ON CAPTIVES UNDER THE PRINCIPATE

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War is the father of all and king of all.
Some . . . he makes slaves, others free.
Heraclitus of Ephesus

A PORTION OF THE FRIEZE FROM THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO SOSIANUS IN ROME shows two barbarian captives sitting on a *ferculum*, both men, their hands bound behind their backs, about to be hoisted into the air for display in a triumphal procession (Plate 1). The lower register of the Gemma Augustea shows two pairs of prisoners: to the left a long-haired and bare-chested man sits on the ground, looking defiant, his arms tied behind his back, while a woman sitting at his side rests her head on her hands seemingly exhausted as Roman soldiers raise a trophy in the background; to the right another man, again long-haired and bare-chested but also wearing a torque around his neck, kneels in pathetic submission as a soldier behind rudely drags along a female captive by the hair (Plate 2). A scene on the Column of Trajan depicts a Roman soldier bringing a captive before the emperor: the man's hands are again tied behind him and the soldier is pushing him along, one hand on the prisoner's back, the other on the back of his head (Plate 3). A memorable section of the Column of Marcus Aurelius presents two barbarian prisoners leaning forward with bowed heads and pinioned hands: under the supervision of Roman cavalrymen they are waiting for the raised swords of executioners to fall on their necks and they can see the corpses of two other already decapitated prisoners lying in front of them (Plate 4). One of the panel reliefs of Marcus Aurelius has another pair of captives being violently hauled before the emperor: a man has his long hair grasped from behind by a soldier who forces the prisoner's tormented face up to look at the emperor standing on a tribunal; the other, his face full of despair, has his arms in manacles and he is shoved along by another soldier whose burly arm stretches across his shoulders. A pedestal relief on the Forum Arch of Septimius Severus shows yet another captive in chains: but this time the man's arms are in front of him, and he has enough freedom of movement to allow him to clutch a captive infant to his chest as he walks forward with a fellow prisoner, their captors following on behind.[1]

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[1] Temple of Apollo Sosianus: Ryberg 1955: 144–146, fig. 78 a, b; Zanker 1988: 68–69, fig. 55; Kleiner 1992: 85–86, fig. 64; Richardson 1992: 12–13; Ferris 2000: 33–35, fig. 11; *LTUR* I 49–54. Gemma Augustea: Hannestad 1988: 78–80, fig. 51; Kleiner 1992: 69–71, fig. 47; Boardman 1993: 274 (J. J. Pollitt), plate XVIII #271; Ferris 2000: 36–38, fig. 15. Trajan's Column: Ryberg 1967: plate XLII fig. 43; Coarelli 2000: plate 16; cf. in general Lehmann-Hartleben 1926: 50–63. Column of Marcus: Caprino *et al.* 1955: 102–103, tav. XXXVIII fig. 76; Hannestad 1988: 238–239, fig. 146;

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From the age of Augustus to the age of Septimius Severus (and beyond) images of prisoners appeared in numerous works of Roman art, both private and public, small-scale and monumental. They conveyed to those who saw them political and ideological messages about the continuing strength of Roman military power and imperial rule. No matter what the importance and appeal of the *pax Augusta* (itself an ideological construct), the militaristic ethos of the Republic which had led to the creation of empire was still very much alive under the Principate and was constantly being recharged. Representations of the defeated being led away into captivity appeared in the paintings that accompanied triumphal processions at Rome and expressed to audiences watching them the exploits of their victorious leaders. Captives appeared on terracotta plaques that were used as household decorations, on items of Arretine domestic pottery, and even on such relatively trivial items as gemstones. When similar images were set on coins as well, hardly anyone can have failed to understand their import.[2]

My concern in this essay, however, is not so much with the ideological significance of these images as, more prosaically, their value for understanding the regularity with which prisoners of war were taken by Rome under the Principate in actual military situations. There is evidence here that to the best of my knowledge has not been given the attention it deserves. In particular I want to suggest, first, that the images of captives that are so widespread in visual media have a direct bearing on the contentious issue of how the Roman slave supply was maintained in the period from Augustus through the Severans, and, secondly, that the images indicate that war contributed more new slaves than is sometimes allowed. I shall assume in so doing that whether in the form of triumphal arches and columns, coin issues or other artistic media such as battle sarcophagi (in all their horrendous savagery), the images of warfare on which Roman art under the Principate relied so heavily, and of the human spoils that warfare produced, must bear some relationship to a lived historical reality.[3]

Just how widespread in public and private art images of captives were may be appreciated from various provincial items. In the public sphere, first, male and female captives can still be seen at La Turbie in a remote spot high above Monaco in the Maritime Alps flanking the inscription on the Tropaeum Augusti which records the first *princeps*' conquest of forty-five Alpine tribes, while on the Arch of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus at Tripoli in Libya (Roman Oea) it is

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Kleiner 1992: 298–299, fig. 267; Ferris 2000: 90–91, fig. 42; cf. in general Becatti 1960: 47–82; *LTUR* I 302–305. Panel reliefs: Ryberg 1967: 57, plate XLI fig. 42, plate XL figs. 41a, 41b; cf. Hannestad 1988: 230. Forum Arch: Brilliant 1967: 155–156, plate 53a; cf. Hannestad 1988: 266; Kleiner 1992: 329; Ferris 2000: 120–121; *LTUR* I 103–105.

[2] Messages: on the ideological or programmatic significance of honorary arches in particular, see De Maria 1988: 87–141. Paintings: Joseph. *BJ* 7.143. Plaques, pottery: Kuttner 1995: 84, 85; Ferris 2000: 149, fig. 72 (a plaque from the British Museum "showing barbarian prisoners in a triumph"). Gemstones: Richter 1971: 22 no. 50, fig. 50. Coins: Levi 1952.

[3] Slave supply: Harris 1980; Scheidel 1997; Harris 1999; Bradley 1999.

still possible, despite the weathering of the monument, to see the sad sight of a captive family, a father gazing out into the distance as his wife, seated and looking in another direction, comforts their child who stands close by. Any number of similar structures could be called into the reckoning: arches at Carpentras, Lepcis, Pisidian Antioch, and the Tropaeum Traiani at Adamklissi. A particularly arresting, almost frightening, item is a column base from the legionary fortress at Mainz which shows two bound prisoners grotesquely chained together at the neck straining against each other (Plate 5). From the private sphere, secondly, a mosaic from Tipasa in Algeria shows a captive couple and their son, their miserable faces full of intense resignation to their fate, while a fragmentary relief now in the Ashmolean Museum shows two pairs of prisoners, wearing just loincloths, roped together at the neck, being led by two attendants to face the wild beasts of the amphitheatre (Plate 6). Equally notable are decorative figurines of captives also with ropes around their necks which made their way into regions as remote as Britain. A bronze lamp in the form of a barbarian prisoner found near ancient Philippi and now in the Archaeological Museum of Kavala is worth special mention. Strictly it falls beyond the main period of concern here (it has been assigned to the late fourth century), but it is a striking object. The captive figure that constitutes the lamp, perhaps a German, has his hands bound behind his back, kneels on one knee, and wears a collar around his neck. His head, the lamp's lid, can be tilted backwards so that oil can be poured into the body, which is attached to the head by a hinge. The lamp also has a chain by which it can be suspended, and when hung up with the lid open it looks for all the world as if the captive is being brutally tortured—a grisly effect to the modern eye that was surely never intended by its maker.[4]

The works on which these images appeared were abstract symbols of Roman power. But they could function as symbols only because in the first instance they commemorated real events: Rome's military victories against foreign enemies. Emperors from Augustus on had cause to characterise their regimes as eras of peace and some made political capital out of the fact that they closed the gates of Janus Geminus. But before Janus' gates could be closed they had to be opened

[4]La Turbie: Picard 1957: 291–300; Ferris 2000: 40–41. Forty-five tribes: Plin. *HN* 3.136–137. Arch of Marcus: Aurigemma 1970; cf. Picard 1957: 438–439; Kleiner 1992: 309; Ferris 2000: 104. Carpentras: Picard 1957: 283–284; Pobé 1961 plate 103; Brilliant 1963: 50, fig. 2.4; Ferris 2000: 46, fig. 21. Lepcis: Ryberg 1955: 160; Ferris 2000: 123–124. Pisidian Antioch: Robinson 1926: 25, figs. 41, 42; Vermeule 1968: 78. (Kuttner 1995: 84 gives further examples; cf. Kleiner 1985: 35 [Pisae], 45–47 [Glanum], 47–48 [Orange]). Tropaeum Traiani: Picard 1957: 391–406; Brilliant 1963: 111, fig. 3.18; Lepper and Frere 1988: 298–299 (reviewing the possible types of barbarian shown in the reliefs). Cf. Hannestad: 1988: 171–173; Kleiner 1992: 230–232; Ferris 2000: 69–70. Column base: Selzer 1988: 69, Abb. 47; Ferris 2000: 155, fig. 76 (cf. Ducrey 1968: 223: the relief shows with "beaucoup de réalisme les souffrances de deux captifs"). Mosaic: Dunbabin 1978: 24, plate III fig. 7; cf. Ferris 2000: 104. Fragmentary relief: Köhne and Ewigleben 2000: 125–127, fig. 136 (I take the prisoners here to be prisoners of war but they may be condemned criminals; it is impossible to be certain). Figurines: Toynbee 1964: 120, plate XXXII c, d. Lamp: Rhomiopoulou 2002.

and opened they frequently were, so that while the first two centuries of the Principate saw little military activity in the heartland of the empire there was considerable, if not endemic, warfare on the frontiers. To think therefore of the Principate as an era of peacefulness is to fall victim to notions propagated by the emperors themselves and to make a fundamental error of historical judgement. Conventional literary sources show well enough that military campaigns were more or less continuous under the Principate. The great campaigns of the Augustan era apart, from the reign of Tiberius to the reign of Domitian Rome at one time or another fought sequences of wars across the Rhine, in Britain, on the eastern frontiers (the Black Sea included), in Dacia, and in Africa. Trajan's Dacian wars led to significant increases of territory, and although the results of his expedition to the East were shortlived, the scale of operations and the initial successes were again considerable. From Marcus onwards fighting on the northern frontiers was constant, and three major wars were fought against Parthia between A.D. 155 and 217. As the visual evidence suggests, all this activity is likely to have produced prisoners of war at a steady rate, even if allowance has to be made from the later second century onwards for the settlement of former enemies within Roman territory. The representational captives who figure so prominently in visual sources had therefore real life counterparts, and one of their purposes must have been to record not just the subjugation, as symbolically appropriate, of Germans, Gauls, Britons, Dacians, Sarmatians, Parthians, and many others, but the actual taking of prisoners of war from among these peoples in the theatres of military operations concerned. What the *pax Augusta* meant was, essentially, an absence of conflict between citizen armies.[5]

The extent of warfare under the Principate may have been much greater than is usually thought. Knowledge of imperial wars obviously depends in the first instance on what conventional narrative accounts allow to be seen. But it cannot be assumed that the narrative sources still available preserve a record of all Roman military campaigns fought from the age of Augustus to that of the Severans. A third century inscription (*CIL* 8.21486 = *ILS* 4495) records the fulfilment of a vow by a governor of Mauretania Caesariensis, Aelius Aelianus, *ob prostratam*

[5] Events: the victories commemorated are in many cases obvious, as with those of Trajan over the Dacians recorded on the Column, but not always: see, for example, on Apollo Sosianus, Zanker 1988: 69; Kleiner 1992: 85–86; and Ferris 2000: 35. The Gemma Augustea is especially difficult to interpret. It may refer solely to victories of Tiberius in Illyricum, or, if the lower register is divided into two scenes, to Tiberius' Illyrian victories (on the left) and, proleptically (on the right), to campaigns yet to be fought by Tiberius against Germanic tribes; see variously Brilliant 1963: 72–73; Hannestad 1988: 79; Zanker 1988: 232; Kleiner 1992: 71; Pollini 1993. (The division is not immediately apparent to the untrained eye.) On the specificity of Roman documentary art, see Kleiner 1992: 122. Janus Geminus: Platner and Ashby 1926: 278–280; Richardson 1992: 207–208; *LTUR* III 92–93. Frontiers: Whittaker 1994: 31–59. Produced prisoners: for the (not abundant) literary evidence, see Volkmann 1990: 33–36 (north-eastern frontier), 50 (Spain), 59–60 (Africa), 68–71 (eastern frontier, including the Jewish War of A.D. 66–70). On continuous fighting, see Woolf 1993: 181–182, 186; cf. Isaac 1990: 29–30.

gentem Bavarum Mesegneitisium praedasque omnes ac familias eorum abductas. The inscription refers to military activity which appears in some form or other to have involved the taking of captives. But the specifics of that activity are beyond knowledge because there is no independent guiding literary source to flesh out the brief record the inscription gives. Many events, moreover, are no more than minimally recorded. For four years in the first century Rome fought a war to subdue Mauretania (A.D. 40–44). But hardly anything is known of it, nor is much known of roughly half of all the reported cases of provincial revolt against Rome in the imperial period—some forty-five episodes from a total of over ninety—or of the fighting due to internal unrest that can be presumed to have regularly taken place in various regions of the Roman world after initial conquest. How many military events were never recorded, or were recorded in sources which have not survived, it is impossible to tell. Strabo (5.2.7) knew that Roman generals had once periodically conducted expeditions to enslave large numbers of brigands on the island of Corsica (so close to the mainland). Did they do the same under the Principate?[6]

The principal literary sources for imperial military actions that still survive are themselves often patchy and lacking in detail, and the numbers of captives taken therefore probably much understated. Tacitus knew that it was the Roman habit to sell captives when a campaign ended successfully: his surprise (*Ann.* 14.33) that the Britons did not do so after their uprising in A.D. 61 makes the habit indisputable. Tacitus was also aware (*Ann.* 2.41, 12.36–37) that it was customary when triumphs were celebrated to parade prisoners at Rome. But he is hardly concerned in the *Annals*, despite the amount of narrative attention devoted to the wars of the Julio-Claudians, to state in detail the numbers of those captured and sold into slavery; nor is he at pains to rival the elaborate triumphal descriptions of Livy, Josephus, Plutarch, and Appian, and to lavish attention on every feature of the triumphs he records. He notices (*Ann.* 13.39) that the non-military population of Volandum was enslaved in A.D. 58 when the city fell to Domitius Corbulo, but how many people were affected he either did not know or did not care to tell. He mentions (*Ann.* 2.41) the presence of captives in the triumph Germanicus held on May 26, A.D. 17, but again there is minimal detail and more is known of the prisoners on this occasion from an incidental notice in Strabo (7.1.4). Clearly authorial idiosyncracies obscure the numbers of prisoners likely to have been taken in the wars described in the main narrative of Julio-Claudian history.[7]

With Cassius Dio there is the added problem that military narratives survive only in epitomated form. For the Dacian campaigns of Trajan Dio's account as it

[6] *ILS* 4495: see Dessau *ad loc.* for other references to the Bavares. Mauretania: for the little that is known, see Whittaker 1996: 597–598. Provincial revolt: Goodman 2002: 21; cf. Goodman 1991: 225–226; Woolf 1993: 187–189. Internal unrest: Isaac 1990: 54–100.

[7] Triumphal descriptions: Livy 34.52.4–12; Joseph. *BJ* 7.123–157; Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 32.2–34.8; App. *Mith.* 116–117, *Pun.* 66; cf. Plut. *Luc.* 37.2–4, *Pomp.* 45; Diod. Sic. 31.8.9–12; Dio 51.21.5–9. Tacitus: cf. also *Ann.* 1.56, 13.54, 15.15.

now exists give no record of Roman forces taking prisoners at all, the capture of the Dacian king Decebalus' sister apart. (There are, conversely, several references to Romans who were captured by the Dacians.) Yet a very late source, the *De Magistratibus* of John the Lydian (2.28), reports that among the spoils of war in Dacia as a whole there were 500,000 prisoners (and their arms), a figure that is impossibly high—it could easily be reduced to 50,000—but which although no more than a detail has a certain cogency because it derives from a now lost work by Trajan's personal doctor, T. Statilius Crito, who had accompanied the emperor on campaign. It is the sort of information that the full, original text of Dio may have contained in abundance. The notice in John the Lydian at least helps validate the evidence of the many scenes on Trajan's Column in which captives appear, and even more so that of the frieze on Trajan's Arch at Beneventum, which shows the parade of captives in Trajan's triumph. A sceptic might argue that these sources are controlled by iconographic conventions from which hard historical conclusions cannot be drawn. But as it is the visual evidence and the literary notice are mutually consistent despite their individual shortcomings, and make the conclusion of capture on the grand scale in this case unimpugnable. It follows that visual evidence which apparently reflects the taking of prisoners in other military campaigns, but for which there is no corroborative literary evidence, must be given the benefit of the doubt and regarded as evidence of standard practice in successful imperial campaigns.[8]

The depiction of captive figures in victory monuments had a long iconographic history, and a distinction must certainly be drawn between captives used to personify defeated enemies and captives who portray, in a more documentary manner, prisoners of the kind who appeared in triumphal celebrations. Contrast, for example, the personifications commonly found on coins which might show *Iudaea capta* or *Armenia capta* or other *devictae gentes*—the phrase of the Tabula Siarensis in reference to the statues that were to appear on the Arch of Germanicus in Rome—with the figures who appear in the Apollo Sosianus relief, which is far more specific: not a photograph of an actual event (of course) but an evocation certainly of a triumphal procession that once took place. Yet the repeated

[8]Trajan's Column: see for scenes involving prisoners Coarelli 2000: plates 16, 43, 76, 77 (men being brought before the emperor for interrogation); 29, 89 (groups of prisoners in process of disposal; cf. 176); 174 (a group of nobles on the point of capture); 41 (a group of elderly men, women, and children before a Roman encampment); 47 (a group of men in a fortified camp); 86–87 (a group of men submitting to the emperor); 172 (men being dragged along by their hair); 175 (fugitives under pursuit in a forest). Lepper and Frere (1988) have little to say about captives in their analysis of these scenes, but they are cautious (73–77, 120) about inferring too much concerning the fates of the two groups of prisoners shown in process of disposal. To say that the reliefs on Trajan's Column "cannot truly be called historical documents" (Ferris 2000: 64) is to betray a very narrow understanding of "historical"; cf. Ferris 2000: 67, discussing scene LXV, for a good example of how modern academic speculation finds itself completely distanced from the Roman past. Arch at Beneventum: Ryberg 1955: 152; Rotili 1972: tavv. CXLIV, CXLVI, CXLVII, CXLVIII, CXLIX; Künzl 1988: 25, fig. 11b; Ferris 2000: 70–74, fig. 34.

personification of defeated enemies as captives and the repeated selection of men, women, and children as suitable figures for display as prisoners of war in documentary forms of art can have made little sense unless capturing men, women, and children was a normal and verifiable outcome of frequently fighting, and winning, wars. A topos cannot be a topos, whether in art or in literature, unless it has some relationship to a recognisable and comprehensible reality on the part of the audience for which it is intended.[9]

Roman military successes were also commemorated in sculptural reliefs in which defeated enemies were shown seeking clemency from victorious emperors or in which emperors were shown extending mercy to those requesting it. Two of the panel reliefs of Marcus Aurelius are representative. In one a desperate father and son stand before a group of soldiers seeking mercy from an emperor who sits imperiously above them on a tall tribunal (Plate 7); in the other the emperor on horseback grants clemency on the battlefield to two kneeling barbarians (Plate 8). Commemorating the defeat of barbarian enemies, however, was not monopolised by the emperor. In the Antonine age it became fashionable for great men, or at least those who aspired to greatness, to be interred after death in marble sarcophagi decorated with reliefs alluding to their accomplishments in life. The decorative elements followed standardised patterns, depicting the deceased with his wife at the time of their wedding, showing him in the role of a priest conducting a sacrifice, and portraying him as a general both vanquishing an enemy and sparing the defeated captives brought before him. The motifs expressed the virtues that elite Roman men were traditionally expected to command and display: *concordia* in marriage, *pietas* in religion, and *virtus* and *clementia* in warfare. A sarcophagus from Mantua offers a captive scene in which a military commander stands on a

[9] Iconographical history: Picard 1957: 49–51; cf. from the standpoint of barbarian representation Ferris 2000: 1–25. Triumphal celebrations: cf. Kuttner 1995: 166, fig. 84: a fragmentary frieze of Julio-Claudian date in Naples showing prisoners in a triumphal procession. Tabula Siarensis: Crawford 1996: 1.515 (fr. (a) line 11). Topos: the portrayals of captives summarised so far are just a small sample of the material that still exists (although I know of no complete collection of images of captives) and presumably much else has been lost. Kuttner (1995: 166–167) refers for instance to a frieze of Julio-Claudian date now in Naples (fig. 84), a portrait on an Augustan cuirass from southern Gaul in Copenhagen (fig. 82; cf. 84 for an example from Amphipolis; see on the type Gergel 1994), a cuirassed statue of Julio-Claudian date from Etruria, a Neronian statue now in Rome, an Antonine panel from Rome in the Museo Torlonia, and the Grand Cameo of France; a scene, however, on one of the Boscoreale Cups often taken to be a scene of captive submission must now be excluded (Kuttner 1995: 94–123). Other Italian items include sections of the Trajanic frieze on the Arch of Constantine (Brilliant 1963: 111, fig. 3.17; Kleiner 1992: 221), a gladiator's helmet in Naples (Brilliant 1963: 72, figs. 2.56, 57), a fragmentary relief showing a Parthian prisoner perhaps in the triumph in 166 of L. Verus (Künzl 1988: 77, fig. 44), a column plinth from the Arcus Novus in Rome now in the Boboli Gardens, Florence (De Maria 1988: 313, tavv. 91.2, 93; Kleiner 1992: 409–413, fig. 381). Captives also appear on one of the distance slabs from the Antonine Wall in Britain (Hanson and Maxwell 1983: 113, plate 6.3), and on reliefs from Corinth (Vermeule 1968: 83, figs. 29, 30) and Alexandria (Vermeule 1968: 88, fig. 31). For present purposes it is pointless to add further examples, but a full inventory of evidence would be invaluable.

shallow platform looking to the viewer's right at three barbarian prisoners, a small child who stretches out his arms in an imploring gesture, a woman, presumably his mother, who with her left hand on the child's back directs him towards the general—she is shown standing but half bent, her face looking up to the general in submission, her tunic falling pathetically from her left shoulder—and behind the woman to her right a shaggily bearded man wearing a barbarian cap, perhaps the husband and father, who seems to bend his head in deference to his conqueror. Two soldiers escort and guard the prisoners, but the general towers above the woman and child, dominating the scene (Plate 9). A comparable example from the Uffizi in Florence again shows a woman and child in similar poses but this time by themselves. They appeal for mercy to a commander who again stands on a platform. The woman is directed to the general by a figure who is perhaps a guard, while she herself has a hand on the back of the boy, who in turn seems to be clutching the hem of the general's tunic.[10]

On the assumption that they were chosen either by the deceased themselves or family members who knew the wishes of the dead, the biographical sarcophagi imply, *prima facie*, that elite Roman men wished to be remembered for certain real, almost tangible, successes they had gained in life. The images of concordant marriages, prominent priesthoods, and high military rank are of course idealised and formulaic, and it is impossible therefore to tell how closely they mirror real events in the lives of the dead. But logic surely requires that a concordant marriage would hardly be shown on a sarcophagus to commemorate a man who had not actually been married, which suggests that he must also have been a general of some accomplishment no matter what the precise or full details of his military record—an individual of the sort society expected to take the opportunity when opportunity allowed to war down the proud and spare the vanquished. As the exemplary tradition in Latin historiography demonstrates well enough, the individual Roman could scarcely be credited with virtues unless a record of performance of suitable deeds and actions were self-evident. Victory, it follows, could not be won without wars to fight and *clementia* could not be shown to the defeated unless captives were available to receive it. At a minimum, therefore, and whatever the degree of literalism involved, the biographical sarcophagi presuppose that in the Antonine age there was always a supply of war captives fortunate enough to benefit from mercy dispensed by conquering Roman commanders. What cannot be assumed is that the captives taken in war were always granted clemency in real life.[11]

[10] Panel reliefs: Brilliant 1963: 152, fig. 3.119; Ryberg 1967: 61–66, plate XLIII fig. 44, 9–15, plate II fig. 2a; Hannestad 1988: 231, fig. 139, 231–232; Kleiner 1992: 289–290, fig. 257, 290, fig. 260. Fashionable: Kleiner 1992: 256–259, 302–303; cf. Brilliant 1963: 157–161; McCann 1978: 124–127; Kampen 1981: 51–53; Ferris 2000: 105–113. Sarcophagus: Brilliant 1963: 158, fig. 3.134; McCann 1978: 125, fig. 158; Kleiner 1992: 303, fig. 271. Comparable example: Brilliant 1963: 158, fig. 3.135: Kampen 1981: plate 8 fig. 8.

[11] Formulaic: Brilliant 1963: 160; Kampen 1981: 55.

What happened to prisoners taken in military campaigns abroad? The visual evidence summarised so far suggests that some were executed on the spot and that others were transported to Rome for display in triumphal processions. Some may have been dragged before a commander to be interrogated or held indefinitely in confinement; others, it seems, could be spared but compelled to leave their lands and relocate elsewhere, taking their families and their livestock with them. All such eventualities, however, depended on the state of total subjection into which the prisoners had fallen, a state that amounted in effect to a condition of servitude in which captives were placed at the complete disposal of their victorious masters. It was a longstanding convention in ancient warfare that prisoners of war became the slaves of those who captured them, and the manacles, shackles, and chains that appear so frequently on captives in works of art provide a particular confirmation, for within Roman mentality and practice shackles and chains were tokens not of captivity alone, but of the total loss of freedom that captivity brought (hence the force of the iconographical motif). The association is evident in Roman culture at an early date in Plautus' *Captivi*, a comedy in which the characters Tyndarus and Philocrates spend the early part of the play in chains because of their purchaser Hegio's fear that they might flee—given Hegio's generosity the captives, who are clearly called slaves, are put in no more than "light" chains, but one wonders if real prisoners would have been grateful for the distinction—and as the play ends the re-chained Tyndarus is about to be released from his fetters to symbolise his imminent transition from slavery to freedom. So too in real life. During the Jewish War that began under Nero the prisoner Josephus was put in chains and automatically forfeited his freedom until Titus ordered his bonds to be severed and his civic status restored: when an axe broke the chains the humiliating condition of servitude they represented (cf. Plaut. *Capt.* 203) instantly disappeared. Obviously enough not all captives are likely to have been as fortunate as Josephus. But it was entirely appropriate that a train of slaves in transit who appeared on a slave-dealer's funerary monument should be shown shackled together at the neck, and many necks must have felt the weight of the chains that Ovid (*Trist.* 4.2.21–22) could imagine in a triumphal parade.[12]

[12] *Captivi*: Hegio gives instructions to release Tyndarus and Philocrates at *Capt.* 354 (Aristophantes is shackled, unseen, until just before his first appearance: *Capt.* 512). For fear of flight, *Capt.* 116–117, and for the "light" chains, *Capt.* 112. Cf. Pliny *Ep.* 3.19.7, claiming that it was not his practice to use slave chain gangs on his estates, and contrast Columella who presumed when he wrote his farming manual that many slave-owners did so (*Rust.* 1.7.1; 1.9.4; cf. 1.8.16, 18), as Pliny's claim implies. On the literary function of the chains, see the remarks of Thalmann 1996: 135–136. Josephus: Joseph. *BJ* 4.626–629; cf. Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 33.6 (Perseus' children). For evidence of slave shackles, Thompson 1993 (cf. Thompson 2003: 217–238); and on war as a supplier of slaves and the use of shackles and other restraints in Greek history, Ducrey 1968: 74–82, 131–140, 218–228. Funerary monument: Duchêne 1986; for another possible slave-dealer, see Thompson 1993: 79–80, describing a tomb relief from Nickenich (illus. 24, 25), now in the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn, which shows two

It is a natural assumption, then, that many war captives in the imperial age became slaves. The images of captives found in numerous works of art suggest that over time imperial Rome regularly and consistently enslaved in significant numbers captives of both sexes, children as well as adults, and the images need to be recognised accordingly as evidence relevant to the history of the Roman slave supply. Allowance should be made for multiple testimonials to one particular set of events—Trajan's Dacian campaigns, for example, though the evidence is sometimes ambiguous—but through its commemorative function the abundant visual material gives grounds for believing that the enslavement of captives in warfare was a normal, predictable, and frequent aspect of imperial life. It confirms and perhaps even surpasses in effect the literary evidence that has always been available to show a connection between enslavement and imperial warfare. Because of the persistent influence of the notion of "imperial peace," warfare has not typically been regarded as a major source of new slaves in the imperial age. Yet how else is the evidence of arches and columns, sarcophagi, gems and household decorations to be explained?[13]

The sources of the Roman slave supply as a whole under the Principate are easily listed: natural reproduction among existing slaves, reclamation of exposed infants, self-sale into slavery, the slave trade (both internal and external), and war captives. The last two were interconnected to some degree, a point to which I will return below. It is very difficult, however, to establish the relative proportions of new slaves generated by these various means. The conventional view has long been that natural reproduction replaced warfare as the chief vehicle of supply once wars of conquest on the scale of those characeristic of the mid and late Republic were no longer being fought. It is a view that has recently been restated on a new basis: a demographic estimate of the numbers of slaves needed to maintain a minimal servile population of ten percent in a total imperial population of sixty million, which produces the firm conclusion that natural reproduction was more important than all other sources combined. The statement, however, considers no other source of supply in detail, and it undervalues to my mind the historical inability of a slave population to replace itself.[14]

The statement has indeed been contested, on the grounds first that alternative methods of supply, especially infant exposure, self-sale, and trade, are not taken into account, and secondly that it pays insufficient attention to the demographic likelihood of a severe imbalance in the servile sex ratio—the number of male slaves being assumed, for reasons of labour requirements, to be much greater than the number of female slaves. Natural reproduction, it is agreed, probably did become

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prisoners in neck collars joined to a chain held by a commanding third party. Thompson 2003: 40, fig. 9, identifies the figure as a Roman soldier, but cf. Ferris 2000: 155: "a rich citizen or magistrate providing captives for games and combat in the arena."

[13] Dacian campaigns: but it cannot be assumed that all Trajanic victory monuments refer to Dacia; see Lepper and Frere 1988: 299–304 on Adamklissi. Literary evidence: Volkmann 1990 (above, n. 5).

[14] Slave supply: see references above, n. 3. Restated: Scheidel 1997.

paramount at some point but when that point was reached is left as a question for further investigation. Meanwhile, infant exposure is brought forward as a previously underestimated means of supplying substantial numbers of new slaves that other sources could not provide in and of themselves.[15]

But this case, too, is problematized. Apart from its relative neglect of warfare, it asserts rather than demonstrates the importance of infant exposure, and it evades the question of why exposure could be so significant if, as demographers maintain, nearly half of all children born died by the age of ten (it is not enough to recognise the high infant mortality rate of the first year alone). Roman slave-owners cannot have been unaware of the massive rate of child mortality in their midst, so precisely why they should have been intensively concerned to reclaim abandoned infants for use as slaves when the children became adults, or how exposure provided large numbers of new slaves, it is difficult to see. Moreover, it is not obvious how or why or in what numbers exposed children surviving to the age of five found their way into the slave market, as is claimed; and it cannot be taken as self-evident that male slaves were always in greater demand than females and that the sex ratio was always highly imbalanced as a result: a considerable female presence on farms, where the bulk of the slave population was located, is more likely than not. More significantly still, the case begins with an assumption of a total imperial population of fifty million, a difference of one sixth compared with the alternative view, and nothing illustrates better the weakness of all arguments made on demographic grounds alone, no matter what their technical sophistication or seeming plausibility. The fact of the matter is that the size of the Roman imperial population and the size of the slave portion of the total population are both strictly unknown—not to mention the variations in the size of the slave population from region to region—which means that claims based on demographic arguments by themselves can have no greater inherent claim to truth than claims based on conventional sources.[16]

The fullest narrative of a military campaign in the imperial age is Josephus' account of the Jewish War of A.D. 66–70, a narrative which is vitally important for understanding how the Roman war machine disposed of its victims. At the assault on Japha led by the future emperor Titus and M. Ulpius Traianus on July 13, A.D. 67, the fighting lasted for six hours before local resistance was crushed; whereupon the men of the city who were still alive were systematically slaughtered and the women and children (infants) were sold into slavery. The number of those killed was 15,000, the number of those taken prisoner 2,130 (*BJ* 3.304–305). Similarly, after the fall of Tarichaeae in September, A.D. 67, Vespasian executed 1,200 of the useless old, sent 6,000 young men to dig Nero's canal at the Isthmus of Corinth,

[15] Harris 1999; cf. Harris 1994.

[16] Demographers maintain: Parkin 1992: 93–98; Bagnall and Frier 1994: 32–36, 151–153; Saller 1994: 21–23. On the difficulties of demographic postulates (with reference to the Republic), see Morley 2001, and of locating slaves in the economy of Republican Italy, Jongman 2003. Female presence: Scheidel 1995 and 1996; cf. Bradley 1994: 59.

and sold 30,400 into slavery—except for a number who went to Herod Agrippa, who sold them anyway (*BJ* 3.539–541). Another 1,200 prisoners were enslaved after the fall of Jotapata (*BJ* 3.336–337), and 3,000 more at Gischala (*BJ* 4.115). Later still, 2,200 Gadarenes and more than a thousand Idumaeans were also enslaved (*BJ* 4.435–436, 4.447–448). When Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70, Aeternius Fronto was delegated by Titus to deal with the captured (*BJ* 6.417–418):

> those who had taken part in sedition and terrorism informed against each other and Fronto executed the lot. Of the youngsters he picked out the tallest and handsomest to be kept for the triumphal procession; of the rest, those over seventeen were put in irons and sent to hard labour in Egypt, while great numbers were presented by Titus to the provinces to perish in the theatres by the sword or by wild beasts; those under seventeen were sold.

Josephus' record makes clear that many of the captives did indeed die in games given in various cities while Titus was still in the Near East, and that some were shipped to Italy for the triumph that he celebrated in Rome with his father on his return. Altogether, Josephus claims (*BJ* 6.420), 97,000 prisoners were taken during the course of the war as a whole, a much larger number than many of the mass enslavements known from the Republican period. The figure cannot be independently corroborated, and the proportions of the total consigned to the arena, to specific labour projects, to be kept for the triumph, or disposed of by sale are likewise impossible to calculate. Some prisoners simply died from starvation. But there is no doubt that enslaved captives were delegated for special purposes—labour projects, the arena, the triumph—or else were sold en masse. The latter at times saturated the market—there was clearly a demand for them—which had the effect of considerably lowering their prices, the proceeds presumably benefiting the *res publica*. Most of the men, women, and children who were sold were probably bought by local slave-dealers, the *mangones* who followed the armies in anticipation of eventual profit. Certainly the Jews expected if defeated to become slaves: not only was this the normal and habitual outcome of defeat in war, but Jewish captives had already been taken as slaves to Rome in an earlier age.[17]

It might be noted in passing that Josephus (*BJ* 3.304) refers in his account of the fall of Japha to the enslavement of infant children, which recalls the fact

[17] Josephus' record: *BJ* 7.23–24; 7.37–38; 7.40; 7.96; 7.118; 7.138 (cf. the relief from Oxford mentioned earlier). On the habit of enslavement, see also *BJ* 3.62; 3.134; 4.488; 4.551; 7.208. The figure: Byatt (1973) argues that Josephus' figures on population are internally consistent and plausible; McGing (2002: 94–97) is completely sceptical and puts no faith in them at all; Aviam (2002: 131) regards the 1,200 given for the captives taken at Jotapata as reasonable. Whatever Josephus' numbers mean, the model for dealing with captives his narrative allows is not affected. Starvation: Joseph. *BJ* 6.419. Saturated: Joseph. *BJ* 6.384; cf. 6.386. Expected: Joseph. *BJ* 5.422. Earlier age: Philo could report in his day (*Leg.* 155) that the Transtiberine community of Jews at Rome was descended from captives fortunate enough to have been manumitted (cf. Gruen 2002: 15–16, 22–23). For modern accounts of and perspectives on the Jewish War, see Millar 1993: 70–79; Berlin and Overman 2002 (with nothing on enslavement). On Josephus and the *Bellum Judaicum* at large, see Rajak 1983.

that infants often appear in captive scenes in visual sources, as various examples mentioned earlier show. It does not follow, however, that there was a special market for infant slaves *per se*, or that evidence such as this supports the view that exposed infants were in great demand as potential slaves. When the Romans captured Japha a massacre took place, especially of the male population, but infants were specifically spared. In the context of war, however, their survival, as that of infants elsewhere, was due to an act of Roman mercy, not to any cool calculations about the requirements of the slave market: enslavement functioned in cases like this as an alternative to killing, not as a response to a demand for infant slaves in and of themselves. To judge from visual material Romans celebrated the opportunities warfare provided to kill or have killed those who fell into their power. The stele of C. Romanius Capito in Mainz, of mid-first century date, offers one example of an iconographic motif commonly found on Roman auxiliary tombstones from the Rhineland and Britain in which an all-powerful cavalryman is about to transfix with a lance a vanquished enemy figure who lies defenceless on the ground beneath him (Plate 10). More graphic still is the scene on the Column of Marcus Aurelius referred to earlier which suggests that the moment of the *coup de grâce* was a moment artists knew their audiences would relish (Plate 4). (Marcus himself [*Med.* 8.34] drew on the image of the severed head for the sake of a philosophical point but is said to have been repelled by the sight.) It is consistent with Ovid's assumption (*Trist.* 4.2.43–44) that there was nothing objectionable in his verbal picture of a defeated Germania sitting in grief beneath the foot of the conqueror Tiberius, her neck exposed to the Roman axe, the hand that had once carried arms now shackled. Clemency for the defeated was not at all automatic, and when on the battlefield the prospect of imminent death was replaced by the living death of slavery the decision can have had little to do with market forces. Rome undoubtedly did enslave children, as both visual and literary sources indicate. But a distinction should be drawn between demographically vulnerable infants incapable of work and older children, those roughly say over the age of ten, whose viability and capacity for work as slaves were less at issue. In the visual evidence the purpose of showing very young children is likely to have been emotive in the first instance, enhancing for the Roman viewer both the horror of defeat suffered by the enemy and the power of Rome to grant life or death to those defeated—to permit, or not, the family ties between parent and child that were so important in Roman ideology to remain intact. The representation of captives was controlled by historical events but conditioned by the dramatic effects artists wished to create in commemorating them.[18]

[18] Stele: Brilliant 1963: 54, fig. 2.13; Selzer 1988: 72, Abb. 48, 156, no. 87 (see for other examples 156–157, nos. 86, 88, 89). Rhineland and Britain: Toynbee 1964: 198–194, plate XLVII a, b (with the point that the motif has no Italian prototypes); Anderson 1984: 17–19, plates 15–19; Ferris 2000: 155–160 ("the motif . . . may then have had its origins outside the Roman tradition" [159]). Execution scene: see above, n. 1: Column of Marcus. For a study of the contrasting iconography of barbarians

The value of Josephus' account of the Jewish War for present purposes is that it shows a range of options followed in one situation that offers a model for the wars of the Principate in general. In all Rome's military campaigns, captives who became *de facto* slaves were sometimes spared, sometimes killed, sometimes reserved for display in triumphs, sometimes exhibited in spectacles, sometimes sent to work on particular projects, and sometimes sold on the open market. The case of C. Julius Mygdonius is exceptional but nonetheless instructive. An inscription from Ravenna (*CIL* 11.137 = *ILS* 1980) records that he was born a free Parthian, taken captive in his youth and sold in Roman territory, but by some twist of fate eventually admitted to Roman citizenship. It is in the acquisition of citizenship rather than the initial enslavement that the exceptionality lies.[19]

The stage that intervened between the enslavement of captives in the immediate aftermath of war and their distribution across the empire is captured in a scene on the Column of Trajan where a group of women and (older) children can be seen being directed to ships on a tributary of the Danube in preparation for their new lives in slavery who knows where (Plate 11). At their head, carrying a small child in her arms, is a woman of some eminence—perhaps the sister of the Dacian king Decebalus—important enough a figure at least to command the attention of the emperor himself and perhaps eventually to suffer a fate less severe than that of those who were to become the merchandise of the *mangones*. One wonders what the thoughts and feelings were at times like this of the slaves who had been present all along in the Roman army as soldiers' personal servants.[20]

Slave-dealers, however, did not rely on the eventualities of warfare alone to provide their stock-in-trade. There was also a regular traffic in slaves with which the aftermath of war could easily overlap. The patterns of the slave trade are not easy to discern, but one can be glimpsed in reasonable outline and might be taken to represent others known only imperfectly.

Caravan trade routes across the Sahara connecting the Mediterranean coasts with the heart of the African continent are well attested from the time of the Islamic conquest of North Africa (ca A.D. 700). One of these routes was the Garamantian road, so called after the Garamantes of the Fezzan, who are first mentioned in classical sources by Herodotus (4.183). Rome found them a particularly intractable people. The Garamantian road ran for approximately

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on the Column of Trajan and the Column of Marcus Aurelius, stressing on the latter the barbarians' complete inferiority and subjection to Rome, see Pirson 1996; observe also Zanker 2000 on the lack of sentimentality in the enslavement scenes on the Column of Marcus. On the ages at which children were put to work, Bradley 1991: 103–124. On the sparing of infants in warfare, note also Joseph. *BJ* 3.336–337 (Jotapata). The sight of child captives could induce mixed feelings in a Roman crowd (Plut. *Aem. Paul.* 33.7–9 [the children of Perseus]).

[19] Cf. *CIL* 6.8972 = *ILS* 1836 for another successful Parthian ex-slave.

[20] Scene: Coarelli 2000: 73, plate 29 (XXII/XXX–XXXI). Woman: Rossi 1971: 146 (cf. Dio 68.9.4); Rossi identifies the river here as the Savus. Personal servants: Speidel 1989. Note especially the servant, quite possibly a slave, fitting his master with greaves shown on the biographical sarcophagus referred to earlier from the Uffizi; Kampen 1981: plate 8 fig. 9.

2,000 kilometres from Lake Chad to Tripoli (Oea), following a string of oases that made the desert crossing possible. At a rate of just under thirty-five kilometres a day, it took sixty days or so to complete the journey. Slaves were one of the principal commodities that travelled this route, as well as the other trans-Saharan caravan routes to its west and east, a commodity for which there was great demand in the Islamic world of the Mediterranean and Middle East. The trade in African slaves northwards across the desert remained vigorous long after the abolition of slavery in the Americas and survived well into the twentieth century.[21]

Given their enormous longevity, these trans-Saharan routes probably existed long before the Islamic conquest, even if classical authors have left little trace of them, and served similar purposes. The Garamantes themselves operated in fact as the intermediaries of an extensive trans-Saharan trade system from roughly the sixth century B.C. until the fifth century A.D. that carried Saharan salt south and brought gold and slaves north, which the Garamantes exchanged on the Tripolitanian coast for olive oil and products made from gems, glass, and metals, weapons included. The Garamantes also had contacts with Nubia and Egypt, and they are likely to have been involved in the slave trade of eastern Africa. Certainly sub-Saharan African slaves were to be found in Egypt long before the Roman annexation: their presence is symbolised by a terracotta lamp now in the British Museum made in the form of a drunken reveller leaning on his African slave boy as he returns home, the slave carrying a lantern to light the way. The high point of Garamantian commercial strength, and of the monarchical Garamantian community at large, can be ascribed to the second and third centuries A.D.[22]

The presence of African slaves in the Roman Mediterranean is attested in various media—verses such as the notorious text from Hadrumentum referring to the "dregs of the Garamantes," mosaics that show African stoker slaves and other slave workers—and is doubtless attributable in large part to the trade in African slaves that is presupposed by the customs tax on a slave of one and half denarii in the early third-century Zarai tariff list. The slaves concerned, however, might in some cases have been captives taken in Roman raiding or other barely documented military expeditions, or captives first acquired in war and subsequently sold to traders. Neat lines between one activity and another cannot always be drawn. Under Domitian, ca A.D. 86, the legionary legate Septimius Flaccus conducted a military expedition beyond the territory of the Garamantes that lasted for three months, and some years later the civilian Julius Maternus, starting from Lepcis Magna, accompanied the king of the Garamantes from his capital at Garama to a place called Agisymba, perhaps near Lake Chad, from where he brought back

[21] Law 1967; Wright 1998 and 2001.

[22] Garamantes: Liverani 2000a and 2000b; cf. Brett and Fentress 1996: 68–69; 217. Comparably but more directly, at Tanais on the Bosphorus nomadic peoples exchanged slaves and hides for clothes and slaves (Strabo 11.2.3). For the slave trade from the Black Sea in antiquity, see Finley 1962, and for possible importations from Colchis, see Braund and Tsetskhladze 1989. Lamp: Walker and Higgs 2001: 90, no. 98 ("second to first century B.C."); cf. Snowden 1970: 187, fig. 114.

rhinoceroses that Domitian displayed in his games. Second-century herms and other artistic depictions of African slaves have been regarded as the product of later campaigns and forays such as these. Analogously, to the east, two small bronze statuettes of African captives shown with arms bound behind their backs have been taken to represent captives taken by the Augustan prefect of Egypt, P. Petronius, during his campaigns of the mid-20s B.C. against the Ethiopians (Plates 12, 13). Strabo (17.1.53–54) records that Petronius sent 1,000 Ethiopian captives to Augustus and that he sold others, which must mean that he sold them locally as slaves. Prisoners taken during expeditions beyond the territory of the Garamantes might well have been the products of episodes of warfare now lost to history or from smaller scale armed interventions in the normal desert traffic. Nero launched an exploratory expedition to Ethiopia whose purpose—whether commercial, military, or both—remains unclear. But in A.D. 66 he was able to fill the theatre at Puteoli with Ethiopian men, women, and children to entertain Tiridates of Armenia. Were they the fruits of war or the products of a relatively peaceable African slave trade or of both combined? There is much here that is simply unknown.[23]

One of the most remarkable recent discoveries from Aphrodisias in Caria is the city's Sebasteion. Particularly notable are the panel reliefs which once decorated its porticoes. In the sequence honouring the Julio-Claudian dynasty the theme of imperial conquest is given much attention—Claudius' subjugation of Britain and Nero's suppression of Armenia receiving special commemoration—and this theme was due to the conscious choice of the local benefactors who sponsored the Sebasteion rather than to imperial dictate, and in a region, moreover, where geographical knowledge could be so imperfect that the location of Britain had to be explained. The reliefs recording the accomplishments of Claudius and Nero show female personifications of Britain and Armenia, captives of a sort. But they are rather different from the barbarian prisoners who appear on other reliefs, more literal figures who represent captives taken in various Julio-Claudian campaigns. On one, a naked male barbarian, seen from the rear with his face in profile, his hands tied with rope behind his back, appears below a trophy that is centred between Augustus and a winged Victory (Plate 14). On another, a barbarian boy, probably meant to be a German, looks up at his captor, who is probably Germanicus (Plate 15). His hands are also tied behind his back and his tunic is torn from one of his shoulders, exposing his chest. Similarly depicted on a third relief is a female captive who crouches below a trophy placed between a figure perhaps personifying the Roman People or Senate and a Julio-Claudian figure who has not yet been identified (Plate 16). Her status as a victim of warfare

[23] Notorious text: *Anth. Lat.* 183. Mosaics: Desanges 1976; Dunbabin 1978: 274, 275 (cf. 162); Snowden 1983: 88; Blásquez 1998. Zarai tariff: *CIL* 8.4508; cf. also *Expos. tot. mund. et gent.* 60 (Mauretania). Septimius Flaccus and Julius Maternus: Snowden 1970: 141–142 (with 302, n. 62 especially). Herms: Snowden 1970: 142. P. Petronius: Snowden 1970: 132–134. Ethiopia: Snowden 1970: 135–136. Puteoli: Dio 63.3.1. On African slaves in Roman art, see especially George 2003.

is clearly revealed by the agonized expression on her face. Another bound male captive, also probably a German, appears on a fourth panel with a figure who is thought to be Tiberius (Plate 17). Although not meant to portray specific events in the documentary manner of the Columns of Trajan and Marcus, these panels nonetheless celebrate actual military victories. The sponsors of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias anticipated that Roman emperors, as a matter of course, would take prisoners in warfare; they knew that those prisoners would become slaves; and they judged it important to record their knowledge.[24]

My purpose here has been to draw attention to evidence of this kind from Aphrodisias because it is a type of evidence that is not usually considered in discussions of the Roman slave supply under the Principate. There are two striking features about it: first, that motifs of captives appear in such a variety of visual media, and secondly, that at all times and in all regions of the empire in the period from Augustus through the Severans images of captives were constantly before the eyes of the imperial population. The impression the evidence leaves is that prisoners were routinely and uninterruptedly enslaved as a result of successful warfare under the Principate; and the evidence itself can be said to supplement and extend a literary record that both underestimates the degree to which military activity took place and conceals the numbers of new slaves warfare generated. In particular, the literary record probably underestimates the number of small-scale military actions conducted as a result of explorations into unknown territories or of police actions in frontier zones when local revolts occurred against Roman rule.

Occasionally the literary record offers information of the sort that Septimius Severus took 100,000 prisoners at Ctesiphon in A.D. 198. But the record of mass enslavements is sparse and of small scale enslavements non-existent—chiefly I imagine because capturing prisoners was such a conventional aspect of warfare that ancient historians hardly needed to go into detail about it. It was only when something exceptional happened that their interest was aroused. Thus Cassius Dio (72.5.1) recorded a bold remark made directly to Marcus Aurelius—no less—by a captive boy under interrogation, and told (77.14.2) of a group of captive Germanic women who informed Caracalla—no less—that they would rather be executed than sold into slavery. (When Caracalla sold them anyway, they committed mass suicide, some killing their children too.) As the latter anecdote makes clear, the connection between capture and enslavement was close: prisoners of war became slaves under the Principate as they had always done under the Republic and in earlier Greek history. The connection was so automatic that Rome invented the legal device of *postliminium* to protect the interests of its own soldiers who returned from capture by enemy forces and who had been regarded as slaves on capture and dead thereafter.[25]

[24] Smith 1987: 115–117, plate XIV (Claudius); 117–120, plate XVI (Nero); 101, plate IV; 110–112, plate X; 112–115, plate XII; 120–123, plate XVIII (captives); cf. Ferris 2000: 58–59.

[25] Severus: Dio 76.9.4. *Postliminium*: Buckland 1908: 291–293. On the enslavement of defeated Romans, see Kolendo 1987.

Josephus' account of the Jewish War indicates a range of possibilities for enslaved captives, their sale and distribution into the slave economy being one. Enslavement cannot obviously have been permanent for many: some may have recovered their freedom through an exchange of prisoners when Rome made a diplomatic settlement with an enemy, others may have been immediately ransomed by family or friends. What happened to most will never be known. But there can be no serious doubt that warfare under the Principate regularly contributed a significant proportion of new slaves to the overall supply.

The extent of that proportion is in strict terms unknowable: the figures required to calculate it are unavailable and to hazard a guess would not for present purposes be particularly profitable. The extent need not be exaggerated but it was probaby not negligible. It is perhaps best understood, however, not from (deficient) literary sources but from the kinds of visual images that I have described here. In the first place such images were the product of an ideology which fostered the expectation that the emperor and other members of the ruling elite should be conquering heroes, and that victories should be celebrated when wars had been fought succesfully. They were of a piece with the practice of counting and recording the number of times emperors received imperatorial salutations, and they sprang from the militaristic ethos in which the emperorship and the life of the ruling class at large were enveloped. In structural terms they expose the violence that permeated Roman culture through all of Rome's history. But the images also express the reality that warfare continually supplied Roman slave-owners with new slaves. It remains impossible in the end to say which of the several mechanisms of supply under the Principate provided most new slaves, because, again, there is insufficient quantifiable material to provide a definitive answer. A model, consequently, of a number of complementary mechanisms acting in concert is in my view a preferable alternative to the conventional view. Natural reproduction, reclamation of abandoned infants, self-sale, trade, warfare—these are all methods of supply that are historically attested. Why insist that one predominated over all others?

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Plate 1. Captives on *ferculum*

Frieze, Temple of Apollo Sosianus, Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori. DAIR Inst. Neg. 71.45.

Plate 2. Two pairs of captives (lower register).

Gemma Augustea, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Inv. IX A 79.

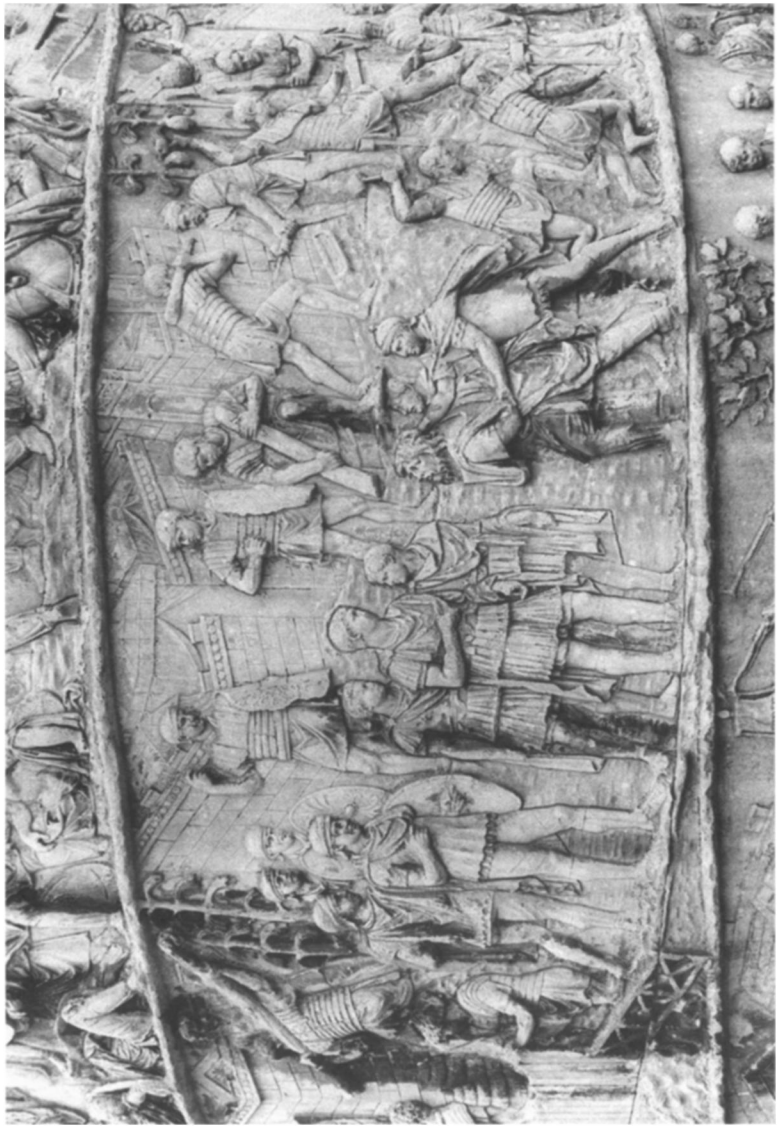

Plate 3. Roman soldier with captive before emperor.
Rome, Column of Trajan. DAIR Inst. Neg. 91.93.

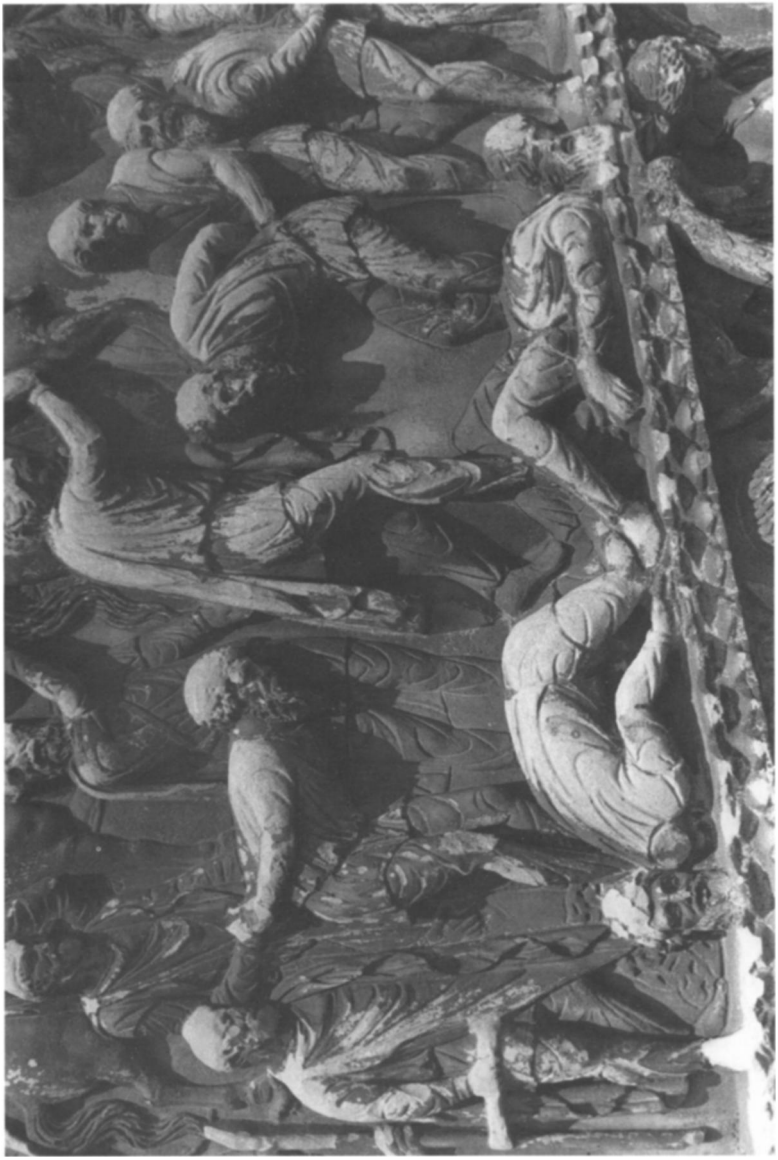

Plate 4. Execution of captives.

Rome, Column of Marcus Aurelius. DAIR Inst. Neg. 55.964.

Plate 5. Captives chained at the neck.

Column base, Landesmuseum Mainz. Kat. Nr. 263. Abb. 47 (Selzer 1988).

Plate 6. Pairs of captives roped at the neck.

Fragmentary relief, Ashmolean Museum. Michaelis 137 (Selzer 1988).

Plate 7. Captive father and son seeking clemency.

Rome, Arch of Marcus Aurelius; Arch of Constantine. Alinari/Art Resource, NY. ART 155436.

Plate 8. Captives granted clemency.

Panel relief of Marcus Aurelius, Capitoline Museums, Rome. Alinari/Art Resource, NY. ART178298.

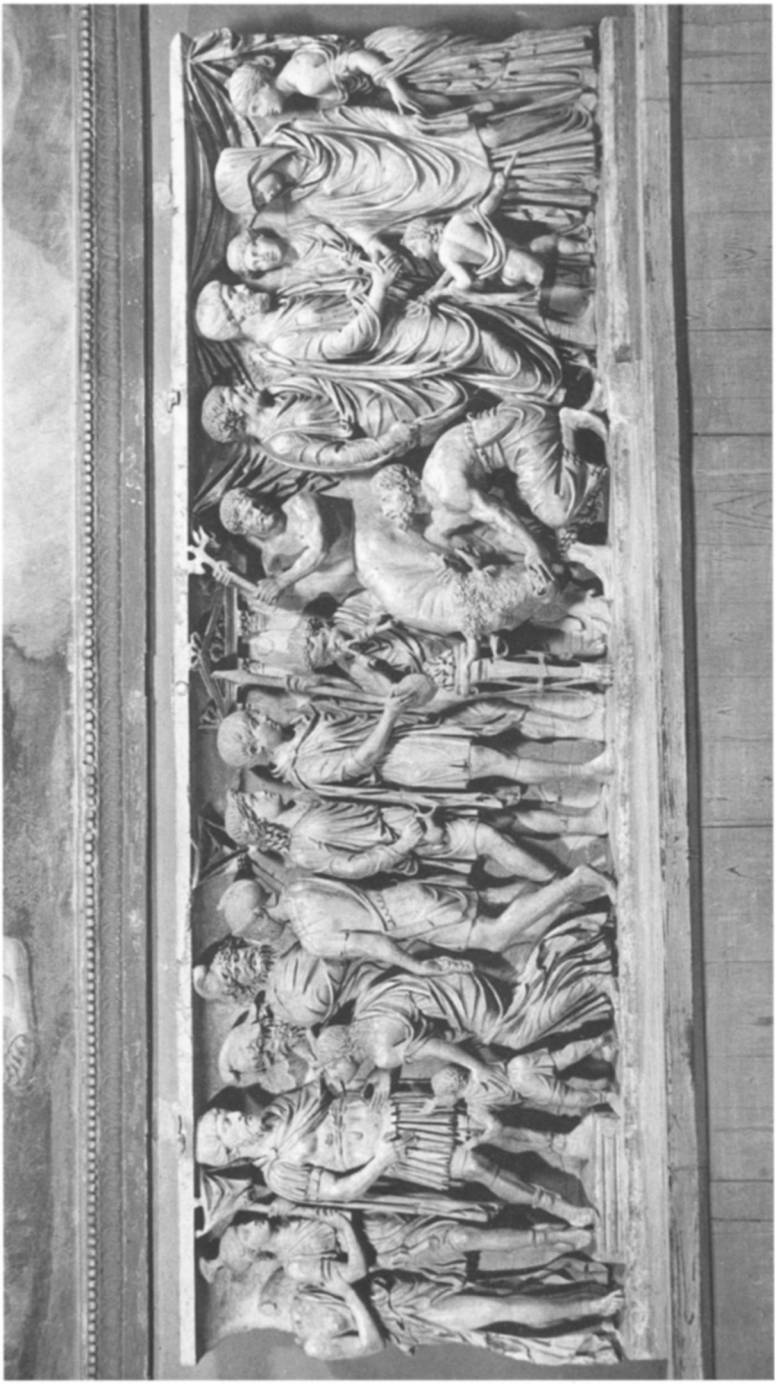

Plate 9. Three captives seeking clemency (left).
Biographical sarcophagus, Mantua, Palazzo Ducale. DAIR Inst. Neg. 62.126.

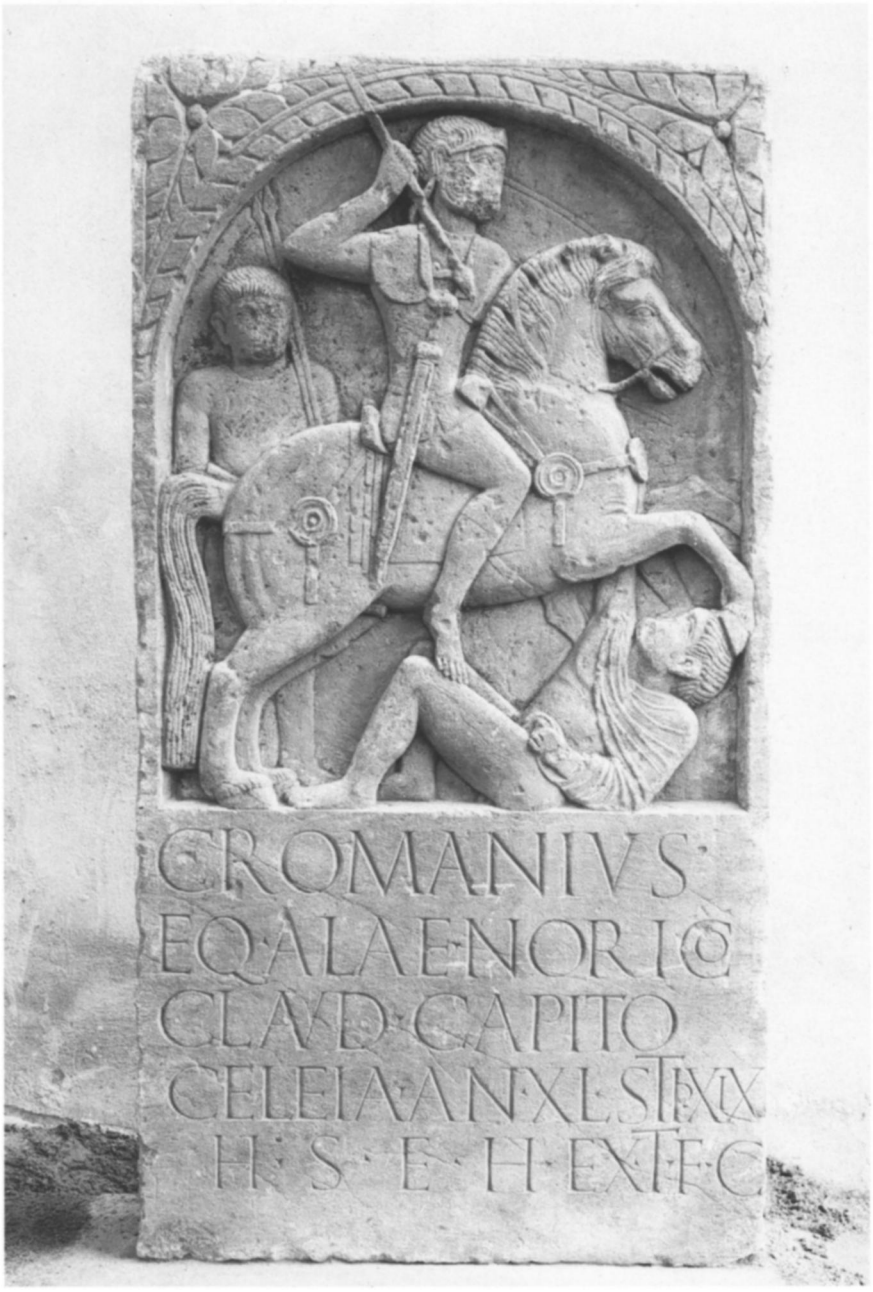

Plate 10. Vanquished enemy figure.

Stele of C. Romanius Capito, Landesmuseum Mainz. Kat. Nr. 87. Abb. 48 (Selzer 1988).

Plate 11. Captives preparing for departure.
Rome, Column of Trajan. DAIR Inst. Neg. 91.109.

Plate 12. African captives.

Bronze statuettes (front view), Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Neg.-Nr. 5245.

Plate 13. African captives.

Bronze statuettes (rear view), Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Neg.-Nr. 5246.

Plate 14. Bound male captive.

Relief, Sebasteion, Aphrodisias. Photo courtesy of Institute of Fine Arts, New York.

Plate 16. Female captive.

Relief, Sebasteion, Aphrodisias. Photo courtesy of Institute of Fine Arts, New York.

Plate 15. Bound male captive, child.
Relief, Sebasteion, Aphrodisias. Photo courtesy of Institute of Fine Arts, New York.

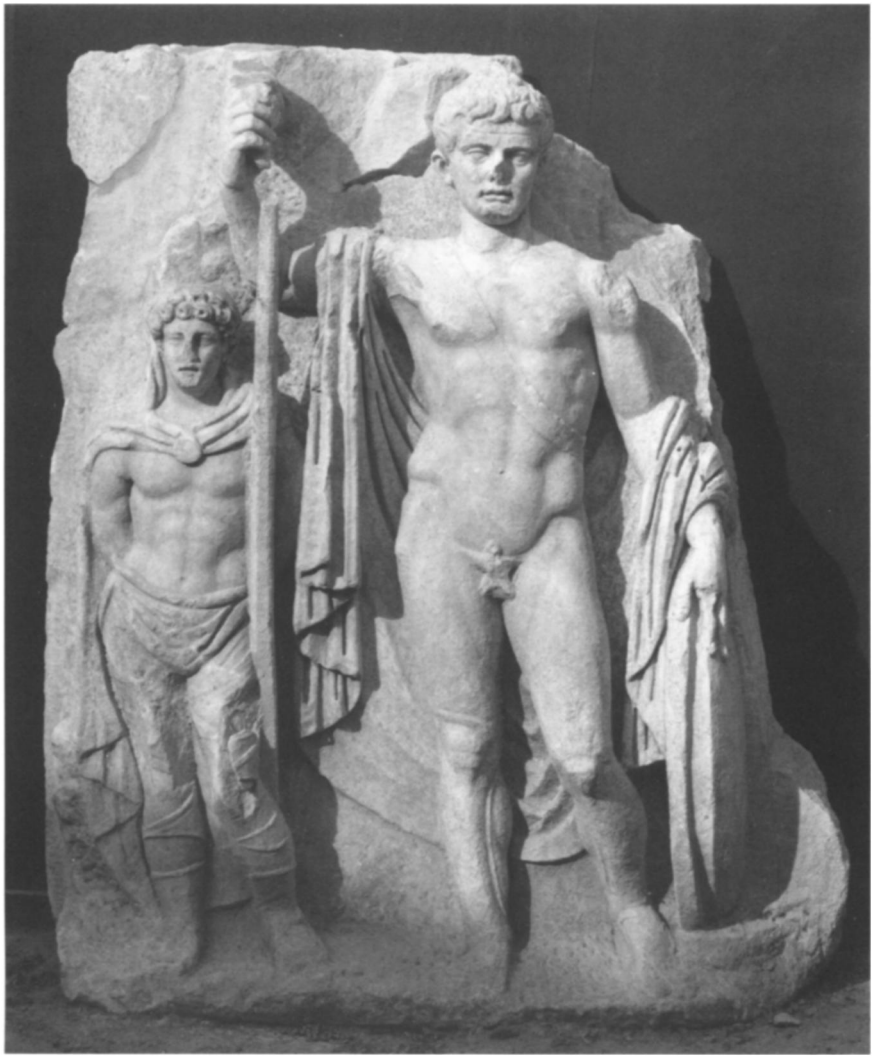

Plate 17. Bound male captive.

Relief, Sebasteion, Aphrodisias. Photo courtesy of Institute of Fine Arts, New York.