8 million of inhabitants living in the province; decisively lower the range of 5-7 million speculated by Scheidel, 2001, pp.184-250.

Finally, the third and fourth chapters present the available sources on relationships between Roman soldiers and the local population. This section of our study is complementary to the previous one. In fact, a clear evaluation of the selected sources (such as complaints, birth certificates and private letters) would not be possible without understanding how Roman soldiers' approached local population. The types of relationship here examined have been organized into two macro-categories, with the aim to provide a clearer exposition. Firstly, the family relationship will be afforded (third chapter). Such bonds are defined as the range of different relationships connecting Roman soldiers to the feminine world. The fourth and last chapter will focus instead on the juridical and economical relationships. These last topics are especially important for the aim of this study. Investigating the local perception of Roman soldiers is not possible without a reliable examination of the bond connecting them to local law and economy.

The last portion of this work are our conclusions. In the light of the doctrine of the 'offensive imperialism', which dominated the Western historiographical analysis for most of the last century, we could expect military units limited in patrolling and repressing tasks. However, this study approaches the topic in a more independent way and therefore hopes to be free from external influences. Given that, at the end of this study some further considerations on the rule of the army in Egypt will be advanced.

I. Roman Imperialism and Romanization process: some insights

The expansion of Rome: the path to the professional soldier

*«The transformation of Rome from a small central Italian city-state into the sole Mediterranean superpower has long proved fascinating and controversial. Its interest lies not merely in the scale and significance of what the Romans did but in its relevance to our understanding of the present: powerful states continue to impose their will on weaker states».*¹⁰

Before approaching the concept of Roman Imperialism and the analysis of Roman mindset, it is necessary to remind briefly the main steps of Roman expansion. The control of a great part of the Italian peninsula was completed by Rome at the beginning of the 3rd century BC. The victory in the Latin War and the dissolution of the League were just the first in a long series of decisive and successful military campaigns. Soon, not only the Tyrrhenian area but also Etruscans and Greek Italiots entered the Roman federation. After the clash with Pyrrhus and the city of Tarentum, and the triumph in the Samnite wars, Rome ensured itself the status of continental power, and could approach the Mediterranean scenario.¹¹ Once that Rome consolidated its control on the Italian peninsula, it fought its first large scale wars against Carthage.¹² The two victories obtained against its African rivals consigned to the *Urbs* the first extra-Italian territories. These military successes were essential in allowing Rome, in the following years, to resume and develop its expansionist policy.

In the first half of the 2nd century BC the city was constantly engaged on three fronts: in Spain, in northern Italy and in the East. In the Iberian Peninsula and Cisalpine Gaul the

¹⁰ Erskine, 2010, pp. 3.

¹¹ On the Roman expansion in Italy see Cornell, 1995; Clemente, 2008, IV chapter, pp. 101-139; Pani, Todisco, 2008, chapter V, pp. 86-103; and Brizzi, 2012, chapter IV, V, pp. 57-94, who introduces some interesting solutions to the chronological problems linked to Samnite wars.

¹² On the Punic Wars an enormous amount of historiographical material. For this paper the studies of Goldsworthy, 2000; and Hoyos, 2011, have been chosen.

Romans proceeded to a slow, but constant conquest of the territory, which ended only with Augustus. Rome's policy in the East was perhaps different in the methods, but not in the purposes. Thanks to the victory over the Macedonian Kingdom, and to that with Antiochus III, Rome had obtained the undisputed supremacy over the whole Mediterranean world, since the first half of the 2nd century.¹³ In the following decades the Romans were more committed to consolidating their own territories and to handling several insurrectional attempts. In fact, it was at the beginning of the second half of the 2nd century that the period of civil wars begun. With Augustus, finally, Roman rule assumed its definitive form, with the completion of the conquests of Spain, Northern Italy and the annexation of Egypt.¹⁴

Since the origins of Rome, the city had reformed its legions several times. The most important intervention during the early Republican period was the manipular reform of the 4th century. It was introduced following the Gallic sack of Rome of 390 BC,¹⁵ and after the humiliating defeat of the Caudine Forks, in the context of the Second Samnite War.¹⁶ Although this reform radically revolutionized the panoply and tactics of Rome's soldiers, it did not affect the recruitment of citizens, which continued to be on a timocratic basis.¹⁷

The growing dissatisfaction of this class led to the beginning of a process of change, complemented only by the Marian reform of 107 BC, which had different consequences

¹³ For what concerns Roman conquests oversea, see Brizzi, 2012, chapter VII, pp. 125-144; Clemente, 2008, chapter, pp. 140-200; e Pani-Todisco, 2008, chapter VI, VII, pp. 104-136.

¹⁴ On the period of the Civil Wars see: Cristofoli, Galimberti, Rohr Vio, 2014.

¹⁵ Livy, V, 35-55. At the beginning of the 4th century a Gallic army crossed the Alps and descended massively in Italy reaching today's Marche, while Rome was engaging the siege of the rival city of Veii. They were presumably interested in the riches of southern cities, or maybe they had been called to fight for Dionysius I, the tyrant of Syracuse, since then at least a part of that army was recruited by him. When the Gallic army arrived in Lazio, it was able to defeat the Romans easily at the Allia river and to occupy the city, plundering it for several days.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, IX, 1-4. At the end of the second Samnite war, the Romans pursued the enemies retreating on the Apennines slopes in order to deeply penetrate into their territory. The consuls continued on the steep route, believing to be able to reach the enemy settlements and conclude the matter. Surprised at the junction of the Valley of Caudio, the Roman contingent was blocked in a bottleneck and, powerless to leave the narrow was eventually forced to surrender and forced to pass under the yoke. It was the humiliating defeat of the Caudine Forks that let the Samnites impose harsh peace terms. This episode revealed with great impact the inefficiency of the hoplitic formation, because the phalanx needed to be deployed on large areas of strictly flat land. The cohesion of the units and the closed formation were hard to maintain on a rugged surface: if attacked under these conditions, like those of the Apennines scenery, it could not provide the dynamism needed to respond efficaciously on the battlefield and was destined to succumb or surrender. This episode is considered conventionally as what persuaded the Romans to change their strategy.

¹⁷ The manipular reform marked the end of hoplitic formation, in favor of a system built on three lines, consisting of *Astati*, *Principii* and *Triarii*. The legionary panoply changed radically, and the new formation, though compact, was provided with the necessary flexibility to fight even on harsh terrains. The reform is called "manipular" because of the introduction of the *manipulus*, which consisted of one subunit composed by two centuries.

over the short and long term.¹⁸ First of all, there was a proletarianization of the legions, no longer made up of men called to arms in times of necessity, but volunteering soldiers, and therefore those more inclined to spend long periods away from Italy. Moreover, the war represented for these men a new opportunity for enrichment, thanks to regular plundering and to Generals' donations. This process led the legions of Rome to accept every military campaign in order to avoid demobilization. Furthermore, the bond between the soldier and their General became stronger, as can be noticed throughout a century of civil wars.¹⁹

The middle-late Republican Roman chronology, combined with the aforementioned military reforms, shows a clear path. With the definitive fall of Carthage, which represented the last obstacle to its hegemony in the Mediterranean area, Rome was ready to boost its expansion. For the same purpose, the *Urbs* provided itself with the professional legionary, which was much more compatible with its new foreign policy. These new features of the Roman soldier also provided a revolutionary impulse to the Romanization process. The creation of permanent *castra* into distant and often culturally diverse provinces led the legionaries to become, first and foremost, the principal representatives of Roman culture. Nevertheless, the time spent by the soldiers on the spots was affected by the Marian reform. The citizen-soldier was expected to come back home at the conclusion of the war. The new professional soldiers were instead assigned in the provinces for a longer period, leading these men to establish rooted bonds with the local people. In the next subchapter we will introduce the concept of Imperialism and how it can be applied to the Roman period.

Reflections on Imperialism and Roman Imperialism

«Colonial policy and imperialism existed before this latest stage of capitalism, and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and practiced imperialism. But "general" disquisitions on imperialism, which ignore, or put into the

¹⁸ Sall., *Iug.*, 86: «Meanwhile, he [Marius] himself enrolled soldiers, not according to the census classes, in keeping with the ancestral tradition, but just as the fancy took anyone, for the most part the poorest of the poor».

¹⁹ On Roman military history the following authors have been chosen: Brizzi, 2002; Cascarino, 2007 (Volume I-II); Keppie, 1984.

*background, the fundamental difference between social-economic systems, inevitably degenerate into the most vapid banality or bragging, like the comparison: "Greater Rome and Greater Britain."».*²⁰

When Lenin published *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* in 1917, one of his most known works, he was perfectly aware of the risks of applying the concept of imperialism to a pre-capitalist historical phase. In fact, modern imperialism and the ancient one are connected by several common points, such as the foundation of colonies and their intrinsic exploitation; on the other hand, there are undeniable differences, especially concerning the connection to the capitalistic economic system. According to Lenin, imperialism is connected to a specific phase of capitalism, that he articulated in the famous five points.²¹ These differences will be kept in mind during this investigation in order to avoid over-simplifications.

According to Werner imperialism, is the political aspiration of state enlargement, driven by many causes, not necessary linked to exact aims. Instead it comes from the mindful inclination of a state or as a consequence of its pursuits. The imperialist objective is the formation or strengthening of an empire, with the intentional domination of people and regions.²² Although Kemp cautions the aim of finding a classification for imperialism, described as forced and subjected to social conditioning, this definition appears to be the most thorough and balanced.²³

The term "imperialism" was originally designated for the expansionist and aggressive behaviour exhibited by some European countries in the beginning of the nineteenth

²⁰ Lenin, 1917, pp. 31.

²¹ Lenin, 1917 pp. 92 «(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed».

²² Werner, 1972, pp. 523.

²³ Kemp, 1967, pp. 1. «As will be clear later in this work, there can be no adequate definition of imperialism which can be expressed in a phrase or a sentence, but that is no reason for abandoning the use of the term».

century.²⁴ It was at this point the word was coined.²⁵ It soon had negative connotations, becoming used to label the policies of global subjugation and exploitation, of people and resources that the powers in Europe being to expand into the Third World. In a contemporary sense the term imperialism conjures economic implications, and from here much historiography has been produced. Continuously, imperialism is shown as the conscious determination of a state to enlarge its hegemony and increase its territory.²⁶ It is certain the Rome displayed these tendencies of empire and imperialism and as such became a ready model for this modern term. The Roman empire extended over several territories and the Romans managed to conquer many other ancient societies. There is a difficult history behind the use of modern concepts to review the Roman world, but this is now, for the most part, accepted because of the close points of contact in these processes, although chronologically distant.²⁷

When talking on the specific concept of 'Roman Imperialism' the term becomes more complex. It can be considered as the series of events that caused the Urbs to become the main power in the Mediterranean region in just a few centuries. It is also important to note the qualities that Rome adopted internally as a result of their external achievements. The beginning of their imperialistic outlook is still in debate, but the date generally fluctuates between the VI and the II century BC.²⁸

«One of the key debates on Roman imperialism in the 20th century is related closely to the debate about the nature of Roman frontiers. This is the question of defensive and offensive imperialism. The desire to get into the Roman mind to analyse the purposes and drivers of Rome's establishment and maintenance of empire has been strong in these analyses. For this

²⁴ Such as those of czarist Russia, Napoleonic France and Victorian England.

²⁵ Hobson, 1905, pp. 15 «Quibbles about the modern meaning of the term Imperialism are best resolved by reference to concrete facts in the history of the last sixty years. During that period a number of European nations, Great Britain being first and foremost, annexed or otherwise asserted political sway over vast portions of Africa and Asia, and over numerous islands in the Pacific and elsewhere. The extent to which this policy of expansion was carried on, and in particular the enormous size and the peculiar character of the British acquisitions, were not adequately realized even by those who pay some attention to Imperial politics». See also Kemp, 1967, pp. 12.

²⁶ On the major interpretative currents of imperialism see: Kemp, 1967; Musti, 1978 (I chapter); Hodge, 2008.

²⁷ The debate is not completely ended, however, if we consider that Edwell was still writing in 2013: «Is it appropriate, therefore, to use the term imperialism when investigating the expansion and maintenance of the Roman Empire? Perhaps hegemony is a better choice as it might allow better consideration of the various indirect means by which Rome exercised imperial control and it is a less loaded term. Further to this, hegemony might be more appropriate to what the Romans themselves thought about their empire as it expanded out of Italy and across increasingly vast tracts of territory from the 3rd century BC»; (in Hoyos, 2013, pp. 40).

²⁸ Brizzi, 2012, pp. 95.

*reason, it is important to consider developments in the debate as part of defining Roman imperialism and it is in this debate that we see most clearly the influences on modern analysis of Roman imperialism».*²⁹

The historiography of Roman imperialism varies to a great extent due to its complex, and unique nature. Much of this debate has become directed against the true character of historical research and has instead moved to ethical debates. The pressure created by the many distinctive ideologies surrounding the topic has caused historiographical trends to diverge greatly, particularly in recent decades. As a consequence of this, the bibliography regarding this theme is extensive, and the historical debate surrounding it is far from resolution.³⁰ Below, the main variants of that model are briefly presented.

One historical trend is that of defensive imperialism, historians who support this concept include, among the others, T. Mommsen. This theory suggests that Roman expansion was not due to an aggressive policy or really an agenda as such.³¹ Instead military action was as a result of multiple factors aside from political decisions. Primary sources are the main point of focus for historians who follow this approach. These sources, for the most part, substantiate this idea of the Roman Republic protecting itself from outside aggressors.

The opposing historiographical trend is defined as 'offensive', and it sees Roman imperialism as an intentional bellicose policy. Those who support this highlight the aggressive military tendencies of the state, stressing that a specific will of expansion drove the whole relations of Rome with other ancient people. As such the entire concept of *Bellum Iustum* was nothing more than a propaganda façade in which real military acquisitions were favoured.³²

The debate on the real nature of Roman imperialism is centuries old, but it has, more recently, taken a different and refreshing route. There has been a questioning of this original offensive/defensive separation, aiming at moving the debate in another direction and progressing in the discussion. The most ardent followers of this so called 'third way'

²⁹ Hoyos, 2013, pp. 46.

³⁰ Brizzi, 2012, pp. 96.

³¹ The historical judgment of Mommsen can be found in his most famous work, *Römische Geschicht*, published in Berlin between 1854 and 1856.

³² Brizzi, 2012, pp. 96. The most famous scholars supporting this approach are, among all William Harris and Peter Brunt.

can be found in Arthur M. Eckstein and Greg Woolf. These two start with the same belief that the strong militaristic tendencies of Rome were not solely enough to substantiate the accomplishments of the state. This innovative theory has helped breach the two conflicting historiographical positions.³³

*«The fundamental question is not why Roman society was militaristic and often at war, but why the Roman city-state was able to create a very large and durable territorial polity when so many other city-states failed at that task».*³⁴

The main base of this historiographical trend is called the 'Anarchic Interstate System'. The term 'anarchy' refers to the lack of international regulations or institutes that could have made steps to resolve the many clashes that regularly occurred amongst Italian cities in the fifth century BC.³⁵ This concept disputes that the whole of the Italian peninsula was fraught with many societies in almost constant conflict. According to Eckstein this attitude was present in Greek, Etruscan and Samnite foreign policy. By not deliberately concentrating on the efforts Rome made in militarising, Woolf and Eckstein change the way Roman imperialism is seen. For both these historians the factor of militarisation is irrelevant as it is consistent with the concept of the Anarchic Interstate System.³⁶

By detaching this formally key point from historiography, Woolf and Eckstein sought to examine the true reasoning behind the success of Rome. The approach of Eckstein focuses on both the virtues of the *Urbs* and the failings of those cities and states it was in competition with for control within Italy and the Mediterranean. Rivals such as the Etruscans and Taranto, and in the later Republican period Carthage and the Macedonian Kingdom were wrought many structural weaknesses. These weaknesses were not felt so keenly by Rome itself as the state had far more solidity. Rome boasted a strong

³³ On this new trend see: Eckstein, *Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome*, 2006; and Woolf, *Rome: An Empire's story*, 2012. Authors' criticism is mainly addressed to the offensive current, given that the defensive one had lost most of its popularity in the 20th century.

³⁴ Eckstein, 2006, pp. 244.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 120.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 244 Both these historians do not doubt the militaristic tendencies of Rome, instead they support the connection between the social and military spheres. This is clear in the upper class where the *corsus honorum* was only available once one had done time in the military. This link is also apparent in lower classes as recent approximations suggest that 13% of Roman men of military age served in the armed forces. Eckstein concentrates on pulling apart the theory that the surrounding states of the *Urbs* were simple observers, accepting Roman bellicosity. He suggests that the recent focus of historians on Roman policy alone, without taking into account the other actors in this period, is un-substantiated. Instead the author gestures that Roman foreign policy was very much interlocking with the policies of its surrounding opponents. (Eckstein, 2006, pp. 3. And also pp. 183).

institutional system which could rely on a widespread demographic because of the support from the *socii*. These factors allow Eckstein to conclude that «*the weaknesses and fragility of Rome's rivals and potential rivals in terms of social mobilization in the face of war, combined with Rome's strengths in these aspects, are the keys to Roman success*».³⁷

Before introducing how Roman legionaries were involved in the process of Romanization, and their relationship with civilians, it seems appropriate to focus on how Romans perceived themselves in the occupied areas. Indeed, such analysis would fulfill the first part of our research, concerning how Romans themselves justified the extension of their dominion. For this purpose, our investigation will need to turn to how what we call "Roman imperialism" in fact appears in primary sources.

"Roman Imperialism" in the primary sources

*«For who is so indifferent or indolent as not to wish to know by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years (220–167) succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government—a thing unique in history?»*³⁸

The main political analysis of Roman expansion was produced by Polybius. His *Histories* are particularly important because he was a contemporary witness to the early stages of Roman expansion in the Greek Orient. However, a few remarks must be made before approaching his analysis. First and foremost, Polybius was member of the Greek elite and he assisted at the Roman assimilation of his homeland. On the other hand he is also well integrated, because he wrote in Greek but for a public that is partially Roman.³⁹

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 311.

³⁸ Polyb., *Hist.*, 1.1.5

³⁹ Being a Greek man and politician who soon came into contact with the Roman society, Polybius was convinced of his ability and responsibility to carry out a unique task. Namely to act as a bridge between the two cultures, explain to all his interlocutors how it was possible that Rome, originally an unknown city states, arrived to dominate almost the whole inhabited world. However, there is also the intention to turn to a Greek public, as is evident from Polyb., *Hist.*, 1.3.7-10: «*Now were we Greeks well acquainted with the two states which disputed the empire of the world, it would not perhaps have been necessary for me to deal at all with their previous history, or to narrate what purpose guided them, and on what sources of strength they relied, in entering upon such a vast undertaking. But as neither the former power nor the earlier history of Rome and Carthage is familiar to most of us Greeks, I thought it necessary to prefix this Book and the next to the actual history, in order that no one after becoming engrossed in the narrative proper may find himself at a loss, and ask by what counsel and trusting to what power and resources the Romans embarked on that enterprise which has made them lords over*

It is difficult to evaluate and balance how these two aspects affected his work. It has also been noted that the concept of fortune (*tyche*) is fundamental in Polybius, and how this then limits his work's reliability. For the author, behind the expansionist successes of the *Urbs*, there is a second 'providential' plan providing a decisive push to Roman purposes.⁴⁰ It is necessary to point out that this perception negatively affects his point of view, especially if we investigate the Roman perception of its imperialist policy. In fact, such position may affect the impartiality of Polybius' narration. Finally, we have one further problem concerning nomenclature, which is generally valid for each ancient historian we investigate. The concept of Imperialism did not, of course, exist in ancient times. It is therefore necessary to investigate the author's analysis by comparing expressions that are semantically different, but similar in the content. According to Musti, Polybius' closest expression to our concept of imperialism is *epibolè ton holon*, which can be translated into 'total dominion project'.⁴¹

Despite such intrinsic problems in Polybius' reading of history, the author's intentions are to our advantage. One of his main goals was to investigate why Rome had decided to follow the way of conquest and universal domination.⁴² Although the author discusses at length the single war events in which the Romans defeated the main antagonists, he misses, in the final analysis, a lucid investigation of this purpose.⁴³ Such analysis was perhaps included in books VII-XV, of which only fragments have survived. Indeed, despite this fundamental lacuna, we can rely on the numerous references in the first six books. Curiously, Polybius considered the domination of Rome as achieved in 167 BC, in the aftermath of the third Macedonian war. The historian did not therefore consider any other surviving people as a threat for Roman hegemony.⁴⁴

Polybius describes Roman foreign policy as decisively and consciously imperialistic, which constantly meant to widen its dominion over neighboring populations. The term

land and sea in the present age; but that from these Books and the preliminary sketch in them, it may be clear to readers that they had quite adequate grounds for conceiving the ambition of a world empire and adequate means for achieving their purpose».

⁴⁰ On the concept of destiny in Polybius see Pedech, 1964, pp. 331-354.

⁴¹ Musti, 1978, pp. 16. «Abbiamo dunque individuate nella espressione polibiana 'epibolè ton holon' l'aspirazione e lo sforzo di conseguire un dominio, anzi un dominio universale, espressione che indica un progetto, una tendenza, un processo storico consapevole, e che perciò mi pare la frase (o la perifrasi) che più presenta una carica semantica vicina a quella del neologismo 'imperialismo'».

⁴² Polyb., *Hist.*, 3.1.4. «As what I have undertaken to treat is a single action and a single spectacle, the how, when, and wherefore all the known parts of the world came under the domination of Rome».

⁴³ It is something considered perfectly normal, since the modern coining of the expression and concept.

⁴⁴ Polyb., *Hist.*, 1.1.5.

domain is used not by chance: the concept of hegemony for Polybius is in fact disconnected from the standard territorial annexation. According to the author, the Romans saw the expansion of their own domain as an extension of their "supremacy" and hegemony, which could be exercised, also and especially, in forms which do not imply the direct control. The author does not provide in-depth explanations on the dynamics of this expansion, probably because *«per lui, come per i Greci in generale, la espansione di uno stato si poneva in primo luogo come un processo naturale, come naturale era per lo stato minacciato il provvedere alla difesa»*.⁴⁵ The lack of a clear explanation for the reasons of Roman expansion can be considered as a supporting point for the Anarchic Interstate System's theory. According to the Greek mind-set, the aggressive foreign policy of a state is coherent with the standardized bellicosity of the Mediterranean scenario.

At this point, it is important to determine to what extent the position of Polybius was shared by Roman authors. The task is not made simple by the fact that the surviving fragments on this topic are rather scarce, and many times less significant, especially when compared with the production left by the Greek historian. The defining trait of Roman sources is that they almost never hold an impartial position, and generally tend to justify the actions of the Senate, especially in foreign policy. The main Roman authors write, of course, for a Roman public, and they often paint the *Urbs* as committed to defending itself from external threats. According to them, war is an option chosen by Rome only when it was strictly necessary. An exploration of the Roman view on the notion of Imperialism must therefore take into account this preliminary consideration.⁴⁶ Precisely for this reason, the selection of texts presented in this thesis has been done by searching extracts concerning civil rather than military contexts. The narration of the latter would have been, in the end, of little use because it would have provided an unsound version of Roman political reasons, and consequently a flawed concept of imperialism.

Appian and Plutarch⁴⁷ are good starting points for investigating the Roman and Latin point of view. Both report the speech made by Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus before the vote of the famous Agrarian Law. Appian writes that the tribune, trying to prove the goodness of his reform, affirmed that Romans were in a great danger. They had in fact subjugated most of the world with the force of weapons, and now they were risking to

⁴⁵ Musti, 1978, pp. 41.

⁴⁶ Brizzi, 2012, pp. 96.

⁴⁷ Plutarch was Greek, but he was born under Roman rules.

lose this due to internal weakness created by the agrarian issue. Tiberius hoped that his reform, aimed at rebuilding the class of small landowners, would have allowed Rome to also conquer the rest of the world.⁴⁸ With regard to the same speech, Plutarch adds further details. According to the author, Tiberius Gracchus stated, with obvious irony, that the Roman legionaries, who were so poor to possess nothing, were sent to die for the Republic, while they were defined as 'masters of the world' by their generals. The obvious reference is to the speech that the consuls pronounced before a battle, with the aim of motivating the soldiers.⁴⁹

A further insight is found in a speech given by Cato the Censor, in the aftermath of the Third Macedonian War. Cato took the defense of the Rhodians, who were guilty, according to many senators, of having maintained an excessively neutral position during the war against Perseus. Indeed, they had assumed the role of mediators, sending ambassadors to find a diplomatic solution for the conflict. Cato justified the Rhodians behavior by recalling the fear that spread among various Greek populations during the war. Many of them were afraid that the Romans would have assumed more and more despotic and authoritarian attitudes, once they defeated Perseus. It is clear that many Greek city states considered Perseus as the last enemy of the *Urbs* and the only ruler still able to fight the expansion of Roman hegemony. Their fear, in this case, was not to be conquered directly, but to 'become the slaves of our imperial rule'.⁵⁰ This expression confirms Polybius' view of the

⁴⁸ App., *B Civ.*, I, 11. «He did not dwell long on this comparison between freemen and slaves, [...] saying that the Romans possessed most of their territory by conquest, and that they had hopes of occupying the rest of the habitable world; but now the question of greatest hazard was, whether they should gain the rest by having plenty of brave men, or whether, through their weakness and mutual jealousy, their enemies should take away what they already possessed».

⁴⁹ Plut., *Vit. Ti. Gracch.*, C. Gracch. IX, 4: «But they accomplished nothing; for Tiberius, striving to support a measure which was honorable and just with an eloquence that would have adorned even a meaner cause, was formidable and invincible, whenever, with the people crowding around the rostra, he took his stand there and pleaded for the poor. "The wild beasts that roam over Italy," he would say, "have every one of them a cave or lair to lurk in; but the men who fight and die for Italy enjoy the common air and light, indeed, but nothing else; houseless and homeless they wander about with their wives and children. And it is with lying lips that their imperators exhort the soldiers in their battles to defend sepulchers and shrines from the enemy; for not a man of them has an hereditary altar, not one of all these many Romans an ancestral tomb, but they fight and die to support others in wealth and luxury, and though they are styled masters of the world, they have not a single clod of earth that is their own».

⁵⁰ Cato, *Frag.*, on the defence of the Rhodians: «I admit that the Rhodians did not wish to see us conquer the king of Persia. But the Rhodians are not alone; many other peoples and many other nations have expressed that same wish. And I am inclined to believe that their attitude in this war was due not to any desire to affront us, but to the very natural fear that if there was no one in the world whom we feared, and we should have our way, they, like many other nations, would soon become the slaves of our imperial rule».

Roman concept of supremacy, which is completely disconnected from the notion of territorial annexation.

In the analysis of the Roman conception of imperialism, we find a last testimony of great significance. Cicero left a fragment of the funeral eulogy that Quintus Fabius Maximus pronounced on the occasion of the death of his uncle Scipio Aemilianus in 129 BC. According to Cicero, he thanked the Gods for having brought up such a man in Rome: It was natural that a man like him was a citizen of the city ruling over the world.⁵¹ This affirmation is made pompous by the context. The funeral eulogy is an occasion where the qualities of the deceased are praised and perhaps exaggerated. However, it remains significant because it outlines the profound respect of Roman politics for figures who played leading roles in the expansion of the *Urbs*.⁵² In the case of Scipio Aemilianus, he had successfully completed the siege of Carthage (146 BC) and the destruction of Numantia, in the contest of the Celtiberian War (133 BC).

The evidence presented here leads us to an important preliminary conclusion. Even if different in style and geographic area, and also chronologically distant, ancient historians agree on one point. The notion of imperialism was well rooted in the Roman mindset, albeit in different forms. The semantic choices of the authors ('rulers of the world') and their complacency in evaluating Rome's achievement pointed out a mind-set addressed to expansion. We could define it as an active imperialism, almost an intrinsic concept of 'mission' finalized to subjugate the world. Such a mission, which, according to Polybius, assumes the form of predestination and leads to a precise design that we could call ecumenical. It has as its means the legions of Rome, but it expresses itself in the extension of Roman hegemony on other peoples, rather than as a mere territorial annexation. The fragment of Appian also provides further insights. Tiberius, during his speech, fears that *«their enemies should take away what they already possessed»*. This extract suggests that the Romans were fully aware that their ecumenical design was not accepted by neighboring peoples; it was the result of an imposition from top to bottom, possibly thanks to the Roman superiority in the art of war.

⁵¹ Cic., *Mur.*, 75. «*On the day of Africanus' funeral Maximus pronounced the funeral eulogy and gave thanks to the immortal gods that Africanus had been born in Rome and not elsewhere; for the seat of the world's government had of necessity been where he was*».

⁵² This did not happen, for example, in Carthage, where the victorious generals were often looked at with suspicion. The Punic senate was in fact afraid that they would have exploited their popularity with the aim of establishing an authoritarian regime.

Before proceeding with an explanation on the bond linking Roman Imperialism and Romanization Process, it is good to briefly explore the stages of the Roman expansion. The chronological phases of this path are well known, and will be mentioned only in general terms.

The definition of Romanization and its bond with Roman Imperialism

*«The two subjects are even more closely linked when imperialism is believed to have had a mission that went beyond the personal aspirations of Roman politicians and emperors pursuing agendas designed to strengthen their position within Roman society [...] the objective of imperialism, and the Romanization which followed it, has been variously seen as a combination of benevolent civilizing, economic advantage, and the cause of good government».*⁵³

Understanding the reasons for Roman activity in the provinces is perhaps more important than understanding the reasons for the expansion itself. In fact, history recorded several empires which succeeded in expanding their territories but then failed in consolidating them.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Rome has been able to create a vast and lasting domain, especially thanks to characteristics and peculiarities that other powers did not have.⁵⁵ Among these, it is important to stress the ability to integrate new populations, so that they felt "rightly" bounded to the *Urbs*. For this reason, the term Romanization is standardly used to define the process of cultural assimilation implemented by Rome after a new conquest. It therefore includes all the actions taken by the *Urbs* to bring a new province closer to Roman customs and traditions. Such acts concerned many aspects of the local society, such as politics, economy, laws and the language. The birth of the term goes back to Theodor Mommsen, more specifically to his book *The Provinces of the Roman Empire* (1885).⁵⁶

It is necessary to point out that some historians have begun to reject the classic meaning of 'Romanization' as a term implying a Romano-centric position. For example Mattingly, who accepts the use of the term only when it does not imply «a unilateral

⁵³ Freeman, in 'Mattingly, 1997, pp. 27';

⁵⁴ The most known example is undoubtedly represented by the Macedonian Empire.

⁵⁵ As pointed out by Eckstein's speculation.

⁵⁶ Morley, 2010, pp. 108.

transfer of culture, whereas it is clear that not only was culture exchange bilateral, it was also multi-directional». ⁵⁷ This is undoubtedly a correct observation: the forced relationship of two different peoples leads to mutual cultural influences. The history of Rome provides several examples of this, such as the rite of *evocatio*,⁵⁸ or the Hellenistic influences criticized by Cato the censor in the 2nd century BC. The effects of a more complex interaction are evident even within the same army; This finds a good example in a trend reported by several ancient historians, concerning the poor quality of the Oriental troops, corrupted by local customs.⁵⁹ No less important is the phenomenon of the barbarization of the late Roman army.⁶⁰

This preamble is especially valid when it comes to concern the local micro-society, namely everything regarding relations between, for instance, occupying forces and the local population.⁶¹ The triumph of Roman cultural influences must not be seen as inevitable, but as the result of a synergy between two heterogeneous forces within provincial territories. The same story of Roman expansion teaches us that different subjugated people responded differently also to the imposition of different cultural models.⁶² Rome, for its part, did not recur to standard patterns in order to foster integration, but used different instruments from time to time relying on its famous pragmatism. However, *«the effect of Roman rule in most regions was to draw the provincials into a common culture and way of life, raising them to a higher standard of living and a more*

⁵⁷ Mattingly, 1997, pp. 9.

⁵⁸ The rite of *evocatio* was followed by the erection in Rome of a temple dedicated to God protecting the enemy city. This indirectly favored the spread of foreign cults within the *Urbs*.

⁵⁹ On the unreliability of Oriental legions, especially Syrian, exists a vast historiographical production. Eastern soldiers are accused, throughout the imperial period, of being unruly, indolent, and refractory in wearing the complete legionary panoply. This accusation was based on a widespread prejudice in Rome, which considered the Eastern civilizations unable to train infantries qualitatively efficient. See, for instance: Tac., *Ann.*, XIII, 35; Fronto, *Ep.*, (*Preamble of History*), XII; Fronto, *ad Verum Imp.* 2.1.19; SHA., *Avid. Cass.*, V, 5-7.

⁶⁰ Brizzi, 2002, pp. 210.

⁶¹ This does not mean that such relations could not give way to large-scale social and political processes. There is no doubt that, with regard to the most institutional sectors, there was a second level of Romanization, based on a model, which the winners imposed upon the defeated. The imposition of garrisons, the language, municipia, and of institutions modeled on the example of Rome, created a forced and therefore unidirectional cultural flow. See Revell, 2009, pp. 11. *«The people of the empire are not victims of the forces of Romanization, but are Roman insofar as they act in a way which can be interpreted as reproducing Roman social systems, a Roman identity, and ultimately, Roman power»*.

⁶² Thinking to the early stage of Roman expansion, we can compare Thyrrenians and Samnites. The former had been easily absorbed since the V century BC; the latter instead rejected any form of integration for more than two centuries, until their last complete annihilation, in the aftermath of the Battle of the Colline Gate (82 BC).

*refined sensibility and allowing them to participate fully in the political and social life of the Empire».*⁶³

The final step was always the same, and it consisted of the acquisition of Roman citizenship, the integration instrument par excellence. The achievement of citizenship guaranteed several advantages; Among the most important of which was the access to magistratures and public offices, the right to participate to assemblies in Rome, numerous fiscal advantages and the possibility of being judged as a private subject (*ius civile*). It is not a coincidence that the extension of Roman citizenship, whether full or partial, was always employed to assimilate local elites in the aftermath of the conquest.⁶⁴ Furthermore, the acquisition of Roman citizenship remained fundamental also among lower classes because it led to different processes: the enrollment of the *socii* in the auxiliary forces or in the navy, for instance, would guarantee them the reward of citizenship once they were discharged (*honesta missio*).⁶⁵ This right was also extended to soldiers' family. This aspect led them to represent an indirect boost to cultural integration, in case they regularized their 'marriage' after discharged.

With these premises we can turn now to a deeper investigation of the selected evidence. As mentioned in the introduction, these have been divided into family and economic relations. The division into these macro categories is aimed to simplify the explanation of concepts. Our aim will be to underline arguments supporting or opposing soldiers' integration in the province. Family relationships will be discussed first.

⁶³ Morley, 2010, pp. 109.

⁶⁴ Mattingly, 2011, pp. 18. This extension remains valid for the local elite obviously. The less fortunate could get citizenship, but in other ways. «*In any case, the empire was not a level playing field; some provincial elites were noticeably more advantaged than others in the competition for posts and stipends. Behind the rhetoric of universal benefits there was fierce infighting within and between provincial elites to secure advantage for themselves and their communities. The elite class was always small—for every winner in the provinces there were a hundred other people whose exploitation supported the social position of the elite*».

⁶⁵ We have several diplomas from the imperial age attesting to this practice (see next chapter 'Family relationships').

II. The unique case of Egypt



(Map of Roman Egypt – Addition of cities by myself)

In the previous chapter we have given a general view of why the concept of Roman imperialism is relevant in the development our study. In this chapter we will go deeper. Specifically, we will briefly address the reasons why the province of Egypt will be able to contribute in answering our research question. In fact, Egypt offers a wide variety of classical sources, including papyrological, which makes the area special. Egypt was made a Roman province in 30 BC, perfectly covering the first two centuries AD, the chronological period here examined. Finally, Egypt is an excellent test ground for the process of Roman integration, since the Egyptians had a millennia-old history, preceding the birth of Rome, with their own traditions and customs often fundamentally different from those of the *Urbs*.⁶⁶

Some preliminary observations are necessary before analyzing the military organization of the Egyptian province. The Roman army in the early imperial age was composed of legions, mostly made up of Roman citizens enrolled on a voluntary basis; from auxiliary troops, namely infantry and cavalry forces mostly recruited from non-citizens; and from the navy whose soldiers were enlisted from among the *peregrini*. In the case of the auxiliary forces and navy, the custom was to confer the Roman citizenship to them after the soldiers' discharge, extended as well to their concubines and to the illegitimate children (if present). This was realized by means of imperial diplomas. It is evident that citizenship still constituted an important distinction during this period, due to the advantages that such legal status provided (see below). It therefore follows that the differences between legionaries, auxiliaries and naval personnel will be constantly taken into account during the investigation of the relations between the forces of Rome and the local population.

⁶⁶ However, with the Macedonian conquest perpetuated by Alexander the Great, and the division of the territories between the diadoches, Egypt was obtained by Ptolemy. He was crowned Pharaoh establishing his own dynasty. It began in 305 BC and survived until the Roman conquest; in such period he began a first large process of Hellenization. Undoubtedly this politic contributed indirectly to a better integration process between the two cultures. About the topic, together with J. G. Milne, 1898; which still is a fundamental publication despite its age, see: Geraci, 1983; Bowman, 1986; Richard Alston, 1995; and Riggs, 2012.

The sources for the Province of Egypt

A brief analysis of the available sources on *provincia Aegyptus* is, at this point, necessary. Literary evidence is of minor importance in the analysis of relations between legionaries and the local population. Generally, literary sources offer vague and rarely relevant insights.⁶⁷ In the case of family relations, no Roman or Greek historian has ever dealt with the issue of marriage within the army in detail.⁶⁸ Economic relations should also be investigated using other types of sources, especially in the papyrological and epigraphical field. It is difficult to find in the ancient literature any specific reference to supplies or armaments. Speaking in general, ancient historians were not military technicians, and they had no interest in writing about the life of individual *milites*, as we will see in this chapter, with Strabo. When they produced military texts, such as Vegetius' *Epitoma rei militaris*, they rarely addressed the life of soldiers, their stories, and relations with local populations.⁶⁹ However, this does not mean that this study will renounce to the use of literary evidence. More simply, other types of sources, which are more incisive, will complement it when it is necessary to investigate the topic more specifically and meticulously (see below).

Epigraphic data and inscriptions do have some relevance. Even in a province where Greek was widespread, especially as everyday language, Latin remained the reference language in the military field.⁷⁰ This is evident in diplomas and documents from the *castra*.⁷¹ Outside the military sphere, Latin was only rarely used: private correspondence, petitions, and the vast majority of the legal documents were written in Greek.⁷² In particular, military diplomas are relevant for the aim of this study. They usually appear as bronze tablets, written with the aim of documenting that Roman citizenship was conferred to a member of the auxiliary forces at the time of his discharge. These lists have

⁶⁷ For instance, Tac., *Ann.*, XIV, 27; which refers to the misconduct of soldiers to marry and have children; or Tac., *Hist.*, II, 80; Which justifies generic relations between soldiers and provincials, also because of the length of military service.

⁶⁸ Phang, 2001, pp. 16.

⁶⁹ This does not have to surprise. The classics of ancient historiography had different goals, and aimed at a public who did not care about the stories of soldiers of Rome.

⁷⁰ Phang, 2001, pp. 22.

⁷¹ Funerary inscriptions were mainly written in Greek. See Veïsse, Wackenier, 2014, pp. 190.

⁷² On the main Latin documents in Egypt see Meyer, 2004, pp. 175.

allowed us to reconstruct with precision the deployment of non-legionary Roman forces in the first two centuries AD.⁷³

Even archaeological data have often been crucial, especially in the analysis of economic relations. They can also be important for the potential and precious engravings that we can detect on the main elements of the legionary panoply. This trend is confirmed by Vegetius, who stated that «*the name of each soldier was also written on his shield, together with the number of the cohort and century to which he belonged*». ⁷⁴ The study of the *castra* remains, together with the analysis of its relative *canabae*, useful in investigating the relationship between soldiers and local women. In this respect, the most important archaeological site in Egypt is undoubtedly Nikopolis, which was also the longest occupied, in chronological terms, by Roman forces.⁷⁵

Mons Claudianus also deserves to be mentioned. It was a Roman quarry located in the eastern Egyptian desert, where porphyry was extracted (see map below). The quarry had been operative from the I century BC to the half of the III century. The interesting aspect of Mons Claudianus concerns the sources which have been found there. The area was inhabited by workers, soldiers and their families: in the site numerous texts, written on fragmentary ceramic material have been uncovered (*ostraca*).⁷⁶

Finally, a special mention is due to papyri. They are a unique feature of the Egyptian area and of the close provinces of Syria and Arabia Petraea. They were obtained from the *Cyperus papyrus* leaves, a very common aquatic plant in the Nile area. The process of refining started from the entire plant: firstly, the pith was extracted by the stem and cut into slices. A single sheet was of 'paper' was then created by overlapping and pressing two or more layers and subsequently drying them. Papyri were a true revolution in writing, as it was easily foldable, easily transportable and light coloured: all useful features for writing. Papyri are particularly useful for historical research, since the arid local conditions have preserved a considerable number of them.⁷⁷

⁷³ Cfr. note 93 in this chapter.

⁷⁴ Veg. *Mil.*, II, 18. Vegetius perhaps refers to an earlier period than the one analysed here. However, it remains an important passage, especially for the many archaeological findings attesting how soldiers personalized their weapons. Furthermore, this has not been noticed in the shield-bosses only, but also in the remaining elements of the legionary panoply.

⁷⁵ Alston, 1995, pp. 192.

⁷⁶ On Mons Claudianus see: Bingen, (4 Vol.), 1992-2009.

⁷⁷ On the history of the papyrus see the brilliant work of Gaudet, 2015.

A large amount of information is recorded on papyri. For what concerns family relations, we have numerous cases of legal documents and private letters. Among the most common topics are paternity certificates on illegitimate children, and certificates of inheritance.⁷⁸ Many of them represent desperate attempts by soldiers to obtain legal recognition, in absence of a juridical recognition, to legitimise their family. In fact, both these types of document shared the common problem: a couple not validated by a legal marriage did not have the right to claim the heir's status in case of death of the other partner. The same issue was encountered by illegitimate children. This problem affected the Roman legionary, unable to marry because of the Augustan ban, and by the auxiliary (or the navy) soldier who would not have possessed Roman citizenship until the moment of his discharge (*honesta missio*).⁷⁹

In the analysis of economic and juridical relations, papyri are equally useful. In some cases, they show how merchants and artisans were supplying the military camp. It seems also clear that some legionaries exploited their status to brutalize local population with the issue of abuses. The most common example is represented by the practice of illegal requisitions. According to the papyrological evidence, some soldiers stationed in the province of Egypt were accused of sequestering goods in a too illicit way (see below).⁸⁰

The main stages of Egypt under Roman rule and the military organization

After a brief analysis of the available sources, the genesis of the Egyptian province needs to be discussed. Although it entered the Roman orbit already during the 2nd century BC, Egypt only became a province in 30 BC.⁸¹ The conquest took place after the death of

⁷⁸ See 'The practice of concubinage', pp. 38.

⁷⁹ Phang, 2001, pp. 34.

⁸⁰ Adams, 2007, pp. 139. This was a common problem in many Roman provinces. In the case of Egypt there is extensive production of documentation on the question of arbitrary requisitions, largely surviving on papyrological material. The problem lasted more than a century, and was finally overcome in the middle of the 2nd century AD with the edict of Marcus Petronius Mamertinus. The topic will be dealt more in depth in the next chapter.

⁸¹ There are at least two episodes that outline a relationship of subordination before the Roman conquest of Egypt. The first concerns the reign of Ptolemy XII, forced to pay 6,000 talents to Caesar and Pompey to be recognized as legitimate pharaoh of Egypt (59 BC - *Lex Julia de rege Alexandrino*). The same king was then exiled by his own subjects. He had to ask again help from triumvirs to regain the throne. Aulus Gabinius, proconsul of Syria, renounced to his Parthian campaign because of this unexpected event (55 BC).

Cleopatra, in the years following the political tensions between Octavian and Marc Antony which culminated in the Battle of Actium. The triumph of the future first “emperor” sanctioned the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty, and of Egypt as an independent state.

*«I added Egypt to the empire of the Roman people'. With these words the emperor Augustus (as Octavian was to be known from 27 DC onwards) summarized the subjection of Egypt to Rome in the great inscription which records his achievements».*⁸²

Of particular interest is the status that Egypt received from Augustus. The newborn province represented a unique juridical case in the history of Rome. It was considered the exclusive property of the Emperor and the senator class members could not enter it without his permission. The province was administered by a *praefectus* of equestrian rank chosen by the emperor directly, to whom a military *imperium* was attributed. When, in 27 BC, Augustus received the ten-year command over troops stationed in several key provinces, Egypt was also included.⁸³ This measure violated, *de facto*, the principle according to which provincial governors controlled troops. However, there were some precedents in the period of civil wars, especially in regard to the campaigns of Caesar, Pompey and Crassus. This organizational anomaly of Egypt was motivated by relevant reasons. First of all, Egypt was fundamental for supplying Rome with grain, and therefore vital for the very existence of the empire. Secondly, the local traditions required some extra caution in the province's administrative organization and a closer form of control through the emperor.⁸⁴

A brief introduction to the military organization in Roman Egypt is now necessary in order to familiarize us with key-places where Roman soldiers were allocated. Organizing the defenses of the newborn province followed decisions strictly bound to the local geography and morphology. Even the distribution of the army was arranged in accordance with the peculiarities of this area. The province consisted of the Nile Valley, surrounded by fertile soils suitable for human settlements. The valley was limited by

⁸² Bowman, 1986, pp. 37.

⁸³ These were the so called "imperial" provinces, that had been formerly returned, at least in theory, to the Roman people and Senate. They were often located on the Roman limes: controlling them meant controlling the army.

⁸⁴ Pani, Todisco, 2008, pp. 242.

virtually uninhabitable desert areas on both sides. At the time of its establishment, the province was bordered by the province of Cyrenaica to the west, and by the Sinai Peninsula to the east. The area furthest to the east and south (the western part of Arabian Peninsula) was conquered in 106 AD and called Arabia Petraea. To the north the province faced the Mediterranean Sea, while to the south it was bordered with the Ethiopian kingdom, at least according to Josephus.⁸⁵

Following Egyptian longitudinal geography, Augustus created (often exploiting already existent Ptolemaic fortifications) some permanent *castra*. The most important were located near Alexandria, the Roman administrative center in Egypt. The first one near the city, and the second in Nikopolis, a few miles northeast. Descending to the south we find Babylon, a *castrum* placed on the Nile, in the southern area of the delta. The last relevant fortification, and the southernmost, was Thebae, located on the east bank of the Nile, 800km south of the Mediterranean Sea. One important aspect was that although they all possessed the status of a legionary fortress, only Nikopolis and, for a few years, Babylon regularly hosted Roman legions (see below). The province was then dotted with minor fortifications, but these did not host legions on a regular basis.⁸⁶

For what concerns the Roman legions allocated by Augustus in the aftermath of the conquest, it is now accepted that they were three: the *Legio XXII Deiotariana* and the *Legio III Cyrenaica*,⁸⁷ plus a third whose name does not survive in any existing source.⁸⁸ *Legio XXII Deiotariana* was located in the fortress of Nikopolis until 132 AD, the year in which the force was disbanded.⁸⁹ *Legio III Cyrenaica* was stationed initially in Babylon, but it was soon also moved to Nikopolis, maybe already during the reign of Tiberius.⁹⁰ During the

⁸⁵ Joseph., *BJ*, IV, 607-610 «*For Egypt is at once difficult of access by land and on its sea-board destitute of harbors. It is protected on the west by the arid deserts of Libya, on the south by the frontier separating it from Ethiopia — Syene and the unnavigable cataracts of the Nile —, on the east by the Red Sea, which penetrates as far north as Coptus; while its northern barriers are the land towards Syria and the so-called Egyptian sea, totally devoid of havens. Thus is Egypt walled off on every side.*».

⁸⁶ On the location of Roman *castra* in Egypt see: Cascarino, 2008 (Vol. II), pp. 311-313.

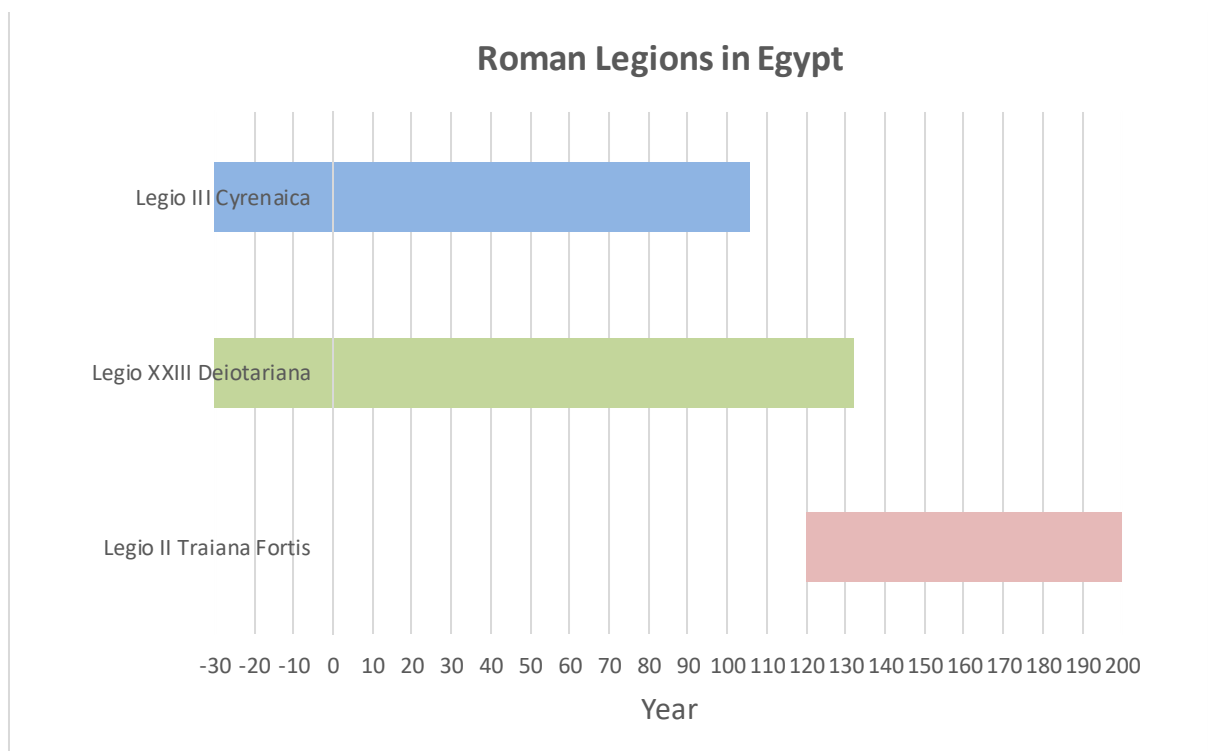
⁸⁷ On the origins of the two legions see: Sanders, 1941 (Vol. 62 nr. 1), pp. 84-87.

⁸⁸ Lesquier, 1918, pp. 27; Alston, 1995, pp. 23; Cascarino, 2008 (Vol. II) pp. 309-310. The third legion is attested in Strabo, *Geog.*, XVII, 797. «*There are also three legions of soldiers, one of which is stationed in the city and the others in the country.*». In 23 AD it was already disappeared from the Egyptian scenario (Tac., *Ann.*, IV, 5).

⁸⁹ Cascarino, 2008 (Vol. II) pp. 310. However, according to Dando-Collins, 2010, pp. 187: «*It is last attested to in Egypt in AD 99. After that, the legion disappeared, from Egypt and from the historical record, and it is likely that this was the legion known to have been wiped out by the Parthians in Armenia in AD 161. It was never reformed.*».

⁹⁰ Dando-Collins, 2010, pp. 120-121; Cascarino, 2008 (Vol. II) pp. 310. It was maybe annihilated during the Bar Kokhba revolt.

Trajanic and Hadrianic period it was definitely relocated to Bosra, in the newborn province of Arabia.⁹¹ The foundation of this new province, in fact, moved the Roman *limes* many miles to the east. As a result of this, an immediate drop in Egypt's military importance followed, which led the area to host a smaller number of forces. In 120 AD *Legio II Traiana Fortis* was deployed to Egypt, and stationed at the fortress of Nikopolis, remaining the only legion that was permanently present in the province from the second half of the 2nd century.⁹²



Switching to auxiliary troops, they were divided into cohorts and cavalry wings. Fortunately, we have four different diplomas that allow us to reconstruct how they were allocated in Egypt from Augustus to Septimius Severus and beyond.⁹³ For a simpler

⁹¹ Alston, 1995, pp. 25. Dando Collins, 2010, pp. 121.

⁹² Cascarino, 2008 (Vol. II) pp. 309. Dando-Collins, 2010, pp. 116.

⁹³ Alston, 1995, pp. 25. The diplomas are: CIL XVI 29 (83 AD), RMD 9 (105 AD), CIL XVI 184 (156–61 AD) and Römer, 1990 (Vol. 82), pp. 137-153 (179 AD).

reading of this data, it has been decided to use Alston's table, which rearranges the distribution of auxiliary formations for this period:⁹⁴

Table 2.2 Attestations of auxiliary units by period

<i>Unit</i>	<i>1–82</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>84– 104</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>106– 49</i>	<i>150– 78</i>	<i>179</i>	<i>180– 220</i>	<i>Post- 220</i>
<i>Alae</i>									
Apriana	*	*	?	*	*	*	*	*	*
Augusta	*	*	*	*					
Commagenorum	*	*				*			
veterana Gallica					*	*	*	*	*
Heracliana								*	*
Thracum Mauretana						*	*	*	*
Vocontiorum	*			*	*	*	*		
Xoitana	*								
Paullini	*								
Totals	6	3	1–2	3	3	5	4	4	4
<i>Cohorts</i>									
Ulpia Afrorum eq.					*	*			
I Apamenor					*	*	*	?	*
I Aug. Pr.				*	*	*	*	*	*
Lusitanorum eq.									
I Flavia Cilicia eq.	?	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
I Hispanorum eq.		*	*	*					
II Ituraeorum eq.	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
III Ituraeorum		*	*	*	?	*	*	?	*
I Pannoniorum		*	?	*	?	*	*	?	*
scutata civium				*				*	
Romanorum									
I Thebaeorum eq.		*	*	*	*				
II Thebaeorum		*	*	*	*	*	?		
I Thracum eq.					*				
II Thracum eq.			*	*	*	*	*	?	*
Nigri	*								
Facundi	*								
Flori	?								
Aelii Habeti	*								
Totals	4–6	7	7–8	10	9–11	9	7–8	4–8	7
<i>Numeri</i>									
Cataphracti									*
Hadrianorum								*	*
Palmyrorum									
Sagittarorum									

*=Positive attestation of presence.

?=Probably in Egypt.

All dates are AD.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26 (Tab 2.2).

An interesting aspect underlined by the table is the numerical procession of these formations. The 4-6 units of the Augustan period⁹⁵ were gradually increased reaching a peak of 9-11 in the first half of the 2nd century AD. After this period, their number decreased again until the reign of Septimus Severus. Probably not by accident the highest auxiliary allocation corresponds with Trajan's Parthian campaign which involved 80,000 men, including those of the two Egyptian legions (*III Cyrenaica* and *XXII Deiotariana*)⁹⁶. This increase may have responded to the need to cover his back during a demanding campaign in terms of men and resources.

The Roman navy completes the picture outlined here. The provincial navy remains the most obscure component among all the units constituting the Roman army. This is due to a marked shortage of sources. In 1941 the total number of relevant sources concerning Roman navy was estimated between fifteen and twenty, and since then it has grown only slightly.⁹⁷ Despite this, in Egypt one of the most important provincial fleets, the *Classis Alexandrina*, was deployed. It had been set up in the Augustan period (although the first mention belongs to the principality of Nero), coherently with the administrative and military revolution carried out by the first emperor.⁹⁸ The fleet was garrisoned in the port of Alexandria where it had two general functions. It was tasked with patrolling the coasts of the south-eastern Mediterranean and to protect the commercial routes connecting the province of Egypt with the western part of Roman dominions. Occasionally, the fleet was also involved in operations to control the traffic on the Nile River. However, this function was usually the main task of another, less important and more local fleet, called *Potamophylacia*. It was mainly formed of boats previously used by the Ptolemaic dynasty. *Potamophylacia's* sailors were stationed in many different bases along the Nile and were also involved in troop and supply transport.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ It is important to notice that according to Strabo, *Geog.*, XVII, 797 the cohorts were nine, and they were supported by three cavalry wings. This would suggest a total of twelve units. This is one of those cases in which primary sources do not collide with the archeologic evidence. Generally speaking, when the sources give different interpretations concerning the Roman military sphere, the archaeological data tend to be more reliable. This is because the great majority of Republican and Imperial historians were not soldiers or officers, and often used to deal with the subject in a not technical way. In this case, however, it should be noted that Strabo had personally visited Egypt in 25-24 BC, and that this makes his work particularly valuable.

⁹⁶ Brizzi, 2008, pp. 166.

⁹⁷ Starr, 1941, pp. 106. The total amount includes literary, papyrological and epigraphic data. The lack of evidence concerning Roman navy led to a scarce number of publications on the topic. For this topic, Starr, 1941 and Pitassi, 2012 have been chosen.

⁹⁸ Starr, 1941, pp. 109; Pitassi, 2012, 'Provincial fleet'.

⁹⁹ Pitassi, 2012, 'Provincial fleet'.

The eastern Egyptian coast along the Red Sea never hosted permanent fleets, probably because of the local morphology. The coast is in fact made up of a thin strip of land with the inhospitable Eastern Desert mountain range in its back. These mountains have peaks reaching over two thousand meters of height. Furthermore, in the same mountain range was located the aforementioned site of Mons Claudianus. However, we know at least one occasion in which the Romans exploited the navigability of the Red Sea. A fleet was involved in an expedition to explore southern Egypt of 26-24 BC. According to Strabo, it was organized using boats and sailors belonging to the *Classis Alexandrina*.¹⁰⁰ Still, the ports on the Red Sea remained less important, and had all commercial and not military purposes. Among the most active, were Berenike, Philoteras, and Myos Hormos (Abu Sha'r).¹⁰¹

The military organization outlined here generated very positive results. In fact, Roman rule over Egypt remained unchallenged for more than a century. However, a few troubled events requiring the army intervention deserve a mention. The first one chronologically concerns the spread of the Kitos war. As a consequence of the events following the First Jewish-Roman War, Alexandria became the center of Jewish religion and culture in Egypt. Not surprisingly, when the new revolt started, Egypt was one of its epicenters. The insurrection broke out during Trajan's Parthian campaign with great repercussions on most areas in North Africa.¹⁰² The first outbreaks appeared in Cyrenaica in 115 AD and soon the revolt spread to Egypt, Cyprus and Mesopotamia. This scenario was unexpected, and it surprised the Roman authorities; It is well described in Eusebius' words, who presented the revolt as incredibly cruel, especially against the Greek communities living in such areas.¹⁰³ When the revolt was subdued in 117 AD, the death toll was dramatic. Not

¹⁰⁰ Strabo, *Geog.*, XVI, 4, 23. «Now this was the first mistake of Gallus, to build long boats, since there was no naval war at hand, or even to be expected; for the Arabians are not very good warriors even on land, rather being hucksters and merchants, to say nothing of fighting at sea. But Gallus built not less than eighty boats, biremes and triremes and light boats, at Cleopatris, which is near the old canal which extends from the Nile».

¹⁰¹ Alston, 1995, pp. 193.

¹⁰² On this topic see: Horbury, 2014.

¹⁰³ Euseb., *Hist. eccl.*, IV, II. «In the course of the eighteenth year of the reign of the Emperor a rebellion of the Jews again broke out and destroyed a great multitude of them. For both in Alexandria and in the rest of Egypt and especially in Cyrene, as though they had been seized by some terrible spirit of rebellion, they rushed into sedition against their Greek fellow citizens, and increasing the scope of the rebellion in the following year started a great war while Lupus was governor of all Egypt. In the first engagement they happened to overcome the Greeks, who fled to Alexandria and captured and killed the Jews in the city, but though thus losing the help of the townsmen, the Jews of Cyrene continued to plunder the country of Egypt and to ravage the districts in it under their leader Lucuas. The Emperor sent against them Marcius Turbo with land and sea forces including cavalry. He

surprisingly, the most deeply affected communities were the Greek and the Jewish ones. For the latter, the number of killed was boosted by their fanaticism which had encouraged several extremist pockets of resistance, especially in the countryside. Although we do not have adequate estimates of the number of people killed, the effects on Roman Egypt continued to be felt for decades. From an Alexandrian papyrus we know, for instance, that the annual celebration of the victory over the Jews continued to be carried out until the end of the 2nd century AD and perhaps longer.¹⁰⁴ It, above all, meant the end of Jewish life in Egypt up until the Byzantine/Early Arab period.

A new, differently connoted revolt broke out in 172 AD, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. It begun formally because of the very heavy taxation hitting the stockmen (*boukoloi*) allocated in the area of Alexandria: for this reason, the conflict is usually defined as Bucolic War. The leader of the riot was Isidorus, an Egyptian native priest. The course of events is not easy to analyze. In fact, it survives in the fragments of book LXXII in Dio Cassius' Histories, which features many legendary and hardly reliable elements. According to the historian, insurgents were able to surprise and overcome the local Roman forces. They were close to the conquest of Alexandria when Avidius Cassius, governor of Syria, came to Egypt in 173 AD. He subdued the rebellion by exploiting the internal divisions of the rebels, rather than facing them directly.¹⁰⁵

The last significant event for the centuries covered by this study is the story of Pescennius Niger, a usurper emperor proclaimed in 193 AD. He tried to exploit the power vacuum caused by the death of Pertinax, who was assassinated by his own troops. Formerly *legatus* of Syria, he immediately received the support of several eastern provinces, including Egypt. Septimius Severus, however, opposed Pescennius Niger. Of African origins, Septimius proclaimed himself emperor in the same year, counting on the

waged war vigorously against them in many battles for a considerable time and killed many thousands of Jews, not only those of Cyrene but also those of Egypt who had rallied to Lucuas, their king. The Emperor suspected that the Jews in Mesopotamia would also attack the inhabitants and ordered Lusius Quietus to clean them out of the province. He organized a force and murdered a great multitude of the Jews there, and for this reform was appointed governor of Judaea by the Emperor. The Greek authors who chronicle the same period have related this narrative in these very words».

¹⁰⁴ P.Oxy. IV, 705: «[The Oxyrhynchites] also possess the goodwill, faithfulness, and friend-ship to the Romans that they exhibited in the war against the Jews, giving aid then and even now celebrating the day of victory as a festival every year». Translation from Nicklas, Tobias, Kraus, Thomas J., 2006, pp. 30.

¹⁰⁵ Cass. Dio, LXXII, 4. «Next, having conquered the Romans in Egypt in a pitched battle, they came near capturing Alexandria, too, and would have succeeded, had not Cassius been sent against them from Syria. He contrived to destroy their mutual accord and to separate them from one another (for because of their desperation as well as of their numbers he had not ventured to attack them while they were united), and thus, when they fell to quarrelling, he subdued them».

support of all the troops allocated in the areas of Rhine and Danube. He reached Rome before his rival, and there he worked to normalize the unstable situation. He decreed the apotheosis for Pertinax, took care of the city's supply and reorganized the local garrison. He then left for the eastern part of the empire where he won a long series of battles against Niger, until the last and decisive in Issus, Cilicia. The defeated usurper was assassinated while trying to escape to the Parthian reign.¹⁰⁶

Septimius Severus did not punish the Eastern provinces for supporting his opponent, and he even distributed political and fiscal privileges to some of the communities in the Roman Levant. The purpose was clearly to strengthen the imperial domains after the civil war. In the case of Egypt, he decided to restore some privileges owned by the citizens of Alexandria, previously abolished by Augustus. In particular, he restored to all the main Egypt cities the full status of urban center, which allowed the city to have a senate and magistrates on the model of the other Greek and Roman cities. As a result of this, the province was affected by a profound administrative reform that brought Alexandria and the other poleis to have «*a certain number of magisterial positions and these were to be rotated between members of the various tribes on an annual or part-annual basis*».¹⁰⁷ He also gave local residents the right to access the Senate of Rome. This privilege was accompanied by the assignment of the liturgies, which made a whole social class responsible for many public services, including tax collection; It was a very involving obligation to the point that, in times of crisis, the local notables began to invent any possible expedient in order to avoid it.¹⁰⁸

Some preliminary conclusions are now required. The integration process of the Egyptian province had a long history. The few aforementioned bellicose episodes do not undermine the province's political trend to remain, for the most part, loyal to Roman authorities.¹⁰⁹ Aside from the Kitois war, which had a religious bases and involved most of the south-eastern Mediterranean area, there were no culturally motivated revolts in the

¹⁰⁶ Brizzi, 2012, pp. 308-309.

¹⁰⁷ Alston, 2002, pp. 144.

¹⁰⁸ Brizzi, 2012, pp. 308.

¹⁰⁹ Especially if compared to some other territories acquired by Romans around the same period. Many Germanic and Celtic people revolted starting from the 1st century. Among the most famous: the revolt of Arminius leading to the Defeat of Teutoburg Forest (9 AD); The revolt of Boudica, queen of Celtic Iceni (60-61 AD); and the Batavian rebellion in Germania Inferior (60-70 AD). In this sense the Egyptian and Greek communities never attempt to gain the political independence by mean of large scale rebellions in the first two centuries AD.

province. In fact, the Bucolic War broke out for economic reasons, whereas the support to Niger had strong political connotations. The aforementioned Hellenization process, initiated by the Ptolemaic dynasty, certainly contributed to the better assimilation of the Roman rule in Egypt. This aspect is crucial in with regard to our research question. This state of affairs, alongside the large amount of papyrological evidence, which provided documents and sources for studying the relation between Roman soldier and the local population, led the province of Egypt to be a fitting case study for this investigation.

It is now necessary to proceed to a deeper analysis of the available sources. In the following chapter we will investigate more in detail the concepts of Roman Imperialism and Romanization, and how Romans perceived themselves in relation to their extraordinary expansion.

III. Family relationships

“Women” and the ban on marriage

By “family relationships” we mean the bonds that Roman soldiers established with local women.¹¹⁰ This was a considerable and very important portion of the relationship between Roman soldiers and Egyptian citizens. War and women were well separated in ancient world; it was men who fitted into the military field.¹¹¹ The expression of virility that came with the Man/warrior dualism can be traced well back to the Sumerian epic poem of Gilgamesh, or to Homer and the *Odyssey*. Such was the importance of this invention of the viral, courageous soldier that *«at least since the ancient Egyptians, cowardice in battle by warriors or their enemies has earned them epithets of female genitalia to indicate that they are ‘weak men’»*.¹¹² It was these beliefs that made the participation of women in war inconceivable to the ancients. Only the Amazons, the female warriors in Latin and Greek mythology, were an exception to this notion.¹¹³ However, because of their foreign, unusual character, they also represented the distance between war and women. Women, for the most part were spectators, forbidden to have any direct involvement in wars that raged around them.

¹¹⁰ The concept might be extended also to other kind of unions, such as prostitutions and homosexual relationships. For what concerns the former, it has been decided to not include it in this study. Such unions were not, in fact, characterized by any long term stability. They do not therefore provide any help to our investigation on integration framework between the Roman soldier and local populations. Also homosexual unions have been excluded. Since homosexuality was mainly practiced among fellow soldiers, it was not directly affecting the integration process.

¹¹¹ While women were excluded from the battlefield, there are few examples of feminine leaderships. Among the most known there was Veleda, of the Germanic tribe of the Bructeri, and Boudica, queen of the British Celtic Iceni. For what concerns the general condition of women, Etruscans represent an exception in Mediterranean Europe. Indeed, Etruscan society was characterized by an actual equality in gender, that comes to be evident also in sculpture and funerary paintings. On the condition of women in Etruscan society see: Livy, I, LVII; see also Theopomp., *Hist.*

¹¹² Otto, 2006, p. 424.

¹¹³ Indeed, the etymological analysis of the Greek name Ἀμαζών led to consider the “A-” a privative alpha, that would nullified μαστός, giving as result the meaning of “breast-less”. This interpretation seems confirmed by some classical authors (Such as Diod. Sic, II, 45; Verg., *Aen.* I, 493) describing the Amazons’ custom of cutting off the right breast in order to stretch the bow properly; such habit fits perfectly with the relationship between the concealment and mutilation of feminine attributes and the improvement of the fighting skills, considered by ancient people as clearly masculine qualities.

«*Either with it or upon it*». ¹¹⁴

-Spartan mothers to their sons referring to their shields.

Yet, women, although kept apart from the military, often held major roles in espionage, acting in a political, rather than physical context. Female professional informers existed, though despite this, classical historiography has often portrayed this involvement in a negative manner. ¹¹⁵

The case of Rome follows the same path as described here. However, the involvement of family in the *Urbs* was more complex, the numerous reforms of the army brought about continuous changes to the Roman soldiers' legal status. During the republican period the army can be seen as a cross section of Roman classes of census. This meant that Roman legions consisted of all men (of the age of serving), from smallholders to the sons of rich aristocratic families. When Rome required their military help, his civilian life would suspend for the duration of the war effort. Until the late Republican period, men were firstly citizens, having jobs, homes and families, becoming legionaries only when needed. As military service was only temporary at this point, it is easy to conclude that being in the army did not stop serving men from creating families. ¹¹⁶

It was in the 2nd century BC, with the introduction of the professional soldier that his relationship with the feminine world was changed. From a legal standpoint the status of the soldier evolved. ¹¹⁷ Alongside voluntary enlistment came the loss of the *ius connubii* (the right to marry) and a prohibition of the soldier buying property where he was

¹¹⁴ Plut., *Mor.*, 241-F, XVI.

¹¹⁵ On the bond between women and espionage in Rome see: Petraccia, 2012.

¹¹⁶ See, for instance, the famous excerpt by Livy, XLII, 34: «*I, Spurius Ligustinus of the tribe of Crustumina, come of Sabine stock, fellow-citizens. My father left me an acre of land and a little hut, in which I was born and brought up, and to this day I live there. When I first came of age, my father gave me as wife his brother's daughter, who brought with her nothing but her free birth and her chastity, and with these a fertility which would be enough even for a wealthy home. We have six sons, and two daughters, both of whom are now married. Four of our sons have assumed the toga of manhood, two wear the boys' stripe. I became a soldier in the consulship of Publius Sulpicius and Gaius Aurelius. [...]*». It was in 200 BC, during the consulship of Publius Sulpicius Gabbia Maximus and Gaius Aurelius Cotta that Spurius Ligustinus took up arms for the first time. He took part in many military campaigns until 171 BC, when he, according to Livy, proclaimed these words at an assembly. He served for 22 years in the army from when he was first enlisted, yet he still managed to have an extended family with eight children. There was no clear distinction between civilian and soldier at this point.

¹¹⁷ On the military reforms of the I century BC see: Brizzi, 2002, pp. 117-149; Keppie, 1984, pp. 39-145; Southern, 2006, pp. 94-97.

serving.¹¹⁸ The contest of this act was the Augustan moralizing policy, which reformed several aspects of Roman society, such as the Senate's public behavior and the practice of adultery.¹¹⁹ The day to day life of legionaries changed drastically with this development. Losing the *ius connubii* had many social costs and because of this, many exceptions and subterfuges to this can be found in remaining sources. Relations had to be created in ways that were not recognized by the legal system. As such concubinage or visiting prostitutes were frequent ways to create bonds with women. Ultimately, by the end of the second century Septimius Severus repealed this ban, which can be seen as an attempt to enhance his relationship with the legions. This investigation will therefore take into account these points when reflecting on the affiliation between local women and Roman soldiers.¹²⁰

The precise legal form forbidding the marriage is unknown, since no text, in any form, survives.¹²¹ A new recruit could be married when enlisting or wait until after discharge to be wed.¹²² Yet, as fresh legionary candidates were normally under the age of 23, as estimated by Keppie, very few were already married at this point.¹²³ Such a point seems to be confirmed by Tacitus; when describing colonial deduction under Nero, the

¹¹⁸ The reason for this measure, probably introduced by Augustus, are debated. Alston, 1995, pp. 59, argued that «it is difficult to think of any justification for the ban sufficient to compensate for the problem caused», referring to the large number of legal documents (petitions, fatherhood declarations, etc.) produced with the aim to circumvent the measure. For a Soldier, marriage was seen as a distraction that took him away from his primary function, which was to promote and fight for the expansion of the *Urbs*. The italic people felt (at least from the 2nd century BC) disenfranchised from the army because of this military function which forced them to leave family and work. The prohibiting of marriage can also be seen as encouraging soldier to return to their home regions, so as they were not, in theory, building bonds within the provinces they were stationed in. This prevented the build-up of power and influence of the professional soldier (yet this happened by the middle imperial period). Another suggested reason was the necessity of moving soldiers between provinces; without bonds with the local population this would have been easier. The same can be seen from the ban on buying property in the assigned province.

¹¹⁹ Phang, 2001, pp. 344.

¹²⁰ Entering the historical debate is not easy, especially because no scholar has dedicated himself organically to the argument, at least in recent times. The only exception is represented by Phang, 2001; This work is undoubtedly a milestone of this topic. However, this important mutation in the Roman military law has been too often studied as a contingent topic of more general researches on the military reforms under Marius and Augustus. In many books of ancient military history, the application of the Augustan ban is never afforded in depth, whereas all the social consequences on the Roman legions are ignored. The main work on this topic are: Brizzi, 2002; Campbell, 1994; Keppie, 1984; Southern, 2006.

¹²¹ Phang, 2001, pp. 115.

¹²² Southern, 2006, pp. 144-145. Southern, in the small chapter devoted to women, in relation to her study of the Roman army contended that marriages that happened before enlistment were annulled when the legionary joined up. However, no sources were indicated to support this hypothesis, unsurprising considering the diminutive breadth of this chapter does suggest that this topic was only viewed a secondary to her study.

¹²³ Keppie, 1984, p. 153. «The average age of recruits on enlistment (as established by information culled from gravestones which give a legionary's length of service as well as age of death) was between 18 and 23. The lower legal limit was 17, though we do find a number of even younger men, perhaps recruited in a time of crisis, or deceiving the recruiting officers as to their true age, or forgetting (or hiding) their real age in middle life».

legionaries in the Italian colonies were reluctant to settle there as they made families in their assigned provinces.¹²⁴ It is important to stress that the major scholars on this topic agree on the fact that the Augustan ban was affecting only the *miles* and the lower officers up to the *centurio*.¹²⁵ Although no ancient source confirms completely such a trend, it is certain that senatorial and equestrian officers were not included in the ban on marriage. In this subchapter the main information concerning the ban on marriage have been briefly exposed. Now we will turn our investigation to possible exceptions in the province of Egypt.

The practice of concubinage

It is well-founded that the Augustan ban represented a mere, formal, legal limitation. Unable to get married according to the law, the legionaries started to establish relationships that represented a surrogate family with slaves or peregrines from the province where they were allocated. This phenomenon is known by the aforementioned term of concubinage. It was widespread not only in Egypt, but in every Roman province where legions or auxiliary forces were allocated.¹²⁶ These unions *de facto* were usually legalized after the soldiers' demission. We have seen that with regard to auxiliary soldiers, Roman citizenship was obtained after discharged (*honesta missio*). Their concubines, as well as the children born from the relationship, also received Roman citizenship as expressed in an imperial diploma. If the soldier belonged to a legion, the concubine and his children could not obtain the same concession, since the marriage between a Roman citizen and a *peregrinus* was not recognized by law. However, some scholars discussing

¹²⁴ Tac., *Ann.*, XIV, 27. «In Italy, the old town of Puteoli acquired the rights and title of a colony from Nero. Veterans were drafted into Tarentum and Antium, but failed to arrest the depopulation of the districts, the majority slipping away into the provinces where they had completed their years of service; while, as they lacked the habit of marrying wives and rearing families, the homes they left behind them were childless and without heirs».

¹²⁵ Southern, 2006, pp. 144: «The ban on marriages concerned all ranks up to that of centurion, but equestrian officers who served for only a short time with the army were exempted». See also Phang, 2001, pp. 129: «[...] the marriage ban, with its requirement of celibacy, must have applied to officers below equestrian rank, that is, to centurions and principales, legionary and praetorian, who were sometimes from wealthier families (Decurion level) [...]». And Allison, 2011, pp. 162.

¹²⁶ On the modern debate on the range of the Augustan ban see Phang, 2001, pp. 13-15.

the topic argued that legionaries' families probably did receive the same treatment as auxiliary troops.¹²⁷ An example of diploma is shown below:

«Emperor Caesar Nerva Trajan Augustus, Conqueror of the Germans, son of the divine Nerva, chief priest, in the fourth year of his tribunician power, father of the fatherland, consul for the third time, has granted to the cavalrymen and infantrymen who are serving in the three alae and twenty-one cohorts, which are called [...] which are in Upper Moesia under the command of Gaius Cilnius Proculus, and who have been honourably discharged having completed twenty-five or more years' service, and whose names are written below, to them, their children, and their posterity, citizenship and the right of marriage (conubium) with the wives they had when citizenship was given to them, or, if they were unmarried, with those whom they married afterwards, limited to one wife for each man. [...]»¹²⁸

This document from the Trajanic era is a perfect example of a military diploma through which soldiers were dismissed, obtaining the prize of citizenship for themselves and for their own family.¹²⁹ Concubines were defined as *hospita* (a guest) or even *focaria* (the woman cooking rations for the soldier) and they used to live in the *canabae*, usually not far from the military camps.¹³⁰ Our aim here is to establish how far these unions resembled the legal Roman family.

Throughout the duration of their military service, Roman soldiers lacked any sort of legal protection as far as judicial and economic relations with their 'families' were concerned.¹³¹ The length of military service in Roman military forces in the imperial age

¹²⁷ Dixon, 1992, pp 56-57. Dixon suggests that the recognition of concubines and offspring was a prize maintained *ad hoc* by central power to ensure a good recruiting rate of new troops. See also Phang, 2001 pp. 72 who offers a different interpretation with reference to P. Mich. VII 432. The papyrus concerns the privileges received by the veterans of *Legio XXII Deiotariana* after discharge, but it is extremely fragmentary.

¹²⁸ CIL XVI, 46. Translated by Campbell, 1994. Other examples of diplomas: CIL, XVI, 1; CIL XVI, 164.

¹²⁹ Phang, 2001, pp. 306. If the obtaining of the Roman citizenship is certain, the legitimacy of the children remains debated.

¹³⁰ Carrié, 1989, p. 116. Phang, 2001, pp. 204, argues a net distinction of the term *focaria*. According to the author, it «occupies an ambiguous position between 'wife' and concubine or still more casual partner».

¹³¹ We find a noticeable exception in BGU 140, a papyrus published in Alexandria in AD 119. It is a copy of a letter written from emperor Hadrian, in which he allowed to illegitimate children of soldiers and veteran to inherit even in absence of a will.

varied depending on the different components of the Roman army. Military service in the



Funerary Stela of C. Julius Valerius, Brooklyn Museum, IIIrd century AD.

It commemorated the departed child of C. Julius Severus, soldier of the *Legio II Traiana Fortis*. Although the mother is not mentioned, we can recognize a melting pot of Roman and Egyptian elements. The child's dress and pose are Roman, whereas the other elements surrounding him are local. The three animals represented symbolize three Egyptian gods: Anubi (the jackal), Horus (the falcon), and Nemesis (the griffin).

early imperial period lasted 20 years for legionaries,¹³² 25 years for auxiliaries,¹³³ and 26 years for sailors and other naval personnel.¹³⁴ Conscription was lengthy and at this time only half of legionaries reached the point of discharge, whereas the other half died during service.¹³⁵ This is unsurprising considering the perils of war and cruel conditions most people lived in during this period. As a consequence of these factors it was commonplace for children to experience the death of at least one of their parents; this then raised multiple legal issues. The absence of a legal marriage between the parents offered little protection for the deceased's partner. If the child were technically illegitimate than the beneficiary of the inheritance was a problem.

¹³² Cascarino, 2008, Vol. II, pp. 47.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 85.

¹³⁴ Phang, 2001, pp. 5.

¹³⁵ A.R. Burn, *The Romans in Britain*, 1932 in "Carrié, 1989, p. 129". The number of survivors reached the 60% in the model of Cascarino, 2008, Vol. II, pp. 48. Perhaps surprisingly, death in action was not the first cause of death among the Roman soldiers. According to Cascarino, the average mortality of a legionary involved in battle was around 9% (4% in case of victory, 16% in case of defeat). Outside specific war events, military service was virtually free of risk; in general, the author estimates an average mortality of less than 1% due to such causes. Disease-related mortality was much higher. According to the historian, infections, epidemics, and illnesses (due to precarious hygienic conditions) combined with lack of medical knowledge would have been the main cause of death.

Within Roman law, inheritance, in the absence of a will fell to the oldest, legitimate male child (*sui heredes*). In the absence of an heir *agnates* followed by *cognates* took precedent.¹³⁶ The explanation of these two terms was dependent on the marriage ceremony. In Rome there were two categories of marriage. A marriage *cum manu* meant that the wife joined the husband's family, this entitled her to inheritance if he was to die. The other type was that of *sine manu*,¹³⁷ the consequence of this was that the wife would stay under the *potestas* of her own family, either father or brother if the former was deceased. If this type of marriage was chosen then the bride would have no right of inheritance to her husband's property, which would instead be passed to his male relatives (*agnates*).¹³⁸

This was the general custom according to Roman law. It follows that this mechanism regulated unions incurred between Roman citizens. As a consequence of it Egyptian local rules should not be overlooked. For this purpose, the list of indications contained in the Gnomon of the Idios Logos are fundamental. This is a collection of instructions written in Greek which concerned the fiscal and juridical administration of Egypt.¹³⁹ The code contains several articles regulating inheritance rules (see below). However, in the absence of a legally recognized marriage, concubines and illegitimate children did not have any right to claim the legacy of the deceased soldier, at least until AD 119.¹⁴⁰ This legal problem, which has already been mentioned briefly, led to the production of a vast amount of documentation addressed to certify relationships and paternities. We start this investigation by comparing the declarations of two members of the auxiliary corps:

¹³⁶ Frier and McGinn, 2004, pp. 16: «*Agnates (agnati) are persons related (solely) through males, roughly relatives through the father: for instance, a brother born from the same father, this brother's son, or a grandson from him; likewise, an uncle on the father's side, this uncle's son, or a grandson from him. But persons who are related through females are not agnates but are otherwise relatives (cognati, "cognates") by natural law. Thus, the relationship between an uncle and the son of his sister is not agnate but cognate. Likewise, the son of an aunt on my father's or mother's side is not my agnate but my cognate; and in turn, of course, I am related to him by the same rule*».

¹³⁷ Saller, 1994, pp. 207. The wedding *cum manu* was far more common in republican Rome. From the last centuries BC, marriage *sine manu* spread, gradually becoming the standard one. According to Saller, this reflects the involution of the average length of marriages and was deeply tied to the return of the dowries. In fact, in the first centuries of republican Rome, marriage was considered indissoluble, and divorce was not so common. As a result of this, even the requests for return of the dowry by the wife's families were rather rare. With the affirmation of divorce, it often happened that the Roman citizens married several times: this resulted in the need for a more flexible legal mechanism that would guarantee, among other benefits, an easy return of the dowry.

¹³⁸ Gardner, 1986, p. 45.

¹³⁹ Riccobono, 1950, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴⁰ BGU I, 140; cfr. note 131.

«Longinus Hy [_ _ _] declared that he, a Roman citizen, had served in the first cohort of Thebans under Severus, and had while in military service lived with a Roman woman by whom he had begotten Longinus Apollinarius and Longinus Pomponius, and he asked that these be certified (as Roman citizens). Lupus, having talked with his legal advisers, stated: 'The boys will be [certified] since they have been born of a Roman woman. You also wish to establish them as [legitimate (?)], but I cannot make you their legal father».¹⁴¹

«Epimachus, son of Longinus, soldier of the second cohort of Thebans, century of Octavius Alexander [affirmed _ _ _] that a daughter, Longinia, had been born to him on 26 December just past, from Arsus, daughter of Lucius, his concubine. Therefore he said that he had made this declaration because of the restriction imposed by military service. Carried out at Philadelphia in the winter quarters of the second cohort of Thebans on 26 December, in the consulship of S[ergius Octavius] Laenas Pontianus and Marcus Antonius Rufinus, in the sixteenth year of Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, on the thirtieth day of the month Choiak. (In Greek) I, Epimachus, son of Longinus, the soldier mentioned above, have affirmed that my daughter, Longinia, was born, just as is written above»¹⁴²

The comparison of these two documents points to the legal problem, and it is useful to stress how soldiers tried to face it. The first papyrus is dated in 114 AD (thanks to the mention of Lupus, prefect of Egypt) and was found in Alexandria. The second papyrus was found in Philadelphia and the reference to the consuls in charge allowed us to date it in 131 AD.¹⁴³ It is also important to underline that it was written in Latin. Longinus served in the I Theban cohort whereas Epimachus was a simple soldier of the II cohort of Thebans. Both were auxiliary forces enlisted at the end of the first century AD and recruited on the spot: the former was allocated in Syene,¹⁴⁴ the latter in Thebes.¹⁴⁵ The

¹⁴¹ FIRA III, 19 = M.Chr. 372. Translated by Campbell, 1994.

¹⁴² BGU VII, 1690 = FIRA III, 5. Translated by Campbell, 1994.

¹⁴³ The reference is to Sergius Octavius Laenas Pontianus and Marcus Antonius Rufinus, consuls in charge in the 131 AD.

¹⁴⁴ Lesquier, 1918, p. 93: «Cette cohorte, recrutée dans la province après l'annexion, existait dès l'époque d'Auguste ou de Tibère; [...] En 83 elle était toujours au nombre des auxiliaires d'Égypte (Dipl. 15.), en 99 elle se trouvait à Syène, où elle faisait avec la coh [...] ».

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 95: «La présence de cette cohorte en Égypte n'est établie que pour les années 83 et 95, par le diplôme des auxiliaires (Dipl. 15.) et par une inscription du colosse de Memnon, qui relate une visite du préfet d'Égypte et

aim of these two certificates was to legitimize the paternity of illegitimate children born during the fathers' military service: the big difference between the two is that Longinus and his partner claim to own Roman citizenship.

The fact that Longinus was a Roman citizen suggests that he was already discharged at the time of this declaration. He was therefore a veteran. It is unthinkable that he was a Roman citizen at the time of joining the army, because the Theban cohort was composed by Egyptian peregrines recruited at the site, and the terms of service in an auxiliary unit were lower than those guaranteed by a Roman legion.¹⁴⁶ The sons who he had with the Roman woman received the Roman citizenship: following the rule to grant to the illegitimate children the legal status of the mother. The paternity is not recognized due to the absence of legal marriage and as a consequence of this, Longinus' sons lose any claim on the father's inheritance. In fact, the Edict of Hadrian, which provided legal tutelage to soldiers' relatives (BGU 140), would have been published only 5 years later.

Illegitimate children who owned the Roman citizenship (*spurii*) were not socially marginalized, but had a different legal status due to the absence of a *paterfamilias*. Their juridical condition placed them in a normal family and emotional background «*but their primary point of reference is the natural mother: they do not belong, in the fullest sense, to a family, as they are not subject to the web of rights and responsibilities involved in patriapotestas*».¹⁴⁷ From a legal point of view an illegitimate son had some disadvantages: he could not be listed in the birth register established by Augustus; he could still run for public office, but priority was often given to legitimate children.¹⁴⁸

The situation of Epimachus is clearly more complicated because he was still serving at the time of drafting his document, so was legally a *peregrinus*. His attempt to certify his paternity on the daughter has doubtful legal value. The reason that encouraged him to do so was the aim to leave some form of certification in order to allow the daughter to claim his property in the event of his sudden death.¹⁴⁹ However, there might be another reason. The age difference between Longinus and Epimachus seems to be attested by the fact that the former is already discharged. This, then, presents the latter with a further problem: if

est gravée par les soins de T. Attius Musa, préfet de la cohorte; elle tenait probablement garnison dans le voisinage et peut-être à Thèbes même».

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 93.

¹⁴⁷ Rawson, 2003, p. 75-76.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 267.

¹⁴⁹ See BGU I, 140, note 130. We know from the article 35 of the *Gnomon* that such privilege was also extended to soldiers' partner.

the soldiers' sons were too young to assume the *potestas*, or, as in this case, they could not, then a tutor had to be nominated.

Legal supervision of children was a controversial subject, but in general «*the honor to be derived from being named as tutor depended in part on the status of the testator and pupillus*».¹⁵⁰ According to Saller, the social status of the tutor must be equal to or greater than the one of the deceased father. In the case of the legionaries and auxiliary forces, a military career exempted them from the protection of civilians' sons, but not from the counsel of fallen comrades' children; the structure of military guardianship was submitted to a strict observation of the soldiers' rank, who could take care of the sons of their equal or, sometimes, of their subordinated.¹⁵¹ In this context, the declaration of Epimachus might have had as its second purpose also the regulation of guardianship for his daughter.

The following papyrus allows further considerations:

«*Marcus Lucretius Clemens, cavalryman on the first cohort of Thracians [...] declares in front of witnesses [...] that during his military service his natural son, Serenum, was born from Octavia Tamusta [...]. For this reason, he declares that he has produced this testatio because of the military rules and with the aim to prove his fatherhood when he will be honorably discharged [...]*».¹⁵²

This papyrus was found in Contrapollonopolis and has been dated to AD 127. The legal condition of Marcus is very similar to Epimachus' one. In fact, the birth certificate was produced while the soldier was still serving. The document does not specify if Marcus owned Roman citizenship, even if the Latin name and the *tria nomina* would imply so. This declaration is also written in Latin, that is a decisively uncommon choice for the Egyptian custom. The membership of a Roman citizen in a cohort of horsemen as well would have been unusual, especially in respect of the aforementioned considerations advanced on the unequal treatment received from legionaries and auxiliary forces. Marcus, in fact, served in a cavalry *ala*, specifically in the Thracians.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Saller, 1994, p. 201.

¹⁵¹ *Idem*.

¹⁵² P. Diog 1. My translation.

¹⁵³ Lesquier, 1918, pp. 79-80. It is probably the Ala I Thracum Mauretana, which was dislocated between Mauretania, Egypt and Judea and it is surely attested from the AD 86. It is the same ala to which Antonius Silvanus belonged; see CPL 221 = FIRA III, 47.

However, a different aspect is extremely interesting for the purpose of our study. Marcus clearly pointed out the reason of his declaration: his aim is to obtain the legal recognition of his natural son at the time to be discharge (*honesta missio*). It has been suggested that this was the standard procedure for such a purpose.¹⁵⁴ The soldier's aim confirms the stability of his relationship with his concubine, putting them, *de facto*, on the same level of a legal marriage with its own long term plans.

It is now necessary to switch to the condition of Roman legionaries. It is important to underline that no legionaries' certificates of *honesta missio* mentioning children or concubines have been discovered, as also pointed out by Phang.¹⁵⁵ This concerns not only Egypt but also the rest of the imperial provinces.¹⁵⁶ The main attestations of soldiers' unions with peregrine women are represented by diplomas that were not produced for legionaries.¹⁵⁷ Mainly as a consequence of it, we have not discovered evidence in any document referring to such unions in Egypt.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, this is an uncommon issue, as we have several evidence concerning other imperial provinces in the same period.¹⁵⁹ The following inscription attests instead a relationship of concubinage from a later period:

*«To the spirits of the departed. Aurelius Longinus, miles of Legio II Traiana Fortis, princeps prior belonging to the VIII cohort Germanica Severina, lived thirty-two years and served nine years. Aurelia Isidora had this made to her sweet husband's memory».*¹⁶⁰

This inscription was found in Alexandria. It describes in detail the military occupation of the deceased soldier and it is dated to AD. The membership to the legion, along with the Latin name, confirms the possession of Roman citizenship. The inscription is dated to the

¹⁵⁴ Schubert, 1990, pp. 41.

¹⁵⁵ Phang, 2001, pp. 74.

¹⁵⁶ Some further reflections on this aspect will be added at the end of the chapter.

¹⁵⁷ Phang, 2001, pp. 84.

¹⁵⁸ In the military necropolis of Alexandria, around fifty funerary inscriptions mentioning family members have been discovered. None of them attests a union with a local woman in the first two centuries AD. See Veïsse, Wackenier, 2014, pp. 200. Furthermore, we have a funerary inscription attesting one of these union before the *Legio II Traiana Fortis* was moved to Egypt; see also CIL III, 6092.

¹⁵⁹ Several of such evidence can be attested in funerary inscriptions. We have some example dated in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD from Pannonia Superior (AE 1994, 1390; CIL III, 4462; CIL III, 4489; CIL III, 14358, 13a); Pannonia Inferior (CIL III, 10365); Moesia Inferior (CIL III, 10365, 08; CIL III, 14435); Galatia (AE 2006, 1478); Baetica (CIL II-VII, 966); and Hispania Citerior (AE 1987, 731).

¹⁶⁰ CIL III, 6594a. My translation.

early III century AD. In fact, the Egyptian but Romanized name of the couple provides precious insights. As a consequence of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (212 AD) all the inhabitants of the empire received Roman citizenship. It was customary for new citizens to adopt the *nomen* of the person who provided their new legal status. It follows that many new citizens decided to adopt the Emperor's name Aurelius, especially in the East.¹⁶¹ We can therefore conclude that the papyrus may have been written after the fall of the Augustan ban, and that the couple was then legally married.

The comparison of these data allows us to draw some conclusions about the condition accorded to legionary and auxiliary troops. This evidence is relevant because it provides interesting information from many different corners.¹⁶² Firstly, they demonstrate to what extent concubinage was accepted into the Roman army, even among peregrines. Unofficial relations seem to have been more than tolerated, since they were freely accepted within legal documentation. Roman citizenship was a core element in inheritance issues, at least until the edict of Hadrian, but these problems persisted even in a legal Roman marriage, as demonstrated by the case of CIL 03, 6594a. However, soldiers could still appoint heirs in their will, ignoring the precedence to *agnates*.¹⁶³

The fact that Roman soldiers were involved in obtaining legal recognition of their 'marriages' and offspring testifies the stability of such unions. For the purpose of our

¹⁶¹ Whereas in the west the *nomen* "Julius" was the most common choice. See: Heckster, 2008, pp. 50; Manders, 2012, pp. 240.

¹⁶² On the same topic we can find BGU I, 326. It is a papyrus dated to 189-94 AD which represented the will of Gaius Longinus Kastor, veteran of the praetorian fleet of Misenum. The soldier did not specify how he was related to his heirs (whose name were all Egyptian and Greek). It has been speculated that « *because wills were (and are) by and large meant to devolve the testator's property in specific ways upon next of kin [...] Marcella or Kleopatra, or both, were Kastor's common-law wives; that Sarapias was not only Kleopatra's daughter, but his as well; and that Sarapion, Sokrates, Longus, and Neilos were his sons. [...] Kastor as a Veteran could have married upon honourable discharge, but Roman law insisted upon monogamy, and Longinus' own 'discharge papers (diploma), while granting him the chance to legitimise a 'common law' union, would also have included a proviso against bigamy* ». In Rowlandson, 1998, pp. 188. See also SB V, 7558. It is a papyrus dated to AD 173. A deceased veteran called Marcus Anthestius Gemellus indicated his minor daughter as unique heir of his properties. The document concerns the legal choice of her guardians. Impossible to establish if the veteran belonged to a legion or to an auxiliary unit; despite that, the double name of the daughter (Valeria Tertia / Thaisarion) suggests the offspring of a union with a local woman. See also Tablettes L. Keimer. It is the will of the auxiliary soldier Antonius Silvanus, written on five waxed wooden tablets and dated to AD 142. He addressed his inheritance to his son nominating his concubine as tutor of the child. The definition of the woman as "mother of my heir" is due to the lack of a legal marriage See also P. Oxy. LV 3798, a papyrus dated to AD 144. The two children of a deceased Roman veteran return a loan which had been made by their mother (also deceased). See also P. Lugd. Bat. XIII, 14; P. Oxy. LII, 3692 (cfr. Tablettes L. Keimer); CPL 221 = FIRA III, 47; P. Mich. VII 436; BGU VII 1695; also the later CPR VI, 76 should not be overlooked.

¹⁶³ FIRA III. 47, 142 AD. Also Dixon, 1992, pp 56 and Phang, 2001, pp. 217.

study this is undoubtedly a big point in favour of substantial integration into the social fabric of the Egyptian province. Unable to establish legally recognized marriages, soldiers created their own *de facto* unions, which did not represent casual relations, but actual family units. This point is undeniable and it is attested by the large number of petitions which are similar, in concept, to the four documents previously presented.¹⁶⁴ This allows us to conclude with Barbero that: «*Mogli, figlie, concubine o schiave che fossero, queste donne erano evidentemente integrate nella comunità formata dal reparto, tanto da considerarlo come la propria famiglia, esattamente come facevano i loro mariti, padri e padroni.*»¹⁶⁵

Different interpretations are offered by the substantial lack of sources concerning Roman legionaries and concubines in Roman Egypt of the same period. It is important to stress that such a problem is not limited to a legal matter. For all the 1st century AD the geographical origin of legionaries was mainly Italian (see next chapter). In fact, the local recruitment started only from the 2nd century AD.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, auxiliary forces were recruited *in loco*, and this, potentially, may have been a key factor of the integration framework.¹⁶⁷ It is clear that their difference in number does not justify the disproportion in the number of available evidence for the first two centuries AD. It is time now to switch to the last chapter of this work. In the following portion we will investigate the social and economic relationships between soldiers and local population.

¹⁶⁴ Cfr. note 159.

¹⁶⁵ Barbero, 2006, pp. 145.

¹⁶⁶ This topic will be faced in the next chapter '*Economic and Juridical relationships*'.

¹⁶⁷ Further considerations on this aspect will be offered in the conclusions.

IV. Economic and Juridical relationships

«*Inter paganos corruptior miles*»¹⁶⁸

(Tacitus, *Histories*, I, 53, 14)

After investigating the family relationships, it is possible to proceed to the other macro-category analysed here: economic and juridical relations. For the purposes of studying the process of integration in the province of Egypt, these aspects are no less important than the preceding. The passage quoted above from Tacitus summarizes adequately the general consideration of the relationship between soldiers and civilians in Roman times. According to the ancients, the soldier had to stay far away from the frivolity of civilian life in order to not be corrupted himself. The only exception was in theory represented by concubinage since, as we have seen, this practice was mostly tolerated. The integration process was instead favoured after discharge, when the *ius connubi* was granted along with the right to buy property in the assigned province. This process was finally completed by the plot of land which was received by the veteran, placing him in the Roman middle class, guaranteeing a retreat in agile economic conditions. In this chapter we will investigate whether the theoretical separation of soldiers from civilians, as intended also by Augustus, was actually respected.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, it is important to investigate which consequences had this policy in the relationship between soldiers and local population.

¹⁶⁸ «*Soldiers corrupt when mixing with civilians*». My translation.

¹⁶⁹ Carriè, 1989, pp. 115.

A deep change in the policy of recruitment

Evolution of the geographical origin of Roman Legionaries (AD I-III centuries).

Survey of Forni, 1953.¹⁷⁰

Provincia - Regio	da Augusto a Caligola		da Claudio a Nerone		da Vespasiano a Traiano		da Adriano alla fine del III sec.	
Italia-Regio I (Latium)	0	0,0%	1	0,9%	2	2,7%	0	0,0%
Italia-Regio II (Apulia)	1	0,5%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	5,9%
Italia-Regio IV (Samnium)	2	1,0%	1	0,9%	0	0,0%	1	5,9%
Italia-Regio V (Picenum)	1	0,5%	0	0,0%	3	4,1%	0	0,0%
Italia-Regio VI (Umbria)	10	4,8%	3	2,6%	2	2,7%	2	11,8%
Italia-Regio VII (Etruria)	16	7,7%	5	4,3%	4	5,5%	0	0,0%
Italia-Regio VIII (Aemilia)	29	14,0%	15	12,8%	6	8,2%	1	5,9%
Italia-Regio IX (Liguria)	17	8,2%	16	13,7%	6	8,2%	0	0,0%
Italia-Regio X (Venetia et Histria)	64	30,9%	27	23,1%	30	41,1%	6	35,3%
Italia-Regio XI (Transpadana)	25	12,1%	30	25,6%	16	21,9%	3	17,6%
Italia-provenienza incerta	42	20,3%	19	16,2%	4	5,5%	3	17,6%
Totale Italia	207	100%	117	100%	73	100%	17	100%
Hispania Tarraconensis	2	1,5%	4	3,3%	9	3,4%	13	0,7%
Hispania Baetica	3	2,3%	13	10,6%	3	1,1%	1	0,1%
Hispania Lusitania	3	2,3%	4	3,3%	4	1,5%	3	0,2%
Gallia Narbonensis	31	23,7%	55	44,7%	34	12,7%	9	0,5%
Gallia Lugdunensis	4	3,1%	3	2,4%	12	4,5%	9	0,5%
Gallia Aquitania	0	0,0%	2	1,6%	5	1,9%	3	0,2%
Gallia Belgica	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	13	0,7%
Sardinia	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	1	0,1%
Alpes Maritimae	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	4	1,5%	2	0,1%
Britannia	0	0,0%	1	0,8%	0	0,0%	4	0,2%
Germania Inferior	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	20	7,5%	47	2,5%
Raetia, Vindelicia	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	2	0,7%	12	0,6%
Noricum	0	0,0%	8	6,5%	17	6,3%	28	1,5%
Pannonia	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	13	4,9%	97	5,2%
Dalmatia	0	0,0%	4	3,3%	4	1,5%	20	1,1%
Moesia	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	2	0,7%	148	7,9%
Dacia	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	50	2,7%
Thracia	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	2	0,7%	99	5,3%
Macedonia, Epirus, Achaia	14	10,7%	9	7,3%	10	3,7%	11	0,6%
Asia	2	1,5%	2	1,6%	4	1,5%	5	0,3%
Bithynia	3	2,3%	0	0,0%	29	10,8%	3	0,2%
Galatia, Lycaonia, Paphlagonia	30	22,9%	4	3,3%	6	2,2%	2	0,1%
Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycia	9	6,9%	1	0,8%	2	0,7%	1	0,1%
Pontus, Cappadocia	4	3,1%	4	3,3%	2	0,7%	0	0,0%
Cilicia	1	0,8%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	10	0,5%
Cyprus	1	0,8%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Syria, Palaestina	5	3,8%	3	2,4%	49	18,3%	35	1,9%
Aegyptus, Cyrenaica	10	7,6%	0	0,0%	8	3,0%	45	2,4%
Africa, Numidia, Mauretania	6	4,6%	4	3,3%	21	7,8%	1165	62,4%
Province – Provenienza incerta	3	2,3%	2	1,6%	6	2,2%	30	1,6%
Totale province	131	100%	123	100%	268	100%	1866	100%
Totale generale	338		240		341		1883	
Rapporto Italia/Province		61,2%		48,8%		21,4%		0,9%

¹⁷⁰ Summarized by Casciaro, 2008, Vol. II, pp. 41

In the previous chapter it has been argued that the lack of evidence concerning unions between legionaries and local women in the first two century AD in Egypt may be explained by the difference in policy in the geographical recruitment. It seems therefore appropriate to spend few words on how legionary recruitment worked. Looking at the evolution of Roman recruitment policy is useful to clarify some of our questions. The recruitment process in the late Republican period was a prerogative of the consuls, even though it had to be approved by the senate. In fact, all military expenses were a burden on the *aerarium*. The senate was therefore in charge of determining the number of the recruits on the base of economic availability.¹⁷¹ This system was transformed with the advent of Augustus: the recruitment of soldiers and their command in the imperial age was a right belonging to the emperor.¹⁷² The senate of Rome lost any prerogative on military matters, so that the cash gratuities were initially paid from the emperor's personal cash (*fiscus*). Only later they became a burden on the *aerarium militare*, created by Augustus and managed by the imperial administration.¹⁷³ In general recruitment was carried out by conscription, since the number of volunteers was not sufficient to fill the ranks, emptied by losses and leaves.¹⁷⁴

As already mentioned, the reform introducing the professional soldier had heavy implications on the Roman recruitment system (see above). Throughout the Republican period, the candidates had to be in possession not only of Roman citizenship, but also of Italic origins. There was no other option. In the phase of the Roman expansion in the Italian peninsula, Rome recruited its citizens according to the system of the Servian classes.¹⁷⁵ They could only be Italic, as there were no extra-Italic territories in the Roman

¹⁷¹ Forni, 1953, pp. 19.

¹⁷² Cass. Dio, LIII, 17: «*In this way the power of both people and senate passed entirely into the hands of Augustus, and from his time there was, strictly speaking, a monarchy [...] By virtue of the titles [imperators] named they secure the right to make levies, to collect funds, declare war, make peace, rule foreigners and citizens alike everywhere and always,—even to the extent of being able to put to death both knights and senators inside the pomerium,—and all the other privileges once granted to the consuls and other b.c. 27 officials possessing independent authority*».

¹⁷³ Forni, 1953, pp. 19.

¹⁷⁴ Campbell, 1994, pp. 9.

¹⁷⁵ The Servian reform takes its name from was Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, who reorganized Roman army and society in 570 BC. (Dion. Hal, *Ant. Rom*, IV, 16.). He divided all the Roman citizens into classes of census (which were seven if we include equites and *capite censi*); The criteria of such a reform were organized in according to timocratic bases. The richest citizens had more political weight to which a higher military effort corresponded. Consequently, the higher classes were deployed on the front line of the hoplitic formation. This had also a more pragmatic and technical reason: they could provide themselves with a complete panoply. Such a cost could not have been borne by the lower classes of census. At the bottom of hierarchy there were the

hegemony. With the establishment of the province of Sicily, and the first overseas expansions, this trend did not change. However, the provincials were required to join the ranks of auxiliary troops.¹⁷⁶ Recruitment policy began a slow but steady revolution in the aftermath of the Marian army reform (107 BC). One of the long-term consequences, fundamental to our study, was a clear change in the geographical origin of the legionaries.¹⁷⁷ The percentage of Italic soldiers began to decline in the course of the 1st century AD: in the second half of the 2nd century, at the end of this process, the number of Italic soldiers was irrelevant.¹⁷⁸ It was unthinkable that in a territory consisting of dozens of provinces, only the Italic peninsula was required to contribute to the defence of the *limes*.¹⁷⁹ The decrease could also be considered as a result of the aversion of Italics to maintain the war machine which reached 25 legions in the age of Augustus. For these reasons some *peregrines* began to be enlisted in the provinces where the legions were allocated. It was the beginning of the process of localization of recruitment. The new legionaries received a Roman name and citizenship at the time of enlistment:

«[...] *To Vilius Cadus, legate of the Emperor with propraetorian power, from twenty-two veterans of Legion X Fretensis who began their military service in the consulship of Glabrio and Torquatus or in the consulship of Paulinus and Aquilinus (AD 124 and 125), and whose names are listed below. Since, Sir, we served in the praetorian fleet at Misenum and then, after transfer to the Fretensis Legion through the generosity of the divine Hadrian, conducted ourselves over twenty[years] in every respect as good soldiers should, now indeed*

capite censi. This class was composed by those who did not possess enough to be part of the fifth class of census. They did not participate to war episodes, except in emergencies. *Equites* were composed by the citizens who could afford a horse, and they therefore fought as cavalrymen. (*Ibid.*, IV,18.).

¹⁷⁶ Except for some special legions, which were instituted by recruiting peregrines. The first certified case is perhaps the creation of the *Legio V Alaudae*: it was founded by Caesar in the 52 BC by forming peregrines from Gaul. The same *Legio XXII Deiotariana*, present in Egypt, was originally constituted by King Deiotarus recruiting Galatians; Note that with reference to the *Legio II Traiana Fortis*, Dando-Collins speculates that at his foundation, the legion was made up with soldiers coming from German provinces (Dando-Collins, 2011, pp. 116).

¹⁷⁷ This happened in spite of the emanation of *Lex Plautia Papiria*, which, at the end of the social war (89 BC), extended Roman citizenship to all the inhabitants of the peninsular Italy; this act virtually extended the number of candidates for the legionary enlistment.

¹⁷⁸ On the recruitment of extra Italic men from the late Republic see: Keppie, 1978, pp. 121; Campbell, 1994, pp. 9; Cascarino, 2008, Vol. II, pp. 40-41; Dando-Collins, 2011, pp. 21. Note that Emperor Tiberius complained about the lack of volunteers in AD 23, at least according to Tac., *Ann.*, IV, 4: «*Next, the old, oft-simulated project of an excursion to the provinces came up for discussion. The Emperor alleged the multitude of time-expired troops and the need of fresh conscriptions to maintain the armies at strength. For there was a dearth, he said, of volunteers; and, even when forthcoming, they failed to show the old courage and discipline, since it was too often the destitute and the vagrant who enlisted of their own accord*».

¹⁷⁹ Obviously, auxiliary troops are not taken into account.

*in these most felicitous times we have been discharged from our military oath and, as we are about to return to Egypt, to our native city of Alexandria, we ask and request that you should think it appropriate to affirm for us that we have been discharged by you, in order that it may be obvious from your affirmation that we have been discharged from this very legion, not from the fleet, so that your endorsement (subscriptio—a response to the petition written at the end) may serve us as written evidence (instrumentum) if circumstances demand, and so that we may be eternally grateful to your compassion. (The names and centuries of twenty-two veterans follow.) [...] However you wish it to be made known to the prefect of Egypt that you have been discharged from your military oath by me on the orders of our emperor. I shall give you your bonus and a written document. [Publish this?]. Executed in the First Flavian Colony of Caesarea, 22 January, in the consulship of Squilla Gallicanus and Carminius Vetus».*¹⁸⁰

This papyrus was found in Egypt but was produced in Caesarea. It was dated to 150 AD.¹⁸¹ The problem described by the legionaries confirms what has been said about the granting of Roman citizenship at the time of enlistment. The 22 men who sent this letter were sailors serving in the fleet allocated in Misenum. As they belonged to a fleet, they were likely not Roman citizens. In the first half of the 2nd century they were recruited into the *Legio X Fretensis*, allocated in Iudaea (Jerusalem). The chronological order makes it possible to assume that such integration occurred following the heavy losses suffered by the legion during the Second Jewish Revolt (132-135 AD).¹⁸² The reason of the missive is to get the reconfirmation of the Roman citizenship before returning to Alexandria, the native city of the soldiers. It is interesting to note that the veterans did finally receive such confirmation. This was not done through a diploma, nor with an official document; the *legatus* Cadus guarantees only that the prefect of Egypt would have been informed. However, this request should not be surprising; in a society which did not have a real bureaucratic system, other types of guarantees were needed.

¹⁸⁰ P.S.I. IX, 1026. Translation by Campbell, 1994. Other examples: CIL XVI, 38; AE 1923, 28; BGU II, 423.

¹⁸¹ Campbell, 1994, pp. 201.

¹⁸² Dando-Collins, 2011, pp. 160: «*In the early stages of the AD 132 – 135 Second Jewish Revolt, the 10th Fretensis Legion suffered extremely high casualties, with the cohorts stationed in Jerusalem apparently being wiped out. Hadrian was therefore forced to transfer Egyptian sailors from the Misene Fleet to the legion, granting them citizenship, to swiftly bolster the 10th's ranks*».

The integration of non-Italic soldiers into legions took place in the culturally more Romanized or Hellenized provinces.¹⁸³ In general, in the 1st century, every legion possessed its own recruiting territory. In the western part, the gradual decline of conscription in Italy was accompanied by the growth of enlisted people from the senatorial provinces: they were the wealthiest, the most Romanised and the most pacified of the Empire; the best examples are Gallia Narbonensis, Baetica, Africa Proconsularis and Macedonia.¹⁸⁴ A similar process took place in the *pars orientalis*. Soldiers of Macedonian origin, or from the Greek cities of Asia gradually replaced Italics.¹⁸⁵ The tendency of veterans to settle close to their old military camps would become exploited by the authorities, gradually starting local recruitment. The case of Egypt is not made simple by the absence of large quantities of evidence offering reliable data on the legionary origin. Alston summarizes these sources, mainly papyri and funerary epigraphs, in the following tables:¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ Carriè, 1989, pp. 109: «*Se ne deve concludere che un qualsiasi 'fellah' egiziano potesse diventare soldato e, di conseguenza, cittadino di Roma? Certamente no. Ma si si deve anche tener conto che un cittadino egiziano ellenizzato non era più considerato come 'egiziano' dalle commissioni di reclutamento, anche se un 'romano' d'Italia non lo avrebbe riconosciuto come concittadino*». Carriè hypothesizes that recruitment criteria had assumed economic connotation rather than cultural. According to the author, the demarcation line was among small and medium-sized owners, integrated into the city system, and lower classes. Consequently, regardless of the cultural aspect, dominant classes were taking greater advantage of the inclusive policy granted by the Roman citizenship.

¹⁸⁴ On the evolution of the geographical origin of legionaries after the first centuries AD, see the detailed survey of Forni, 1953 at the beginning of this chapter. It is also included in Cascarino, 2008, Vol. II, pp. 41.

¹⁸⁵ Campbell, 1994, pp. 9. These considerations can be extended also to auxiliary forces.

¹⁸⁶ Alston, 1995, pp. 42-43.

Table 3.1 Origins of legionaries 30 BC—c. AD 110¹

Province	<i>CIL</i> III 6627	<i>BGU</i> IV 1083	<i>Others</i> ²	Total	%
Egypt	7(19) ³	—	1	8	13
Africa	—	2	2	4	7
Bithynia	1(3)	1	—	2	3
Cyprus	1(3)	—	—	1	2
Cyrene	2(6)	—	—	2	3
Galatia	17(47)	5	5	27	44
Gaul	2(6)	—	—	2	3
Italy	1(3)	2	2	5	8
Palestine or Pamphylia	1(3)	—	—	1	2
Pisidia	2(6)	—	—	2	3
Syria	—	3	2	5	8
<i>Castris</i>	2(6)	—	—	2	3
Totals	36	13	12	61	

1. All inscriptions which deal with III *Cyrenaica* and XXII *Deiotariana* have been dated to this period. It is unclear precisely when the legions left Egypt.

2. Other sources are *CIL* III 6598, 6599, 6602, 6603, 6606, 6607, 12059, 14138³, *AE* (1986) No. 700 and *P.Mich.* XII 637.

3. The figures in brackets are percentages of the total for that particular document.

Table 3.2 Origins of legionaries serving after c. AD 110¹

Province	<i>AE</i> (1969) 633 ²	<i>CIL</i> III 6580	<i>Others</i> ³	Total	%
Egypt	1(1) ⁴	8(21)	—	9	5
Africa	84(66)	1(3)	2	87	50
Asia	1(1)	1(3)	—	2	1
Bithynia	2(2)	1(3)	—	3	2
Cilicia	1(1)	—	—	1	1
Commagene	—	1(3)	—	1	1
Dacia	1(1)	—	—	1	1
Dalmatia	2(2)	—	—	2	1
Galatia	2(2)	—	—	2	1
Germania	1(1)	—	—	1	1
Italy	15(12)	—	1 ⁵	16	9
Macedonia	—	—	1 ⁵	1	1
Pannonia	—	—	1	1	1
Pamphylia	1(1)	—	—	1	1
Syria	16(13)	3(8)	1	20	12
Tripolitania	1(1)	—	—	1	1
<i>Castris</i>	—	24(62)	—	24	14
Totals	128	39	6	173	

1. All references to II *Traiana* were dated to this period.

2. This inscription was republished in two parts. *AE* (1955) No. 238 contained only the introduction to the list.

3. The other inscriptions used are *CIL* III 6593, 6596, 6611, 6592, 12056, 12057.

4. Numbers in brackets refer to the percentage of recruits in the one document.

5. This figure includes one centurion.

The tables show the evolution of the geographic origins of legionaries in Egypt before and after the end of the 1st century.¹⁸⁷ According to Alston, the process of localization of recruitment in the province did not develop until at least the end of the 2nd century.¹⁸⁸ Although Africa became the first spot for recruiting from the first century, «*many other provinces were represented and the legions were still manned by a mix of soldiers from different parts of the empire*».¹⁸⁹ This position is coherent with Forni's surveys concerning legionary origins in imperial and senatorial provinces. With reference to Egypt in the 1st century, Forni concluded that the vast majority of the soldiers had Eastern origins (Asians, Egyptians and from Cyrenaica); next to an Italic, Gallic and African minority.¹⁹⁰ After Trajan a slight change occurred: with reference to *Legio II Traiana Fortis*, Forni considered a clear Egyptian preponderance, followed in number by two groups of Syrian and African soldiers. There were still minorities from Italy, Pannonia, Thrace, Macedonia, Bithynia and Cilicia (see table Forni, 1953).¹⁹¹

Another important circumstance is the debated absence of veteran colonies in Egypt in the first two centuries AD. Veteran colonies were meant to create areas that would have been easily controllable in case of emergency. A further advantage was the proven loyalty of their inhabitants to the Roman authorities. Therefore they can be considered

¹⁸⁷ They deny the view of Wesch-Klein, who argues that «*Recruits from Egypt were often sent to the fleets. Familiarity with the Nile, the lifegiving river of Egypt, and the fact that Egyptians were not Roman citizens and could not seek the more exalted branches of service, may have had something to do with this preference. It seems to have become a tradition for Egyptians to serve in the fleet; there is evidence for Egyptian recruits in the navy up to the fourth century*». (Wesch-Klein, 2007, pp. 438, in 'Erdkamp, 2007'). Although the sample used by Alston for his studies is relatively small (61 elements for 3.1 and 173 for 3.2), it unequivocally represents a mixed origin of Roman legionaries. Such distribution remains coherent in both periods of time. Thanks to AE 1951, 88 we also have evidence of centurions and soldiers of the *Legiones III Cyrenaica* and *XXII Deiotariana*, sent to Cyrenaica with the purpose to recruit local people. The inscription is dated in the second half of the 1st century and shows the will to recruit outside the Egyptian territory.

¹⁸⁸ This thesis seems to be confirmed by an extract of BGU VII, 1680: «*And if Aion wants to be a soldier, he only need come, since everybody is becoming a soldier!*». Translated by Wesch-Klein. This papyrus was found in Alexandria and dated in the 3rd century (Bagnall, Cribiore, 2008, pp. 365). The sender is Isis, who writes to his mother. The names are clearly local. Although there are no precise references to the corps in which Aion wants to enlist, it would appear that the criteria for being accepted into the army of Rome were much softer in the third century. It is important to note, however, that given the late dating, the papyrus may be following the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (212 AD). With this edict, Emperor Caracalla extended citizenship to all the inhabitants of the empire; the first result was the decay of one of the main original requirement of enlistment.

¹⁸⁹ Alston, 1995, pp. 42-43.

¹⁹⁰ Forni, 1953, pp. 77.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95.

bridgeheads of Romanization. There is no archaeological evidence of Roman colonies in Egypt, although some are mentioned on papyrological material.¹⁹²

Some preliminary conclusions can now be offered. In the previous chapter we have seen that no evidence proving family relationships between legionaries and local women is attested in Egypt in the first two centuries AD. On the other hand, the survey of Forni shows clearly a delocalization process in the recruitment policy within the Roman army. Such process found its end in the second half of the 2nd century AD, when the Roman legionaries recruited on the spot represented a preponderant percentage of the new soldiers. Finally, Alston's survey shows a clear tendency towards local recruitment as standard policy from the end of the 2nd century AD. It is natural, at this point, to notice a pattern in the comparison of this data. It seems that Roman legionaries in Egypt were not as involved in concubinage as in other imperial provinces.¹⁹³ Furthermore, the geographical origin of them (together with other related aspects, such as the different language and cultural background) could have played a role in the building of long-term relationship on the model of auxiliary soldiers. This aspect cannot be ignored, especially if we take into account of the large portion of non-African soldiers serving in the Egyptian legions in the first two centuries AD.

The issue of abuses

It is now necessary to switch to the specific social and economic relations occurring between soldiers and civilians in the province. The installation of legions or auxiliary troops in the provincial territories had a clear economic and social impact. The *castra* attracted merchants, bureaucrats, blacksmiths. Soldiers were paid in cash (usually bronze or silver coins) and needed constant supplies, including food, luggage, equipment and animals for transport. If these aspects can be judged positively, for their advantageous

¹⁹² See for example P.Giss. I 60; BGU II 587; M.Chr. I 461; P.Oxy. III 653; and P.Oxy. XII 1508. These documents mention the presence of colonies assigned to demobilized veterans (*kolonia*). According to Alston they were self-governing urban settlements. Here the former soldiers had access to plots of land (perhaps sold to them) to put them into production.

¹⁹³ *Cfr.* note 159.

economic repercussions, there was undoubtedly the other side of the coin. Sources have constantly reported, for the two centuries under examination, the long-standing problem of abuses. It is important to stress that abuses represent the main argument of the historiographical trend supporting the theory of the systematic harassment of civilians perpetuated by Roman soldiers in the imperial provinces.

What do we indicate by the word “abuses”? With this definition we refer to the numerous criminal actions carried out by Roman soldier who exploited their status to avoid all those restrictions imposed on them by Roman and local law. The conflicts between the two social categories are largely recorded on petitions and complaints sent by the victims to the local authorities. Abuses could include acts of violence, arbitrary requisition and coercive demands for transport or hospitality.¹⁹⁴

Moving to our case study, the province of Egypt perfectly fit this scenario. Among the most common abuses were the arbitrary confiscations perpetrated by the soldiers. Animal requisitions (*angareia*) in Egypt were a common practice and the most widely accepted. It is important to notice that the custom was not of Roman origin, but it was introduced in the Ptolemaic period at the latest. Animals were mostly used for transportation or mail services. In the case of the Romans, requisitions were made using the information gathered during the census, in which each provincial free citizen was required to declare his property. The owner of the animal was refunded for the beast's services.¹⁹⁵

However, alongside these 'legal' requisitions a parallel, illicit practice emerged. The soldiers exploited their status to confiscate every kind of good:

«Marcus Petronius Mamertinus, prefect of Egypt, declares: I have been informed that many of the soldiers, while travelling through the country, without a certificate requisition boats, animals, and persons beyond what is proper, on some occasions appropriating them by force, on others getting them from the strategoi by exercise of favour or deference. Because of these private persons are subjected to arrogance and abuse and the army has

¹⁹⁴ *Idem.*

¹⁹⁵ Adams, 2007, pp. 138: «Animals were requisitioned by the state for a number of purposes: for specific transport tasks such as the transport of quarried stone for imperial building projects, for the supply of state operations such as quarrying in the Eastern Desert, for the transport of officials around the province and for carrying their supplies, for state visits by the prefect or emperor, and for the use of the army. Numerous papyri relate to these phenomena, and a number of important inscriptions relate to abuse of the system».

*come to be censored for greed and injustice. I therefore order the strategoi and royal secretaries to furnish to absolutely no one any travel facilities at all without a certificate, whether he is travelling by river or by land, on the understanding that I shall punish severely anyone who, after this edict, is caught giving or taking any of the things mentioned above. [Year ?] of the lord Hadrian Caesar, 8 Thoth».*¹⁹⁶

This document was issued by the prefect of Egypt Mamertinus and is dated to 133-7 AD.¹⁹⁷ This is a single specimen from a long series of documents and edicts aimed at fighting the abuse of random confiscations carried out by soldiers in the province.¹⁹⁸ From this evidence it can be argued that the phenomenon of illegal requisitions was common and difficult to extirpate for provincial governors, despite good intentions. The soldier's status was in fact privileged. Being a member of the military caste, according to Juvenal and other ancient historians, set them above the law.¹⁹⁹ It is difficult to evaluate the range of these claims today. However, the absence of a law against extortions is relevant: punishments were in fact left to the discretion of prefects and governors.²⁰⁰ Undoubtedly, illegal requisitions had the greatest impact on the provincials, as proved by the vast production of edicts and petitions produced with the aim to fight them. Several texts recording civilian complaints about the behaviour of Roman soldiers are attested:

«To Aurelius Marcianus, centurion, from Aurelius Sarapion son of Pasei, of the village of Philadelphia. There is nothing more dreadful or harder to bear than maltreatment. At the time of life which I have reached, being eighty years old and more, I am serving blamelessly

¹⁹⁶ PSI V, 446. Translation by Campbell, 1994.

¹⁹⁷ Campbell, 1994, pp. 176.

¹⁹⁸ There are other documents concerning attempts to fight soldiers' abusive requisitions in Egypt (in chronological order): SB I 3924 = Sel. Pap. II 211; P. Lond. III 1171v; Hibis 1 = OGIS 665 = IGRR I, 1262.

¹⁹⁹ Juv., XVI, 7-14: «First, let's deal with the advantages shared by all soldiers. Not the least of these is that no civilian will have the nerve to beat you up. Instead, if he gets beaten up himself, he'll pretend he wasn't, and he won't be eager to show the praetor his teeth that have been knocked out, or the black lump on his face with the swollen bruises, or the eye he still has, though the doctor isn't making any promises. If he seeks redress for this, he gets a hobnailed boot for a judge, with huge calf-muscles sitting at the big bench». Such opinion is shared also by Epictetus, *Disc.*, IV, 1, 79: «You ought to treat your whole body like a poor loaded-down donkey, as long as it is possible, as long as it is allowed; and if it be commandeered and a soldier lay hold of it, let it go, do not resist nor grumble. If you do, you will get a beating and lose your little donkey just the same». And Columella, *Rust.*, 1.5.6-7: «And neither should there be any marsh-land near the buildings, and no military highway adjoining; [...] the highway, moreover, impairs an estate through the depredations of passing travellers and the constant entertainment of those who turn in for lodging».

²⁰⁰ Phang, 2008, pp. 175.

as an Arab archer. A sow having escaped from my daughter in the village and being reported to be at the house of the soldier Julius, I went to him to demand his oath about this matter, and he laying hands on me, old as I am, in the village in the middle of the day, as if there were no laws, belaboured me with blows in the presence of Nepotianus, steward of the most eminent Valerius Titanianus, and of Maurus and Ammonius, Arab archers, so that they, being shocked to see me beaten, separated us and I barely overcame his attempt on my life. I am compelled to present this petition and to request that he be arrested in order that his audacious behaviour may receive punishment; and I hold him to account. Farewell.»²⁰¹

What we can learn from this papyrus, dated 245 AD, are the details of Aurelius Serapion's petition.²⁰² He is a man of over eighty years who, as a consequence of a dispute, is beaten by a soldier in public. There are several interesting aspects of this incident. The first one concerns the location: the old man is maltreated in front of the soldier's house. The late dating of the documents makes this scenario plausible: It was not until the reign of Septimius Severus that soldiers were allowed to buy property in the province in which they were stationed.²⁰³ Furthermore, the recipient of the petition is a centurion. This is not uncommon in the Egyptian papyri from the Roman period. These officers possessed juridical power, and were often employed in arbitrating legal issues. Campbell assumes that centurions exerted juridical power in other provinces too, although the only evidence currently available are Egyptian papyri.²⁰⁴ The most common petitions addressed to these officers concerned assaults, misbehaviour during tax collections, theft, extortions and claims for justice in general.²⁰⁵ In this specific petition, Serapion mentioned the presence of a witness with the aim of strengthening the legal validity of his complaint. Given the legal privileges held by soldiers, testimony of a witness was crucial in order to obtain legal results against the accused.

Here is another example of a petition addressed to a centurion:

²⁰¹ P. Graux IV, 248. Translated by Hunt. (Select Papyri, Vol. II: Public Documents pp. 289).

²⁰² Edgar, Hunt, 1934, pp. 289. The papyrus has been included despite the later dating because of its intrinsic peculiarities which allow multifaceted considerations on the topic of abuses.

²⁰³ Furthermore, according to Serapion, the soldier was living outside the camp. If Julius was a legionary, he should have resided in the fortress of Nikopolis.

²⁰⁴ Campbell, 2002, pp.91: «Centurions informally exercised an effective legal authority and arrived at *de facto* remedies for litigants [...] In practice, centurions, backed up by the soldiers they commanded, administered a kind of rough justice».

²⁰⁵ *Idem*.

«To Quintus Gaius Passer, centurion, from Hermon, son of Demetrius. Near the village of Teïs in the toparchy of Thmoisepho of the Oxyrhynchite nome, I own a plot of land inherited from my paternal grandfather, called 'of the Woodland', in which there is a public dyke and a cistern, which is situated in the middle of my land, along with cubic measures (?) and other things. For all of these I pay the appropriate public taxes. But I am being attacked and plundered by the fishermen Pausis, Papsious and his brother, and Cales, Melas, Attinus, Pasoïs, and their accomplices, not few in number. They also brought along Titius the soldier, and approaching my cistern with many fishing lines and scaling knives, they fished with gaffs and pulled out fish worth one silver talent. Moreover, when I remonstrated with them, they came up to me apparently intending to [_ _ _] me. Since they are using force against me in many ways, I am taking recourse to you, and I request, if you agree, that you have the accused brought before you so that they may pay me back for the value of the fish, as was mentioned above, and so that in future they may keep away from my property, in order that I may be assisted. Farewell. [...]».²⁰⁶

This papyrus was found at Oxyrhynchus and was dated to 31 AD.²⁰⁷ It reports the abuse suffered by Hermon, a landowner from Teïs village. The recipient, a centurion, is again called to take disciplinary measures against a soldier named Titus. He is accused of looting Hermon's land and stealing a large number of fish for the total value of one silver talent. During the robbery he was assisted by some civilians, mostly fishermen. At the end of the plundering, the assailants used force against the victim, who intervened to block them. The two papyri presented here are part of an extensive production of petitions complaining about the behaviour of the Roman army in the province.²⁰⁸ However, not every soldier was able to escape his punishment. The following case concerns the episode of a veteran who had been beaten in public:

²⁰⁶ P. Oxy. XIX, 2234. Translation by Campbell, 1994.

²⁰⁷ Campbell, 1994, pp. 172

²⁰⁸ See also: BGU XV 2458, concerning a soldier stealing a deposit of a veteran; P.Mich. I, 12, a petition written by a veteran whose land has been confiscated. It is necessary to underline a very interesting part: «[...] And so, his criminal actions against being evident, I, a Roman, having suffered such things at the hands of an Egyptian[...]»; it is clear the intention to stress the difference in status; P.Mich. III, 174, concerning a petition against a sailor.

*«The undersigned swear by the fortune of the Emperor Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Pius that they offer the following testimony in good faith. We were in the village of Philadelphia in the Arsinoite nome, Herakleides division, at the temple of the Caesars, and that is how we happened to behold Gaius Maevious Apelles, veteran of the Appian division, being flogged with rods and scourges by two guards on order of the strategos Hierax. Therefore in good faith we depose that we beheld him being flogged in the village of Philadelphia».*²⁰⁹

This papyrus was found in Arsinoites, modern Fayum, and dated to AD 153. The witnesses producing this declaration described in detail the punishment received by Gaius Maevious Apelles, clearly a Roman citizen and veteran. Unfortunately, we cannot trace the reasons existing behind the harsh punishment inflicted on the victim. The order came directly from the *strategos* and this aspect opens different interpretations of the episode. Despite that, we can reasonably speculate that the decision followed a juridical issue, maybe opened by a petition written on the model of the ones previously investigated here. Personal reasons or a casual event do not seem convincing options with regard to this particular episode. However, it is necessary to stress that the measure involved a veteran and not an actual soldier. Furthermore, the measure was also violating the person and the rights of a Roman citizen, as also considered by Lewis.²¹⁰ This was virtually collocate a Roman citizen on the same juridical level of a standard provincial inhabitant. However, we do not know whether such an episode was a single event or was rather part of a pattern.

In conclusion, all the papyri presented in this subchapter tend to confirm Campbell's views on the harsh mistreatments perpetrated by Roman soldiers against the civilian population. Although the petitions were willingly coloured with dramatic tones, they nevertheless attest a clear lack of legal protection for civilians. In fact, victims' only chance to obtain justice was based on the efficiency of their petition. It follows that an offended civilian could have waited months or years before receiving an answer from the local authorities. Furthermore, the system of punishment was certainly not contributing to

²⁰⁹ SB V, 7523 = FIRA III, 188. Translated by Lewis, 1983.

²¹⁰ Lewis, 1983, pp. 24.

reconcile the two juridical parts in trouble.²¹¹ The issue of the abuses uncovers a different prospective on Roman soldiers. The documents here presented show a diametrically opposite description of the Roman soldier, especially if compared to the results of the previous chapter. It is hard to conjugate the figure of the protective soldier, the 'family man', with the cruel tormenter emerging from some of these petitions. A further input on this topic will be shown in the next subchapters.

Soldiers contribute to the province of Egypt

In this subchapter we will investigate Roman soldiers' non-military functions in Egypt. When not employed in warfare, soldiers could represent a resource aimed at improving the economic and social conditions of the province (infrastructure, building material, safety). In the province of Egypt, considering only legionary forces, the number reached thousands of men:

*«He reduced Egypt to the form of a province, and then to make it more fruitful and better adapted to supply the city with grain, he set his soldiers at work cleaning out all the canals into which the Nile overflows, which in the course of many years had become choked with mud».*²¹²

This report by Suetonius is an excellent example of legionary employment. In the aftermath of the Battle of Actium and the takeover of Egypt, Augustus used legions to clean the canals of the Nile River with the obvious aim to restore the province's agricultural productivity. Although there are no further testimonies of this kind for Egypt in the

²¹¹ But SB V, 7523 represents a unique case, so we do not know what type of punishments were usually addressed to soldiers in such circumstances.

²¹² Suet., *Aug.*, XVIII.

following five centuries, there is no reason to doubt that legionaries were occasionally, or even frequently, employed for these purposes.²¹³

The case of Mons Claudianus is relevant in this contest. It was a state-owned quarry located in the Eastern Desert, not far from the Red Sea, which extracted porphyry (see map). It was regularly guarded by soldiers who had security and garrison tasks. Soldiers and workers lived near the quarry with their families.²¹⁴ The case of Mons Claudianus is relevant because in the site a considerable amount of evidence has been found, including a large number of ostraca. Soldiers allocated there were not legionaries, but auxiliary forces in permanent service.²¹⁵ Some of the most interesting data with regards to this study is represented by letters written on some of these ostraca. Private correspondence included a vast number of sub-topics, ranging from family letters to military and economic dispositions.²¹⁶

Among the several kinds of relationships which linked soldiers and civilians at Mons Claudianus, the writing and reading exercises are surely the most particular. In fact, the presence of school exercises among the archaeological data attests to the work of a school master who was giving elementary lessons on the site. According to W. E. H. Cockle, such lessons were addressed to children as well as adults living at Mons Claudianus such as workers and their relatives; the ostraca show various writing exercises of growing difficulty ranging from the simple alphabet to lists of names and various verses.²¹⁷ Mons Claudianus represents a very particular example of integration between Roman soldiers and civilians. It allows us to study a long term cooperation between two categories otherwise (often) conflictual.

²¹³ Alston, 1995, pp. 79: «*The more usual role of the soldiers is shown in a document from 7 BC. Bassus wrote to Herakleides and Tryphon about the failure of the people from the hamlets to perform some task relating to the canals. The two were instructed to take a soldier and seize the crop of the villagers. Soldiers did not do the work. They merely ensured that the work would be done*». However, the task was usually conducted by the local farmer, by indication of the strategos, as pointed out by P. Oxy. XII, 1409 and P. Kron. 62.

²¹⁴ Phang, 2008, pp. 238.

²¹⁵ Bingen, 1992-2009, Vol 1-4. The majority of the mentioned names on ostraca are local rather than Latin; Furthermore see Bingen, 1992 (Vol. I), 137; it is a letter written by Valerius Palmas to the brother Valerius Longus, horseman of the *Ala Apriana*, attested in Egypt from 83 AD (Lesquier, 1918, pp.73); and Bingen, 1992 (Vol. I), 177, in which is mentioned Valerius Herianus, '*cavalryman in the turma of Iulianus*'.

²¹⁶ *Idem*.

²¹⁷ Cockle, 1992, pp. 169; the evidence are O. Claud. 179/190, (In Bingen, 1992, Vol. I).

Another type of employment was the fight and containment of banditry, a problem very prevalent in the province.²¹⁸ It is well known that Egypt was affected by various types of criminal activity ranging from theft and assault to smuggling.²¹⁹ Banditry was the phenomenon which required the most extensive deployment of force. The use of the army and navy against bandits and pirates was a standard pattern in Roman history;²²⁰ actually, policing was a secondary task of many armies of the ancient world.²²¹ From this point of view soldiers can in times of peace also be seen as a city militia.

In the case of the Roman army, it is interesting to investigate which units were fulfilling this task. In a brief but complete study on imperial procuratorial provinces, Loreto analysed the connections between the provincial organization and the allocation of legions and auxiliary corps; for this purpose, he divided Roman provinces into macro-categories in relation to their status of internal bellicosity. Procuratorial provinces were normally founded in case of new acquisitions characterised with a scarce urban development, or which were not completely pacified (such as Corsica, Sardinia and Thrace). This second feature, which the author defines as 'low intensity', included phenomena ranging from banditry to guerrilla, and therefore always internal and not external threats. Procuratorial provinces were normally governed by an equestrian procurator who commanded only auxiliary troops. This fact allowed Loreto to conclude that the auxiliaries themselves were concerned with maintaining internal order while the legions were involved in dealing with external threats.²²² This theory can be applied to Egypt, although the province had always hosted at least one legion according to its

²¹⁸ Strabo, *Geog.*, XVII, 1, 57 resized the phenomenon of banditry in Egypt. He argued that « *the remaining parts, those towards the south, are inhabited by Troglodytes, Blemmyes, Nubae, and Megabari, those Aethiopians who live above Syenê. These are nomads, and not numerous, or warlike either, though they were thought to be so by the ancients, because often, like brigands, they would attack defenceless persons. [...] And now, too, the whole of the country is similarly disposed to peace. And the following is a sign of the fact: the country is sufficiently guarded by the Romans with only three cohorts, and even these are not complete; and when the Aethiopians dared to make an attack upon them, they imperiled their own country* ». However, this optimistic description has been reconsidered by Alston, 1995, pp. 83.

²¹⁹ On criminal activities in Roman and Byzantine Egypt see: Baldwin, 1963.

²²⁰ Among the best-known episodes one is that of Pompey's successful campaign against pirates of the Eastern Mediterranean in 67 BC.

²²¹ Shaw, 1984, pp. 18: « *Wherever and whenever adequate documentation is available relevant to this internal role of the army in contact with the vast majority of the inhabitants of the empire (for example, the papyri of Egypt, the Christian martyr acts) we find soldiers everywhere functioning as investigators, enforcers, torturers, policemen, executioners and jailers* ».

²²² Loreto, 2000.

exceptional status.²²³ Moreover, there are some records about the extent of this phenomenon in the province:

«[...] I therefore encourage everyone to return to their place of residence [...] those who deliberately associate with fugitives who have chosen an evil and criminal life [...] they know that it has been ordained to the epistrategoi, to the strategoi and to the soldiers sent by me to safeguard the security and the tranquillity of the region, to suppress the raids nip it in the bud, by anticipating and preventing them [...]».²²⁴

The extract above is part of the edict issued by Marcus Sempronius Liberalis, *praefectus Aegypti* from 154 AD to AD 159. The document is dated to 154 AD, probably on the day he entered office.²²⁵ This is an edict that can be placed in the field of official acts addressed to combat the phenomenon of *anachoresis*, i.e. the constant migratory flow of villagers abandoning their residences to escape into the desert, where they lived by expedients or joined bandit communities. Such groups were spread throughout the province and had much older origins than Roman rule in Egypt. Furthermore, such movements were motivated by the will to escape liturgies. The peculiarity of this edict is represented by the presence of a promise of amnesty. All the fugitives would have received immunity for a long series of crimes allowing them to return to their homes within three months from the edict's publication in case they done wrong.²²⁶ The document is relevant for our study because it mentions both the phenomena of banditry and the fact that soldiers were employed to fight it. Unfortunately, we do not know if the prefect was referring to auxiliary cohorts or to legionaries. The aforementioned study of Loreto would suggest the

²²³ Brizzi, 2002. On the other hand, the use of regular units for the suppression of guerrilla warfare is historically ineffective. Beside the most recent conflicts, such as US intervention in Vietnam or that of the French in Algeria, there are at least two examples of great significance in Roman republican history. During the Samnite wars, the clumsy and rigid optatic phalanx, used by the Roman legions of the fourth century, dramatically showed its limits. The difficulties in dealing with an elusive enemy, exploiting perfectly the rough territory of Italian southern Apennine, resulted in the disastrous defeat of the Caudine Forks (321 BC): the resonance of that episode led the Romans to a complete revolution of panoply and tactics within the legions (manipulative reform). The second example of some importance concerns the assimilation of the Iberian Peninsula. The first portions of territory were inherited by the Romans in the aftermath of the Second Punic War (202 BC). However, the complete acquisition of the peninsula was completed only by Augustus, at the end of the 1st century BC. The process therefore lasted almost two centuries, mainly due to the local tribes (the Celtiberian and the Lusitanian firstly, and then the Astures and Cantabrian in the last phase of the invasion) whose resistance was difficult to bend.

²²⁴ SB XX, 14662. My translation.

²²⁵ Zaccaria, 1988, pp. 27.

²²⁶ *Idem*, pp. 17-18. The amnesty would have covered all the crimes, except for murder and impiety. It was available for all the fugitives independently if they were just suspects or if they were declared guilty.

latter category. However, the intervention of legionaries cannot be excluded. In fact, this is a period of tranquillity for *Legio II Traiana Fortis*. The unit would not be involved in any major military action until it supported Niger in 194.²²⁷

The search for papyrological material which directly concerns the phenomenon of banditry is not made easy by the Roman conception of this criminal activity itself. In Latin, the Romans used the word “bandit” (*latro*) to indicate a wide range of criminal categories, such as the «mercenary, political adversary, mutineer, usurper, revolutionary, mountain-man, barbarian».²²⁸ The same issue is present also in the Greek papyri. Here, the term *ληστής* had a wide meaning including also “robber” and “assaulter”. The semantic problem is not irrelevant because it complicates the selection of potentially useful evidence. The following petition has been selected from many because it responds to the classic characteristics of banditry:

*«To Megalonymos, strategos of the division of Themistos and Polemon of the Arsinoite nome, From Pasion, son of Herakleides, from the district of the Hellenion, and from Onesimos, son of Amerimnos [...] both pig merchants of the metropolis. Yesterday, which was the 19th of the present month of Thoth, we were coming up from the town of Theadelphia of the division of Themistos, and at dawn certain malefactors attacked us midway between Polydeukia and Theadelphia. They bound us, along with the tower-guard as well, abused us with many blows, and wounded Pasion. They took one of our pigs and stole Pasion's tunic [...] therefore we submit this petition and ask that it be kept on file and our account be preserved so that when the guilty ones appear we have a complaint against them about these things...».*²²⁹

The papyrus was found near Fayum and dated to 171 AD. This is a petition complaining of some bandits who assaulted the merchants while travelling in the way between Polydeukia and Theadelphia. The assault unfolded in perfect bandit-style:

²²⁷ Actually, its participation in Lucius Verus' Parthian campaign remains debated. *The Legio II Traiana Fortis* is not mentioned in any source; However, renouncing to the legion would be at least strange, considering that it was already in Egypt. In this sense we can also read the increase of auxiliary units set up in the period between the campaigns of Trajan and Lucius Verus.

²²⁸ McGing, 1998, pp. 160. Surprisingly, we have several examples of bandits stealing pigs in the province. See also: P. Ryl. II, 134; and P. Ryl. II, 140.

²²⁹ P. Fay. 108. Translated by Bryen, 2013.

surprised on their own path, the two victims are tied, worn out and robbed. All this happened with the help of an unspecified guard. Certainly he was not a legionary, because it would not explain his employment for such a task; he could have been an auxiliary assigned to patrolling the communication path or a simple private guard. The receiver of the message this time is a *strategos*, not a centurion, confirming that the judicial power of the latter was probably limited to their men, or to common crimes.²³⁰ The thefts and acts of banditry were perhaps persecuted by different authorities, in this case the man in charge of Egyptian nomes. Moreover, it is important to note the absence of references to the identity of the two robbers. Many of the petitions for theft found in Egypt freely mentioned those suspected by the victim: usually friends, relatives, neighbours, or enemies.²³¹ The absence of references to the identity of the robbers confirms a criminal assault for economical purposes; the assailants were probably exploiting the road for their actions.

This subchapter allows us to conclude that soldiers had different tasks beside their military duty. In times of peace they could have been employed as manpower, or with patrolling tasks, such as the containment of banditry. These extra functions put them in contact directly with the local population. The case of Mons Claudianus is particularly interesting because it concerned the coexistence of soldiers and civilians at the same spot. Our investigation turns now to the relation between soldiers and trade.

Soldiers and business

*«In point of fact, evidence for actual economic relations between soldiers and civilians, as between cities and legions, reveals a situation of enormous complexity».*²³²

²³⁰ See: P. Ryl. 2. 141; and P. Mich. III, 175.

²³¹ Baldwin, 1963. The name of the person accused is often present within the document text. See: P. Mich. V, 230, concerning a robbery at the petitioner's house; and P. Tebt. II, 304, concerning an assault against the petitioner's brother.

²³² Ando, 2007, pp. 373, in 'Erdkamp, 2007'.

The deployment of a legion in a province represented an economic boost of considerable impact. It contributed to monetary distribution between the provinces of the empire, through the payment of wages and encouraged trade routes intended to supply soldiers and their entourage.

The difficulties pointed out by Ando, when it comes to investigating the relationship between soldiers on the one hand, and merchants and craftsmen on the other, are due to the impossibility of creating standard patterns that are valid for all the Roman provinces. In theory, after Marius' military reform of 107 BC, the economic burden of obtaining the equipment fell on the state budget, and not on the single soldier. In practice, the recruit received his own panoply in advance and later paid it back, by instalments taken from his salary.²³³ In general, the Roman production process of weapons and equipment destined to the legions remains a nebulous topic. Vegetius argued that every legion had its own blacksmith hired for this purpose.²³⁴ Indeed, some provinces were provided with *fabricae*: state-owned workshops, charged with the production of clothing, weapons and equipment for soldiers.²³⁵ In Egypt, as in the East in general, we do not have archaeological evidence supporting the existence of *fabricae*. Furthermore, the investigation may be helped by this passage from Dio Cassius, with reference to the outbreak of the Bar Kokhba war:

²³³ Tac., *Ann.*, I, 17: «In fact, the whole trade of war was comfortless and profitless: ten asses a day was the assessment of body and soul: with that they had to buy clothes, weapons and tents, bribe the bullying centurion and purchase a respite from duty!». See also Cascarino, 2008, Vol. II, pp. 49.

²³⁴ Veg. *Mil.*, II, 11: «The legion had a train of joiners, masons, carpenters, smiths, painters, and workmen of every kind for the construction of barracks in the winter-camps and for making or repairing the wooden towers, arms, carriages and the various sorts of machines and engines for the attack or defense of places. They had also traveling workshops in which they made shields, cuirasses, helmets, bows, arrows, javelins and offensive and defensive arms of all kinds. The ancients made it their chief care to have everything for the service of the army within the camp. [...] All these were under the direction of the officer called *praefectus fabrum*». The rule of *praefectus fabrum* could be a mistake because existing only in the late antiquity; The man caring about supplies and the equipment is the *praefectus castrorum*, assisted in the task by the *optio fabricae*.

²³⁵ See, for example, Tab. Vind., II, 155. 343 men worked in the *fabricae* addressed to supply the auxiliary forces located there. In Corbridge the rest of a huge structure has been found (560 square meters) capable to host 100-150 working men. Their task was the production and repair of the soldiers' panoply (Campbell, 1994, pp. 121; Collins, McIntosh, 2014, pp. 14). The artisans could be civilians, or soldiers specially trained in these tasks. See also RIB 156: it is an epigraph dedicated to Julius Vitalis, blacksmith working for the *Legio XX Valeria Victrix*. The same funeral is commissioned by his blacksmith company (ex collegio fabrice elatvs); Finally, see Digest L.6.7. The categories of *immunes* are listed in it, namely the soldiers exempted from the most unfavourable tasks because provided with qualities or duties that were useful to the legion. Among them, the *custodes armorum* (guardians of the weapons store) can be detected. There is also an *optio fabricae*. He was the man responsible for the management of the *fabrica*, caring therefore for the production and maintenance of the legionary panoply.

« [...] for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there. So long, indeed, as Hadrian was close by in Egypt and again in Syria, they remained quiet, save in so far as they purposely made of poor quality such weapons as they were called upon to furnish, in order that the Romans might reject them and they themselves might thus have the use of them; but when he went farther away, they openly revolted». ²³⁶

According to the historian, Jews from nearby Judea were called to produce weapons for the Roman soldiers allocated in the province. This data, combined with the absence of proven workshops in the *pars orientalis*, suggests that there were private smiths handling the production and maintenance of the legionary and auxiliary panoply, even in Egypt; they were probably located nearby cities or in the *canabae*. ²³⁷ The most convincing interpretation concerns the commission and the purchase by the state of batches of equipment; it was then collected in stores ²³⁸ and sold to the soldiers who paid with money subtracted from their wage. ²³⁹

The scenario is different when the soldier becomes an active economic entity. According to Duncan-Jones' calculations, the average expense on food in Egypt was around 39 *denarii* per year, ²⁴⁰ corresponding to about the 17% of the annual wage of a simple *miles* in the Augustan age (225 *denarii*). ²⁴¹ This data suggests that, even after the equipment deductions, soldiers still had a good amount of money left to spend. Restricted in his business by the Augustan ban, which forbade the purchase of real estate in the

²³⁶ Cass. Dio, LXIX, 12.

²³⁷ A passage Tac., *Hist.*, II, 82, would confirm this thesis. In his narration Vespasian ordered the cities to produce weapons in occasion of the war against Vitellius (69 AD): «*The first business of the war was to hold levies and to recall the veterans to the colours. The strong towns were selected to manufacture arms; gold and silver were minted at Antioch; and all these preparations, each in its proper place, were quickly carried forward by expert agents. Vespasian visited each place in person, encouraged the workmen, spurring on the industrious by praise and the slow by his example, concealing his friends' faults rather than their virtues*». See also P. Oxy. XXXVI 2760, concerning the transport of 775 sheets manufactured in Oxyrhynchos, and destined to the soldiers of the *Legio II Traiana Fortis*.

²³⁸ The existence of stores addressed to the collection of armors and weapons is attested by the figure of the *custos armorum*, a very common category of *immunes*.

²³⁹ SPP XXII, 92 = Speidel 1981b (Fayum, II/III century AD): «*Flavius Silvanus, standard-bearer of the horseguards of the prefect, to the elders of the village of Socnopaios, greetings. I have received from you the spears of palm-wood that were assigned to you, for which I have paid out the agreed fee from public funds*». Translated by Campbell, 1994. The equipment was commissioned (or imposed) at those villages provided of artisans capable of producing it. See also: BGU VII, 1564.

²⁴⁰ Duncan-Jones, 1974, pp. 365–6.

²⁴¹ Cascarino, 2008, Vol. II pp. 48.

province where they were allocated, commercial activities had to be focused on movable goods. They were constantly fought by the officers, and badly seen by the jurists:

*«Paternus has also written that the man who is attentive to the responsibilities of the command of an army should grant leave very sparingly, not permit a horse which belongs to the military to be taken outside the province, and not send soldiers to carry out any private job, or to fish or hunt. In the rules of discipline established by Augustus it is laid down as follows: 'Although I know that it is not inappropriate for soldiers to be occupied in building work, I am nevertheless afraid that if I grant permission for anything to be done which might be in my interest or yours, it would not be done in a fashion which would be acceptable to me'».*²⁴²

In this extract from Digest the jurist Aemilius Macer outlined the limitations that should have been applied to soldiers. Application to extra-institutional activities was seen as a lack of discipline which affected the military efficiency of the Roman war machine. This mind-set can be placed in the same historical current of Tacitus's passage which opened this chapter and sanctioned the necessary division between the civil and military worlds.²⁴³

Such limitations were probably formally respected judging by the lack of commercial documentation concerning Roman soldiers, at least in Egypt.²⁴⁴ However, lack of evidence does not mean, in this case, a lack of trade.²⁴⁵ Such absence could be justified by the will to not leave tangible traces of such activities, given the aversion of lawyers and officers for any extra-institutional task involving soldiers.²⁴⁶ Moreover, a dim indication of commercial activity by legionaries can be found in a passage of Suetonius:

²⁴² *Dig.*, 49.16.12.1 (*Macer 1 de re milit.*).

²⁴³ See the aforementioned references to the Eastern Legions (*cfr.* note 59).

²⁴⁴ Also the references to other provinces are scarce. See for example: Tab. Vind. II, 343. There is a potential exception represented by O.Ber. II 126, a receipt of a purchase involving a soldier. However, the subject of the transaction is gone missed. Furthermore, the detailed mention to his cohort may suggest that the purchase was made on the behalf of his unit (See also SB III, 6957).

²⁴⁵ Phang, 2008, pp. 176-177. Other reasons of profit were represented by loans and bribes.

²⁴⁶ See conclusions of this chapter.

*«When provisions were very scarce during a foray and a soldier was accused of having sold for a hundred denarii a peck of wheat which was left from his rations, Galba gave orders that when the man began to lack food, he should receive aid from no one; and he starved to death».*²⁴⁷

This anecdote refers to the two years spent by Galba in Africa as *proconsul* (44-46 AD). At that time the province was disturbed by disorders, internal discord and raids of barbarians from the southern area. According to Suetonius, Galba was chosen to restore the discipline and to bring the province back to tranquillity.²⁴⁸ However, from the context described by Suetonius, it would seem that the soldier was punished for the immorality of his act, rather than for the sale itself. In fact, the passage is permeated by an unconcealed rhetoric addressing the soldier's behaviour.

While information regarding actual soldiers in Egypt and their commercial activities is completely absent, the condition is different for those veterans who started a commercial activity after discharge. They could take advantage of their network, skills and the generous cash gratuity to open their own business. The most common goods according to the evidence available were represented by animals, especially camels, horses, mules and donkeys:

*« [...] Marcus Iulius Apollinaris, of approximately 58 years old, veteran, having a scar on the left eyebrow, states that he sold to Simarion, son of Socrates, approximately 25 years old and no particular signs, a donkey belonging to him. The donkey is growing its first tooth and cannot be returned. He recognized that he received the agreed price of 340 silver drachmas and he confirms this sale providing all the guarantees. [...] ».*²⁴⁹

The papyrus was found in Egypt and is dated to 141 AD. It concerns a commercial contract between a civilian, probably Egyptian, and a Roman veteran. It has been chosen because it attests the contact between a former Roman soldier and a local civilian. In particular, this document is one of the few concerning a veteran selling and not buying an item. This aspect, combined with the donkey's young age, may suggest that the veteran

²⁴⁷ Suet., *Galb.*, VII.

²⁴⁸ *Idem.* However, the record could have been created on purpose by the author, with rhetorical aims.

²⁴⁹ P. Meyer 13. My Translation. Other contracts of this kind are: P. Mich. IX, 551, and P. Athen. 27.

was involved in trading. Despite this, no further insights within the papyrus text would indicate an actual commercial activity ruled by Marcus.

Switching to immovable proprieties, Egypt provided several documents involving veterans. They are mainly contracts which concerned former soldiers (serving in auxiliary forces, but also previous legionaries) buying houses with the aim to settle down in the province. The following papyrus mentions the renting of a soldier's house:

*«Receive with my recommendation the bearer of this letter, Terentianus, an honourably discharged soldier, and acquaint him with our villagers' residing there, I have urged upon him that he rent my house for this year and next for sixty drachmas, and that he take a lease of my field for sixty drachmas, and I'd like to use the one hundred and twenty drachmas to buy for me from our friend the linen-merchant by the temple in the city [...]».*²⁵⁰

This papyrus is dated to the AD 135-136 and was found in Karanis. The author serves in the fleet and expects to be discharged in around one year. The receiver is his brother, an already discharged soldier.²⁵¹ The main purpose of this mail is to provide instructions for renting the author's house. But reading between the line of the letter we can detect a second interesting aspect. Lewis argued that the recommendations on Terentianus' behalf suggest that local population may have been reacting negatively at the idea of a new veteran settling down.²⁵²

The last presented papyrus represents one of a kind:

«[...] Thenetkoueis daughter of Heron, olive-carrier, Persian woman, about twenty-six years old with a scar on her right shin, with as guardian her kinsman Leontas son of Hippalos, about fifty-four years old with a scar on his forehead to the right, agrees with Lucius Bellenus Gemellus discharged from military service from the legion, about sixty-seven years old with a scar on the left wrist, that she has received from him directly in cash from the house sixteen drachmas of silver as non-returnable caution money. Therefore

²⁵⁰ SB VI, 9636. Translation by Lewis, 1933. See P. Diog. 10, in which a veteran owning a plot of land is mentioned; P.Mich. VI, 427, concerning a discharged legionary selling his propriety; P.Mich. VI, 428, concerning a discharged cavalryman buying an house; and the later P.Mich. IX, 542 and SB XII, 10982. Another business involving soldiers and veterans was the money lone. This is not surprising, as soldiers were paid in cash money and tended therefor to count on a certain availability. See: P.Mich. IX, 569 and SB XXII, 15325.

²⁵¹ Lewis, 1933, pp. 22.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 23.

Thenetkoueis must carry at the olive-press belonging to Lucius Bellenus Gemellus in Euhemeria, from whatever day he orders her, the olive which constitute the produce of the present third year, performing all that befits an olive-carrier until the completion of the oil-making, and receiving from Lucius Bellenus the same daily wage as the other olive-carriers in the village; and Lucius shall deduct the sixteen drachmas of silver by instalments from her wages [...]».²⁵³

The papyrus is dated to AD 99 and it is originally from Euhemeria in the Arsinoite nome. What we learn from the document is a contract stipulated between a young Persian woman and a former legionary. The agreement concerned her employment as olive-carrier in the veteran's estate. This papyrus represents a unique example of integrating two categories of people who often have been seen as separated. As specified by the contract, Lucius was serving in a Roman legion. This would suggest his non-Egyptian origins.²⁵⁴ As a consequence of being discharged, he settled down in the province and he started a real entrepreneurial activity, providing work for local people. The extent of such business is confirmed by other documents mentioning the veteran. In an account document produced by him, Lucius enlisted dozens of workers employed in his crops, with their related wage. In the list appeared men, women and also young boys.²⁵⁵ Furthermore, we know from another papyrus that Lucius hired Pindarus, a private guard for his estate.²⁵⁶ This series of documents allow us to conclude that Lucius owned a large scale business rather than a small local one.

In consideration of the documents here examined, we can reflect on some preliminary conclusions regarding the relationship between Roman soldiers and business. In fact, documents attesting soldiers' commercial activities are mainly absent for the province of Egypt. The only few exceptions concern documents which attest soldiers trading on the behalf of their military unit. On the other hand, we do not miss evidence concerning veterans' economic activities. The *silentium* of sources can, of course, be interpreted as an actual respect of the ban on extra-military activities. However, this hypothesis would lead

²⁵³ P. Fay. 91. Translation by Rowlandson, 1998.

²⁵⁴ In fact, the early datation would indicate a non-Egyptian provenance. See Forni's and Alston's surveys (pp. 49 and pp. 54).

²⁵⁵ P. Fay. 102.

²⁵⁶ P. Fay 113 and P. Fay. 114.

us to accept a scenario in which several soldiers found their commercial vocation only after they had been discharged, but this does not seem likely. For these reasons it is necessary to consider the existence of trade between soldiers and civilians, although we cannot give an estimation of its range.

Conclusions

This study had the ambition to investigate the expression of Roman rule in Egypt by analysing how the Roman presence was perceived in the province. The effects of such a perception have been considered in different fields of everyday life in Egypt. Our investigation has therefore been conducted by examining the sources concerning the relations between the Roman soldiers and the local population. For the same purpose, our study has joined the actual theoretical debate existing on the topic. It has been explained that historians have reached decisively different opinions along the years. Such conclusions ranged from the speculation of a consistent integration pattern, to a decisive difficult cohabitation.²⁵⁷ The most obvious result obtained is the lack of uniformity in the selected evidence. The remarkable heterogeneity of the sources and of the judgments contained therein reveals the extremely complex and multifaceted local interactions.

The first task of this work was to investigate the rulers' mind-set, namely how the Romans justified their hegemony over foreign populations. When Egypt was made a Roman province in 30 BC, the *Urbs* had already elaborated its own ecumenical philosophy, which finds its greatest expression in the analysed passages of Polybius.²⁵⁸ Rome was perfectly aware of its mission, which was even clearer from the first century BC, in the wake of the very aggressive foreign policies perpetuated during the late-republican period. This age is, in fact, characterized by real wars of aggression, wars whose ethical justification was difficult for also some ancient commentators. What emerged from primary sources was a latent, but conscious, imperialistic mind-set within Roman authorities. Furthermore, such attitude is perfectly coherent with the theory of the Anarchic Interstate System. Such a theory was originally published by Eckstein and Wolf with the aim to offer a new angle on the centenary debate on Roman imperialism. The results achieved here demonstrate that it fits with the mind-set extrapolated by most of the ancient authors' texts investigated. However, a further open issue remains: It is impossible to establish to what extent did this bellicose mind-set reflect on the simple soldiers' attitude deployed in the province.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ On the theoretical debate see 'Introduction', pp. 2-3.

²⁵⁸ And, in minor size, in the other extracts from the Roman historians here analysed.

²⁵⁹ Even if we detected some insights in the further chapters. *Cfr.* Note 208, P. Mich. I, 12: «[...] And so, his criminal actions against being evident, I, a Roman, having suffered such things at the hands of an Egyptian[...]».

According to several historians, Roman attitude reflected Rome's aggressive foreign policy. This theoretical current argued that the aim of any deployment of military forces in newly acquired provinces would, above all, be to police and repress. When applying these considerations at the local level, we could expect that relations with the population were confined to the mistrust and cultural repulsion typical of military domination. Although some symptoms of this social malaise have been found, the scenario that emerged from the selected evidence is more articulate.

On one hand, we have clear evidence of misbehaviour committed by the Roman army. These habits found their most hated expressions in illegal requisitions, abuses and physical harassment. As a result of this, the production of petitions and complaints addressed to centurions and *strategoi* has been intense.²⁶⁰ Malpractice certainly increased the negative perception of the Roman soldier, seen sometimes as an unscrupulous persecutor, and against whom there was no protection. The soldier's status guaranteed undeniable advantages, especially regarding the law, which would not have eased their integration into society. It was a well-known condition in ancient times, as we have noticed from the judgment of Juvenal, Epictetus and Columella.

On the other hand, alongside this certainly negative types of relationship, there was another equally, or more important, and somewhat opposite trend. This aspect especially emerged in the investigation of the sources related to the family relationships. Due to the vast papyrological production, we have found numerous legal documents attesting to the practice of concubinage and the related legal issues. In this new context, certainly more personal, the soldier takes off the mask of the oppressor, to wear the one of the husband and father. Moreover, this form of surrogate family was only formally fought by the authorities, and there was no form of moral criticism towards such unions.²⁶¹ This is demonstrated not only by the silence of the sources on this subject, but also by the legitimization of soldiers' family after discharge. The substantial absence of sources concerning legionaries needs to be pointed out. In fact, the available evidence mainly referred to auxiliary forces. This aspect has been explained by a possible negative impact of the different geographical and cultural background characterizing Roman legionaries for the good part of the first two centuries AD. This was the main difference affecting the

²⁶⁰ Frictions between the Egyptian population and the Roman army were also not healed by the ways how the authorities' reacted to such complaints. While, on the one hand, there is extensive production of edicts aimed to fight soldiers' misbehaviours, their effectiveness remains dubious.

²⁶¹ Phang, 2001, pp. 386.

two corps, as soldiers belonging to *auxilia* were mainly recruited on the spot. The principal arguments in favour of this hypothesis are the two surveys published by Forni and Alston. The former concerns strictly the development in Roman legionaries' geographical origins, from Augustus to the end of the 3rd century. The latter regards the process of recruitment localization. It is important to note that the spread of concubinage in the 2nd century AD and after is not limited to Egypt but involved also the other Roman provinces, as argued by Phang.²⁶²

Beside family relationships, there are further arguments in favour of the trend supporting the substantial integration between Roman soldiers and local population. The local perception of the soldier of Rome improved when he was called to contribute to social and economic improvements within the province. The investigation of the selected sources resulted in the identification of some extra tasks involving Roman units deployed in the province. Soldiers could have been employed as manpower, or to fight the issue of banditry. Furthermore, we highlighted several petitions addressed to centurions. They attest their involvement in the administration of justice assisting, in this task, *strategoi* and prefects. It is important to note that such activity was not regarding military abuses only (such as soldiers' harassment of local people) but also common crimes.

The picture outlined here is completed by the economic impact of Roman forces in Egypt. The production of weapons, as the supply process of the army, are nebulous aspects of Roman history, not only in Egypt. The sources in this regard are scarce and limited to few provinces. Furthermore, in Egypt there is no evidence of *fabricae*, namely the workshops which were fulfilling this task. It is therefore hypothesized that the burden of producing and maintaining the Roman soldiers' panoply belonged to local blacksmiths and artisans. The goods were probably commissioned or imposed depending on the circumstances. Such a result has been achieved by investigating the few available hints on the topic, mainly consisting in papyrological and literary sources. This system was a great opportunity of enrichment for different local production categories and merchants. Unfortunately, further efforts in this topic remain difficult, as we miss a solid archaeological base of investigation (on the model of the province of Britannia).²⁶³

It is necessary to stress that a second fundamental point emerged during this investigation. The differences in Roman social policy concerning soldiers and veterans

²⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 152.

²⁶³ *Cfr.* note 235.

turned out very clearly, with obvious repercussions on the relationship with local civilians. On one side, soldiers' relationships outside the military field were fought against with energy, except for those concerning concubinage. Such attitude is evident in the production of edicts addressed to limit soldiers' prerogatives in relation to local economy. This concept was deeply rooted in the Roman elites' mind-set. For instance, the same ancient historians left an extensive production of critiques against Eastern legions, accused to be militarily inefficient because of cities comforts.²⁶⁴

If the Roman social policy towards its soldiers was addressed to restrict integration, an opposite treatment was given to veterans. Several insights attesting a change in attitude have been detected. A discharged soldier received a generous economic bonus and, if he belonged to an auxiliary unit, Roman citizenship.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, this new legal status was extended to their family where present. These measures allowed the veteran to settle down placing him in relatively wealthy economic conditions. As a consequence of this, a vast production of evidence involving veterans and their businesses are attested in Egypt. These documents include trade of goods and estates. Among them, the most noticeable are certainly those regarding Lucius Gemellus, who managed to start a large scale enterprise concerning olive oil.²⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the number of sources concerning Roman soldiers and business are rather scarce. When a trading soldier is mentioned in the Egyptian papyri, he was usually purchasing or ordering goods for his unit, rather than for himself.²⁶⁷ This scenario compels us to admit that the juridical limitations concerning soldiers and business were, at least formally, respected.

One last point needs to be cleared. It has been said that the heterogeneity of the relationships between Roman soldiers and local civilians has been interpreted in decisively different ways. There is a polarisation between modern authors on the two opposing theoretical positions regarding such social interactions. However, the same Anarchic Interstate System theory may help to shed light on how Romans behaved within the provinces. The theory was originally created to offer a different and revolutionary interpretation on diplomacy between ancient powers in the Mediterranean scenario. One of its theoretical pillars consisted in rejecting the classical dualism (defensive or

²⁶⁴ *Cfr.* Note 59. It is interesting to note that such accuses are spread in more than three centuries.

²⁶⁵ An internal policy representing a real boost to the Romanization process.

²⁶⁶ See: P. Fay. 91, pp. 72.

²⁶⁷ Furthermore, the important role of the intermediary in economical local matters has constantly emerged in our research.

aggressive) intensively adopted by historians in the study of Roman imperialism. Following the same principle, it is necessary to reject a rigid interpretation of Roman troops' interactions in Egypt according to the dichotomy systematic harassment/pattern of integration. Within the province, the different pictures depicted by ancient sources are only apparently disjointed. The interactions of the Roman army in Egypt relied on two important factors: the variety of people serving into the military troops, and the development of these over time.

With regard to the former, Roman military units were composed of thousands of men with different cultural and geographical backgrounds. Social pressure, unexpected events and opportunities found different responses in different human beings. This is even more true if we consider the lack of real legal limitations affecting Roman society, not only in Egypt. As we have seen, the juridical protections for the victim of a felony were mostly limited to the production of petitions addressed to local authorities. If, according to Eckstein, the lack of an international diplomatic organism resulted in chaos among Mediterranean powers, the lack of a solid legal system affected as well the relationships between Roman soldiers and local people. Following this pattern, we may provide reasonable and contextualized explanations to the violent and savage episodes depicted by some of the sources here investigated.

The other aspect regards the changes over time. Romans ruled over Egypt for several centuries. Even reducing our case study to the first two centuries AD, it is impossible to analyse this period of time as static. Roman legionaries serving in Nikopolis during the first century met a different social environment to those allocated in the same spot one century later. But this is not all. Several other social and military aspects changed over time, as has clearly emerged in this study. The geographical composition within the legions transformed, as did their number and their allocation. It follows that we should reflect on the integration process of the Roman army in Egypt as a path which, with Roman policies and time, progressed. Historians should be taken away from making any unitary analyse with the aim of creating a social model which does not take these considerations into account. However, what we have seen is that soldiers were not completely separated from the locals. Although some social friction persevered, the soldiers were not viewed simply with mistrust. They also provided manpower and law enforcement, they created family units and, after discharge, stayed and ran thriving

businesses. While they could take advantage of their position, they could also integrate and become part of the community.

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