AUFSTIEG UND NIEDERGANG DER RÖMISCHEN WELT

GESCHICHTE UND KULTUR ROMS
IM SPIEGEL DER NEUEREN FORSCHUNG

II

HERAUSGEGEBEN
VON

HILDEGARD TEMPORINI
UND
WOLFGANG HAASE

WALTER DE GRUYTER · BERLIN · NEW YORK
1979

PRINCIPAT

DREIUNDZWANZIGSTER BAND
(1. HALBBAND)

RELIGION

(VORKONSTANTINISCHES CHRISTENTUM:
VERHÄLTNIS ZU RÖMISCHEM STAAT UND
HEIDNISCHER RELIGION)

HERAUSGEGEBEN
VON

WOLFGANG HAASE

WALTER DE GRUYTER · BERLIN · NEW YORK
1979

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Christians and the Roman Army from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine

by John Helgeland, Fargo, N. D.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction 725

II. War, Violence, and Military Service in the Church Fathers 733
1. Tertullian 735
2. Clement of Alexandria 744
3. Origen 746
4. Hippolytus 752
5. Cyprian 752
6. Minucius Felix 755
7. Arnobius 756
8. Lactantius 757
9. Eusebius of Caesarea 760
10. Apocryphal Gospels 762
11. Conclusion 764

III. Christians in the Roman Army from A.D. 173—312 765
1. *Legio XII Fulminata* — The Thundering Legion 766
2. Marinus — Officer Candidate 774
3. The Theban Legion 774
4. Maximilian — The Recruit 777
5. Marcellus — The Centurion 780
6. Dasius 783
7. Tipasius — The Veteran 785
8. Julius — The Veteran 787
9. Persecution in the Army Before 303 789
10. Inscriptions 791
11. The Question of Christian Police 793
12. Recruitment 795
13. Summary 796

IV. Constantine, Christians, and Military Service 797
1. Constantine's Religious Background 798
2. Constantine's March on Rome 799
3. Church Councils During Constantine's Reign 805
4. Persecution in the Army under Licinius 808
5. The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste 812
6. Eusebius' View of Constantine as a Military Commander 812
7. Summary 815

V. Conclusion: Christians and Roman Army Religion 816

VI. Appendix: The Acts of the Military Martyrs 820
1. Andrew the Tribune 822
2. Callistratus and His Forty-Nine Companions 822
3. Fabius 823
4. Longinus the Centurion 824
5. Longinus the Soldier 824
6. Luxorius 824
7. Nereus and Achilleus 825
8. Polyeuctes 825
9. Procopius 826
10. Proculus the Soldier 826
11. The *quattuor coronati* 826
12. Sebastian 827
13. Sergius and Bacchus 828
14. Tarachus, Probus, and Andronicus 828
15. Theodore the Recruit 829
16. Theodore the Commander 829

Selected Bibliography 830

I. Introduction

For the most part, the study of the relationships between Christians and the Roman military has been in the work of church historians and theologians. Generally, key questions tended to recur in these studies. Was the church, prior to the time of Constantine, acting on pacifist principles? Were there Christians who entered the army? Was their Christianity in some way deviant from that of the church? What did the church think about the morality of Rome conducting war? Although the distinctions blur here and there, three basic positions in these studies emerged: the Roman Catholics, the Protestants from state church backgrounds, and the Protestants from disestablished traditions representing a pacifist point of view.

The Roman Catholic point of view seems to be dominated by the work of ANDREAS BIGELMAIR, 'Die Beteiligung der Christen am öffentlichen Leben

in vorconstantinischer Zeit', published in 1902[1]. Written in the aftermath of the *Kulturkampf*, his work, as the title suggests, attempted to show that Christians willingly participated in the public life of Rome, at least to the extent that they did not run the danger of having their faith compromised by Roman religious observances. Christians were loyal to the Roman government as far as their faith allowed them to be. For example, Origen supported the empire, not by encouraging Christians to enlist, but by praying for the success of the armies as long as they were engaged in 'righteous' wars. BIGELMAIR's point of view did not allow him to treat Tertullian's career fairly: when Tertullian became a Montanist he adopted a hostile attitude to the Roman government which was not characteristic of his earlier apologetic writings, a change in attitude which BIGELMAIR did not fully appreciate. In two ways he tried also to minimize the number of conflicts which Christians had with the Roman government. First, he argued that there were few Christians in the army because they were not, he assumed, citizens and therefore not eligible to serve. Second, he was sceptical of most of the accounts of Christians martyred at the hands of their military commanders. Nevertheless, it was the loyalty of Christians to the empire which encouraged Constantine to favor them, building his government by actively seeking the support of the church.

Over a generation later in France, HENRI LECLERCQ continued the Roman Catholic argument but, since he wrote in a less tense political-ecclesiastical milieu, he found it possible to pay more attention to the conflicts between Christians and Rome than did BIGELMAIR[2]. Accordingly, he studied

Abbreviations:

AB	Analecta Bolliandiana
AE	L'Année épigraphique
ANF	Ante Nicene Fathers
ASS	Acta Sanctorum
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CIMRM	Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae
DACL	Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie
Feriale Duranum	Feriale Duranum, in: R. O. FINK, Roman Military Records on Papyrus
HE	Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
ILCV	Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres
ILS	Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
MC	ADOLF HARNACK, Militia Christi
OCD	Oxford Classical Dictionary (2nd ed.)
RE	PAULYS Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
RGG	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 3rd. ed.
VC	Vigiliae Christianae

[1] ANDREAS BIGELMAIR, Die Beteiligung der Christen am öffentlichen Leben in vorconstantinischer Zeit (Munich, 1902), pp. 164—201.

[2] H. LECLERCQ, Militarisme, in: Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie, ed. by FERNAND CABROL and HENRI LECLERCQ, XI (1933), 1108—1181.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

the military martyr accounts more thoroughly, and he believed them to be more authentic. Another generation later in the United States, EDWARD RYAN pointed out that the early church was not pacifist[3]. Jesus was not a pacifist because he did not have any occasion to address himself to the subject of the Roman military. Those whom he thought held pacifist views — Tatian, Marcion, the Montanists, the Novatianists, and Tertullian — were either heretics or on the fringe of Christendom and, as such, had no claim to represent it.

The first representative of a Protestant from a state church background, ADOLF HARNACK, seemed to be refuting the work of BIGELMAIR though he did not mention him explicitly[4]. HARNACK's antipathy toward the Roman Catholic Church is well known and, accordingly, he probably wanted to keep the church as separate from the state as possible; the Constantinian settlement was not a blessing for the church. Basically, HARNACK's argument is this: in the early church *militia Christi* (the army of Christ) was a spiritual army, but, after the time of Constantine, it became an army in the ordinary sense of the word, eventually culminating in the crusades of the Middle Ages, a development he viewed with horror and indignation[5]. Characteristic of the spiritual army of the first three centuries was the use of military analogies to describe the Christian life: 1. the sacrament of baptism was compared with the military oath, also called the *sacramentum*; 2. Christ was the commander (*imperator*) of this army; 3. all Christians were soldiers in this army; 4. their battle was on God's behalf and they receive their honors from him; 5. the church and the prison (for martyrs) were the camps of God; 6. heretics are rebels and deserters; 7. the liturgy of the church was like the stations and vigils around the military camp; 8. service to the army of Mithra was treason[6]. Already in the New Testament, HARNACK points out, we can see the beginning of these analogies, particularly in Ephesians 6 : 10—17[7].

HARNACK found increasing numbers of Christians in the army; by the time of Constantine they had become so numerous that Jerusalem and

[3] EDWARD A. RYAN, S. J., The Rejection of Military Service by the Early Christians, Theological Studies, XII (March, 1952), 1—32.

[4] ADOLF HARNACK, Militia Christi: Die Christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten (Tübingen, 1905).

[5] Ibid. p. 30.

[6] Ibid. p. 41—42.

[7] Eph. 6 : 10—17. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Translation from: The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version (New York, 1952).

Rome were prepared for each other. In fact, it was in the army that the public recognition of Christianity first took place; relegating to the monastery its views on war, the church threw itself into the arms of the emperor[8]. These Christians had problems with the military. He began by listing the potential conflicts awaiting the Christian entering the military. 1. The Church was opposed to war and bloodshed. 2. On occasion, officers must pronounce the death sentence and soldiers would be required to carry out those commands. 3. The unconditional nature of the soldier's oath conflicted with the unconditional duty to God. 4. The imperial cult was most rigidly observed in the army, more than in civilian life. 5. Officers must sacrifice and soldiers must participate. 6. The military standards were considered pagan idols and, therefore, their worship became idolatry. 7. In leisure time the behavior of the soldiers conflicted with the Christian ethic, for example, engaging in extortion, licentiousness, ribald humor, and gambling. 8. The traditional rough games offended Christians who connected them with the idolatry of pagan festivals[9]. HARNACK arrived at this list of possible conflicts by distilling the objections of various Church writers; whether or not these were problems for individual Christians in the service is another matter. Some of the conflicts can be documented by reference to military martyrdoms, but not all.

The work of JAMES MOFFATT, a Scottish Presbyterian, seems to be directed toward two goals: 1. he argued, against HARNACK, that military analogies did not form the mind of the church since they were commonplaces in the literature of the ancient world and, therefore, prove nothing about the thinking of men who employed them, and 2. he wanted to show that the early church was not a pacifist community[10]. This latter point MOFFATT pressed with vigor since he wrote his articles during the First World War. For him, pacifists were parasites and Marcionite cranks[11]. Despite the differences in historical situations, he reached conclusions compatible with BIGELMAIR. The problem of the idolatrous army religion was the chief conflict between the Christians and the Roman military. In his attempt to explain the lack of evidence for Christian soldiers before A.D. 170, he adopted BIGELMAIR'S argument that their social and legal status kept many Christians from confrontation with the army owing to their ineligibility for enlistment.

A Lutheran, HANS VON CAMPENHAUSEN, takes a non-pacifist stance arguing that the early Church had no consistent doctrine of its relationship to the military[12]. A corollary of his thesis is that the Church did not compro-

[8] MC, pp. 87 and 90.
[9] Ibid., pp. 46—47.
[10] JAMES MOFFATT, War, in: Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, ed. by JAMES HASTINGS, II (1918), 646—673.
[11] JAMES MOFFATT, The War and the Religious Life in Great Britain, American Journal of Theology, XX (October, 1916), 489.
[12] HANS VON CAMPENHAUSEN, Tradition and Life in the Church, trans. by A. V. LITTLEDALE (London, 1968), pp. 160—170. Originally this article appeared as 'Der Kriegsdienst der

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

mise itself when it allied with Constantine; the Church did not begin a decline as a result of that alliance (if it ever did decline).

Chronologically, the development of VON CAMPENHAUSEN's article falls into three periods. In the first period, the concerns of the Fathers, such as Tertullian, were pastoral. While no Father condemned the military profession, the question was whether a converted soldier could remain in the service without suffering spiritual harm. The second period involves the conflict of principles between Christians and Rome; Origen and Celsus are the *dramatis personae* of this conflict. In answer to Celsus' accusation, that the barbarians would simply take over if the Christian refusal to serve became the norm for the empire, Origen proposed an idealistic solution; he did not take Celsus' question seriously. Since Origen could not conceive of a Christian empire, he answered theoretically that God would protect such an empire; in that case there would be no need for an army. Moreover, there were specific roles for Christians and pagans in the empire as Origen knew it. Pagans, including the emperor, enlist and fight while Christians pray to God for the success of the armies. The third is the period of realism. Under Constantine, the Christians had the opportunity and responsibility to work out the answer to Celsus' question. Accordingly, VON CAMPENHAUSEN reads Canon III of the Synod of Arles literally; Christians are not allowed to disarm themselves in peacetime. The Church passed laws to make certain that Christians did not desert the army, though there were still theologians, like Basil, who clung to the rubric of abstinence from the Eucharist for killing in battle; but the die was cast and there could be no return to a theoretical answer to the problem.

A weakness of VON CAMPENHAUSEN's argument is that it is based on too few examples. Tertullian, Origen, and Canon III of Arles are substantially the content for the three periods he identifies. Not only are these sources not adequate to furnish reliable indications of the direction the Church took to resolve its problems with Rome, but one must question, as did RYAN, how representative Tertullian and Origen were of the Church at large[13].

The third basic stance, the pacifist, had its first expression in the 20th century in the work of C. J. CADOUX, a Congregationalist[14]. Writing a few years after MOFFATT, CADOUX reacted to the First World War in a fashion exactly opposite to that of MOFFATT. In the work of CADOUX a new

Christen in der Kirche des Altertums', Offener Horizont. Festschrift für Karl Jaspers (Munich, 1953).

[13] Two other studies fall in the state church Protestant category. They are HEINRICH KARPP, Die Stellung der Alten Kirche zu Kriegsdienst und Krieg, Evangelische Theologie, XXIII (1957), 496—515, and EINAR MOLLAND, De Kristne og Militaertjenesten i den Gamle Kirke, Norsk Theologisk Tidskrift, LI (1959), 87—104.

[14] C. J. CADOUX, The Early Christian Attitude to War (London, 1919). Six years later CADOUX added this material to his larger book, 'The Early Church and the World' (Edinburgh, 1925). Although he added more research to the latter work, the orientation to the subject remained pacifist. (Hereafter cited as 'Attitude' and 'World' respectively.)

approach to the study appears. While those before him spent relatively little time examining the ethics of Jesus, CADOUX dwells on them at great length, assuming that, if Jesus was totally opposed to war and killing, the early Church could not have been far away from this position. Both HARNACK and CADOUX have the utmost respect for the notion that the Church departed from Jesus' stance on the question of bloodshed. However, they disagree concerning the time when the period of decay set in; for HARNACK it is relatively early, for CADOUX it is somewhat later.

> "But over against all this we have to set the facts that the first three centuries were the period in which the work of the Church in morally and spiritually regenerating human life was done with an energy and a success that have never since been equalled, when the power springing from her Founder's personal life pulsated with more vigor and intensity than was possible at a greater distance when incipient decay was held in check by repeated purification in the fires of persecution, and when the Church's vision has not been distorted or her conscience dulled by compromises with the world[15]."

CADOUX, therefore, finds the first three centuries of the Church's existence exemplary; HARNACK does not.

Like most pacifist writers, CADOUX believed that his study had a particular relevance for his own day. In the examination of the early Church, one gains insights to apply to the contemporary science of ethics[16]. As such, his work is dominated by his concern that wars should cease and that Christians should not take part in military service.

In his study, CADOUX had little trouble finding statements of the Church Fathers abhorring war. It is the problem of Christian enlistment which causes him to take liberties with the evidence. For example, the account of the martyrdom of Marcellus, which nowhere indicates that Marcellus was opposed to killing, in CADOUX's work appears to be pacifist[17]. (Marcellus said that he could not serve two masters, indicating that he was concerned that he was being forced to be an idolator.) Another example is those Christians in the military, mainly known from tombstones, who had no problem with that occupation since CADOUX claims they were in the police, not the army[18]. While the subject of police will appear at length below, it is sufficient to say here that the Roman military made no such distinction in those provinces where many of these tombstones were recovered. For CADOUX, this theory is a priori since he nowhere offers any evidence to support it. His purpose in making the distinction between the army and the police is to argue that a person would have been more 'Christian' for entering police work. Finally, CADOUX's interpretation of the evi-

[15] Attitude, p. 3.
[16] Ibid., pp. 1—3.
[17] World, p. 584, note 3.
[18] Attitude, p. 16.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

dence leaves the reader asking why Constantine chose Christianity to unify the empire; if one of the greatest needs of the empire was defense, Constantine would not have been so irresponsible as to show favor to a religious group as pacifist as CADOUX argued it was.

As CADOUX wrote shortly after World War I, so ROLAND BAINTON, a Quaker, responded shortly after World War II[19]. He began his article by summarizing the evidence for Christians in the army before Constantine. The silence existing from the time of the New Testament to A.D. 170 he interprets as meaning that there were few, if any, Christian soldiers during that time. After that, the evidence pointed to few soldiers who were Christian. However, he merely mentions the Thundering Legion; the military martyrs are not examined at any length, indicating that he is trying to minimize the numbers of Christians in the army. Evidence obtained from the writings of ecclesiastical authors, he claims, confirms the low number of Christian soldiers.

Like CADOUX, BAINTON makes the distinction between police work and soldiering, but develops it to a greater extent. He uses it in two ways. The first is to attempt to prove that the policeman's role is more peaceful, not requiring the person to kill in the line of duty. Therefore, the service could not be condemned out of hand; this explains further why there were few outright denunciations of the military profession. The second use of the distinction is to explain the confusing reading in Canon III of the Synod of Arles in 314 A.D., condemning soldiers for throwing down their arms in time of peace. BAINTON's interpretation is that soldiers were not permitted to leave the service in peacetime while they were subject to police duty, but could leave in time of war when they were required to kill.

BAINTON tries to limit the force of three explanations scholars have given for the Church Fathers' aversion to military service: 1. idolatry was offensive to Christians; 2. Christ would soon return, and 3. they were hostile to the Roman government. The first explanation appeals to Roman Catholic scholars. He tried to avoid the subject of the conflict with the idolatrous army religion, mainly by narrowing the context of the Fathers' statements to exclude references to it. Nowhere does he face squarely the arguments Catholic scholars have advanced to show that army religion was at the basis of the conflict. The second objection, that Christians did not enlist because the return of Christ was soon expected, never appears in the writings of the Church Fathers or in the accounts of the military martyrs. If this reservation was held in the first century we have no way of knowing it; in the second and third centuries it receded into the background. The third objection, hostility to Rome, is troublesome to BAINTON; he cannot simply say that Christians were disloyal. Following the argument of Origen, BAINTON con-

[19] The Early Church and War, Harvard Theological Review (hereafter cited as HTR), XXXIX (July, 1946), 189—212, and ID., Christian Attitudes to War and Peace (Nashville, 1960). The content of the article is the content for the corresponding period in the book, which covers ancient to modern periods. For our purposes we refer only to the article in the introduction.

tends that Christians' loyalty to the state, though qualified, took the form of disciplined lives, prayers for the emperor, and the ethic of love. In so doing, Christians were as effective as soldiers for maintaining peace. As opposed to the Roman understanding of peace as the absence of armed conflict, he contends that the Church was concerned with true peace. Therefore, the Church's loyalty to the empire transcended the traditional Roman concept of loyalty.

After BAINTON eliminated these objections, the remaining option, as he saw it, was that the early Church had a profound aversion to bloodshed. However, no one can deny that at least some Christians enlisted voluntarily. Therefore, he posited various 'levels' of participation in the Church; not all members followed it with the same degree of devotion. While BAINTON wished to make the first three centuries an example to the present time, as did CADOUX, he was qualified in his estimation of early Church ethics.

Closely following the arguments of both CADOUX and BAINTON, JEAN-MICHEL HORNUS took as one of his primary emphases to cast doubt upon the military martyr literature to remove it as a source for the study of the relationship between Christians and the military[20]. He chose some of the most vulnerable accounts to attack, giving the impression that all military martyr acts are not reliable. But even if these accounts did prove to be unreliable, which they are not, one still would have to explain away the facts that there were so many of them and why they almost unanimously point to idolatry as the major problem, not having to engage in combat.

It is clear that the research into the problems Christians had with the army has been dominated by theological concerns primarily. As a result much evidence has gone unexamined. Over the past century an impressive body of literature grew up around the topic of the Roman army itself, but unfortunately much of it has not been related to the Christian experience with the army. In the following pages we hope to begin to develop a new understanding of Christian soldiers as they lived in the Roman army and how army policies affected their lives. It is just as interesting to find out what the military thought about Christians as what Christians thought about it. In this regard, the military martyr acts have much to tell us; they must be read critically, but it is possible to distill a great deal of reliable information from them, particularly with the help of the studies on the army. For example, the discovery of the 'Feriale Duranum', a calendar of religious festivals to be celebrated in the army, has illustrated the fact that the Roman army was a religious world of its own and that it was a religious environment impossible for any Christian in the army to escape[21].

[20] JEAN-MICHEL HORNUS, Evangile et Labarum (Geneva, 1960). The dedication of his book reads, «*A la mémoire de Georges Hornus, mon père (16/9/1905—10/6/1940), et de Charles Hornus, mon oncle (4/10/1906—15/12/1944), morts en chrétiens et en soldats.*»

[21] See my article 'Roman Army Religion', in: Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, II 16,2, W. HAASE, ed. (Berlin–New York, 1978), pp. 1470—1505.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Most of the church historians who worked on the subject of Christians and the army had theological presuppositions which interfered with their studies. The foremost one, it would seem, was that they regarded the thoughts and conduct of Christians in the first three centuries as normative for the contemporary church. Consequently, it makes a great difference whether the evidence from only 'orthodox' Christians is recorded in one's study of the problem, or whether the entire range of those who wished to call themselves Christian is regarded as a sociological unit and studied as such. The latter is the point of view taken here; the story of Christians and the army is interesting for its own sake.

II. War, Violence, and Military Service in the Church Fathers

In an examination of the evidence from the Church Fathers certain questions must be answered: What did they think about war? What did they think about violence? What did they think about Christians serving in the Roman army? Furthermore, the relationship between these questions must be established; for example, if a Father was opposed to war, was he necessarily opposed to Christians serving in the army? As many in our day, some Fathers thought that the ideal solution to conflicts did not call for violent means, yet they recognized that the ideal was not possible in every case. Some other churchmen recognized that war and violence were an unavoidable necessity but denied that Christian soldiers could take part in military service. Their denial was based, however, not on the ground of possible bloodshed, but on the nature of military life itself, in particular, the idolatrous army religion.

Despite the fact that there are a few prohibitions of Christians enlisting, there was no controversy which involved the entire church on this subject. We know of no quarrel between churches nor any angry exchange of letters, only individual churchmen voicing individual points of view. The lack of dispute has made the relationship between Christians and the military difficult to study; in collecting evidence one has to cover long expanses of text to pluck out random (and in most cases it would not be fair to call them more than that) comments. Only Tertullian and Origen have any lengthy and detailed statements on the subject of Christians enlisting, and in these two cases we are justified in raising questions about how representative of the church at large these authors were. Another problem is that, when the subject of killing is raised, it is unclear what sort of killing the author had in mind. In this regard, the Roman empire suffered a great deal from criminals as well as from military conflicts; some Christians seem to have been guilty of crimes of passion[22]. However, some modern scholarship has

[22] One Christian admitted in 305 that he was a murderer and was proud of it; he even intended to kill those who had charged him with the crime. See Purpurius' statement in 'The

interpreted general injunctions against killing as evidence for the church opposing military life.

What did the Church Fathers know about the army they criticized? In those passages where it is possible we have tried to set them in the context of what we know of military antiquities. Generally speaking, the Church Fathers had no more knowledge of military procedures and organization than the common civilian of the empire might have had, perhaps less; at least, if they knew they were not telling. Of all the Fathers Tertullian seems to have had the most precise knowledge of the Army.

Although outside the chronological limits of our study, it might be argued from the detail of the language that Clement of Rome used in a military analogy that he had a correspondingly precise knowledge of the organization of the Roman army[23]. When Clement pleaded with the Corinthians to obey the ecclesiastical discipline which placed bishops over the laity, he preached that everyone was a prefect, a tribune, a centurion, or a "leader of fifty" (πεντηκόνταρχος). But the Roman army had no one in charge of fifty men[24]. Most likely, Clement appropriated this description of an army (he never said it was a Roman army) from the 'Septuagint' where the exact words for those same detachments are used (except for the word for prefect, of course)[25]. The word for a leader of fifty is found referring to the army of the Seleucids, and was, therefore, probably taken over in the translation of the 'Septuagint'[26].

On the other hand, Ignatius of Antioch gained first hand experience with the Roman army during his extradition to Rome in the custody of ten soldiers[27]. Concerned primarily with properly suffering his impending matyrdom, he made no statement concerning the ethics of becoming a soldier or of waging war.

On the basis of his experiences with the soldiers he learned to elaborate further the military analogy of Ephesians 6 : 12—17. "Be pleasing to him in whose ranks you serve, from whom you receive your pay — let none of

Acts of the Council of Cirta in Numidia', in: J. Stevenson, A New Eusebius (London, 1968), p. 309.

[23] I Clement 37.

[24] Robert M. Grant and Holt Graham, The Apostolic Fathers: First and Second Clement (New York, 1965), II, 65.

[25] Exodus 18: 21, 25.

[26] F. Miltner, Nautai, in: Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, ed. by Georg Wissowa (Hereafter cited as RE), XVI, 2 (1935), 2032. Septuagint, Exodus 18 : 21.

[27] Romans 5, 1. Since the Roman army had no technical term for a subdivision of ten men, it is not clear what he meant by the δέκα λεοπάρδοι who watched him; the phrase may mean either a special detail of soldiers to conduct him to Rome or, as Bauer thought, his personal guards while traveling in a much larger group. (See Walter Bauer, λεοπάρδος, in: A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature, trans. by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, Chicago, 1957). Because there is no evidence for any cohort or legion by that name, even though Ignatius said it was a military detachment (ὅ ἐστιν στρατιωτικὸν τάγμα), the word "leopard" conveys the impression that the soldiers were brutal.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

you be found a deserter. Let your baptism remain as your arms, your faith as a helmet, your love as a spear, your endurance as your panoply, let your works be your deposits that you may receive the back-pay due to you[28]." Ignatius seems to have had the closest contact with the army of any Church writer, but in a situation not of his own choosing.

1. Tertullian

Tertullian lived in North Africa but for how long is not known; his writings date from about 197 to 220. There is no direct evidence that he was the son of a centurion, as Jerome thought[29]. As his career progressed he became more and more hostile toward the Roman government to which he addressed his 'Apology', his first writing, in the year 197[30].

In the 'Apology' Tertullian recognized the necessity of war, but qualified his approval of it by citing disadvantages arising from it. Like every kingdom which grew great by expanding its boundaries militarily, the Roman empire owed its greatness to wars it had waged[31]. War, however, always results in destruction; cities, priests, and citizens suffer as well as armies. In addition, Rome suffered because, in destroying the religions of conquered nations, it destroyed its own religion. Rome's greatness was not a gift of the gods but a spoil of war.

Viewing the rise and fall of nations as the work of the Christians' God, not the Romans', Tertullian was able to place confidence in the Roman

[28] To Polycarp 6, 2. Ignatius was momentarily carried away by the excitement of naming all the equipment he saw; panoply meant all the equipment issued to a soldier. However, he showed detailed knowledge of the army payroll. The *opsonia* are the regular wages; the *accepta* are the deposits to which he refers and were deducted from the soldier's wage. Only the standard bearers were trusted to watch over the deposits which were kept in the regimental savings bank, in the same place as the standards. To steal from the *accepta*, therefore, became sacrilege as well as theft. On this subject v. G. R. WATSON, The Roman Soldier (Ithaca, N.Y., 1969), pp. 104—107.
Since in some cases Ignatius used Latin military terms transliterated into Greek, he probably picked them up from soldiers while on the journey to Rome — *desertor, deposita,* and *accepta*. In less technical uses of words he retained the Greek — ὅπλα, περικεφάλαια, δόρυ, πανοπλία — arms, helmet, spear, panoply.

[29] De viribus illustribus 53.

[30] H. KARPP, Tertullian, in: RGG, VI (1962), 700—701.

[31] Apology 25, 14: *Atquin quomodo ob religionem magni, quibus magnitudo de irreligiositate prouenit? Ni fallor enim, omne regnum uel imperium bellis quaeritur et uictoriis propagatur. Porro bella et uictoriae captis et euersis plurimum urbibus constant. Id negotium sine deorum iniuria non est; eadem strages et moenium et templorum, pares caedes ciuium et sacerdotum, nec dissimiles rapinae sacrarum diuitiarum et profanarum.* ("Indeed, how could religion make a people great who have owed their greatness to their irreligion? For, if I am not mistaken, kingdoms and empires are acquired by wars, and are extended by victories. More than that, you cannot have wars and victories without the taking, and often the destruction, of cities. That is the thing in which the gods have their share of calamity. Houses and temples suffer alike; there is indiscriminate slaughter of priests and citizens; the hand of rapine is laid equally upon sacred and on common treasure." Trans. by S. THELWALL, Ante Nicene Fathers, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1963).

empire in spite of its destructiveness. At one time or another God had favored Babylonians, Medes, Egyptians, and Assyrians, but now he was on Rome's side[32]; the benefits of Rome were in fact God's gifts given through Rome[33]. On the basis of Tertullian's belief in God's concern for the Roman empire he was able to pledge allegiance to it.

> "Without ceasing, for all our emperors we offer prayer. We pray for life prolonged; for security to the empire; for protection to the imperial house; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest, whatever, as man or Caesar an emperor would wish[34]."

In another sense Christians pray for the empire; by praying for a delay of the end of time they are supporting the empire[35]. The emperor received benefits from Christian prayers for his safety, although Christians declined to swear by his genius. Since Tertullian feared that the end of the world would come in the form of a barbarian invasion, he felt that the empire was a part of God's plan for the future; evidently Tertullian could not imagine a future other than one under the Roman eagle[36].

Christian loyalty to the empire took another form in addition to prayer — Christian participation in the Roman army. Proudly he claimed that Christians had taken places in almost every part of Roman life:

> "We have filled every place among you — cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum — we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods[37]."

In fact, Christians are so ubiquitous that, if they had the inclination to repay evil for evil, they would be in a position to bring the empire to its knees. "A single night with a torch or two could achieve an ample vengeance[38]." Although Tertullian had just stated that Christians were in every camp, he dismissed the possibility of guerilla insurrection:

[32] Ibid., 26, 2.

[33] Ibid., 30.

[34] Apology, 30, 4: *precantes sumus semper pro omnibus imperatoribus, uitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, quaecumque hominis et Caesaris uota sunt.* (Tr. ANF.)

[35] Apology 32, 1: *qui uim maximam uniuerso orbi imminentem ipsamque clausulam saeculi acerbitates horrendas comminantem Romani imperii commeatu scimus retardari. Itaque nolumus experiri et, dum precamur differri, Romanae diuturnitati fauemus.* ("For we know that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth — in fact, the very end of all things threatening dreadful woes — is only retarded by the continuing existence of the Roman empire. We have no desire, then, to be overtaken by these dire events; and in praying that their coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome's duration." Tr. ANF.)

[36] Ibid., and On the Resurrection of the Flesh 24, 18.

[37] Apology 37, 4: *et orbem iam et uestra omnia impleuimus, urbes insulas, castella municipia conciliabula, castra ipsa tribus decurias, palatium senatum forum. Sola uobis reliquimus templa!* (Tr. ANF.)

[38] Ibid., 37, 3: *Quid tamen de tam conspiratis umquam denotatis, de tam animatis ad mortem urque pro iniuria repensatis, quando uel una nox pauculis faculis largiter ultionis possit*

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

"For what wars should we not be fit, not eager, even with unequal forces, we who so willingly yield ourselves to the sword, if in our religion it were not counted better to be slain than to slay[39]."

In hinting about the possibility of revolt, Tertullian was toying with one of Rome's greatest fears; though neither he nor his contemporary readers knew it, they all stood on the threshold of the third century military anarchy.

In addition to the loyalty Christians held toward the empire, they were congenial participants in it, despite the accusation that they were weird people. To the slur that they lived strange lives, he replied that Christians were not Brahmins or Gymnosophists who lived an ascetic existence.

"So we sojourn with you in the world, abjuring neither forum, nor butcher shop, nor bath, nor booth, nor workshop, nor inn, nor weekly market, nor any other places of commerce. We sail with you, and fight with you…[40]."

Therefore, early in his career, Tertullian pictured the Christian as an ideal citizen of the empire, enjoying its benefits and shouldering its responsibilities — including military service. Even when the Christian parted company with Roman customs such as temple attendance, he did so for a 'higher' means of showing loyalty to the emperor and empire — prayer for them.

While Tertullian claimed that Christians were loyal subjects of Rome, he also claimed that some Romans were not. By way of illustration he referred to the experience of the *legio XII Fulminata*, the Thundering Legion. Under the personal command of Marcus Aurelius, this legion in 173 was engaged in fighting the Quadi in the region of the Danube. The legion had exhausted its water supply and was dangerously weakened by thirst. Tertullian's version of the incident has it that Christian soldiers in that legion prayed for rain and that their prayers were answered[41]. Whether or not this account is correct, the later affairs of the legion gave additional support to Tertullian's arguments that Christians were loyal to the Roman empire. In 175 Avidius Cassius led a revolt of the provinces of Egypt and Syria against Marcus Aurelius. The Thundering Legion did not participate in that revolt, but was instrumental in subduing it. For this it was given the honor of being called *certa constans* ("constantly dependable")[42]. In two

operari, si malum malo dispungi penes nos liceret? ("Yet, banded together as we are, ever so ready to sacrifice our lives, what single case of revenge for injury are you able to point to, though, if it were held right among us to repay evil by evil, a single night with a torch or two could achieve an ample vengeance?" Tr. ANF.)

39 Ibid., 37, 5: *Cui bello non idonei, non prompti fuissemus, etiam impares copiis, qui tam libenter trucidamur, si non apud istam disciplinam magis occidi liceret quam occidere?* (Tr. ANF.)

40 Ibid., 42, 2—3: *Itaque non sine foro, non sine macello, non sine balneis, tabernis, officinis, stabulis, nundinis uestris ceterisque commerciis cohabitamus hoc saeculum. Nauigamus et nos uobiscum et uobiscum militamus.* (Tr. ANF.)

41 Ibid., 5, 6; Ad Scapulam 4, 6.

42 RITTERLING, Legio, in: RE, XII, 2 (1925), 1710.

works where Tertullian mentioned the campaign against the Quadi, he also brought up the revolt of Avidius Cassius, although not explicitly with reference to the Thundering Legion[43].

Fourteen years later, in 211, the theme of Christian loyalty to the empire disappeared from Tertullian's writing, to be replaced by his regrets that Christians were involved in the military life[44]. In the treatise 'Concerning Flight in Persecution' Tertullian stated that Christians were becoming soldiers and spies, and that they were therefore coming in contact with hucksters, pickpockets, bath-thieves, gamblers and pimps[45]. From what we know of the nature of army life, this accusation is no surprise; frequently soldiers resorted to extortion to supplement their salaries. John the Baptist, for example, counseled the soldiers he baptized to refrain from extortion and robbery; "rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages[46]." Probably Tertullian was angered by the soldiers who solicited bribes for letting Christians off from persecution or delivering special favors for a price[47]. Even though his attitude hardened against Christians in the military, it would not seem that these practices in the army caused him to rethink his position; in the 'Apology' he complained about soldiers blackmailing Christians by threatening to tell authorities about their religion[48]. Whether or not this passage can be interpreted to mean that soldiers had turned in Christian comrades, late in the third century it happened at least on several occasions[49].

Of all the arguments which Tertullian puts forward against Christians serving in the army, none are as strongly held as those against the religions of the army. Not only is this the central theme of the 'De corona' but it appears in the 'Apology' and the treatise 'On Idolatry' as well[50]. Apology 16, 8 shows Tertullian's equation of the camp standards with idolatry because those standards were set above all other gods. Fourteen years later in 'De idolatria' this same thought is expanded and strengthened:

[43] Apology 5, 6; 35, and Ad Scapulam 2, 4. STEPHEN GERO tried unsuccessfully to establish that, in 175, there were few Christians in the army. See STEPHEN GERO, Miles Gloriosus: The Christian and Military Service according to Tertullian, Church History, XXXIX (October, 1970), 258—298. However, Tertullian's reasons for including the information about Cassius' revolt and the incident of the Thundering Legion were to show that the Christians in the army were loyal, and, perhaps, numerous, as he suggested in Apology 37, above.

[44] The date JOH. QUASTEN (Patrology, II [Utrecht–Antwerp–Brussels, 1953], 247) gives for Tertullian's movement into Montanism is 207. From that time on his work is quite hostile to Roman society and government.

[45] De fuga in persecutione 13, 3.

[46] Luke 3:14.

[47] Apology 7, 3; De fuga in persecutione 14, 1. RAMSAY MACMULLEN, Soldier and Civilian in the Later Roman Empire (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 84—89. (Hereafter cited as 'Soldier'.)

[48] Apology 7, 3.

[49] See the accounts of Marinus, Julius, and Dasius in Chapter III, below pp. 774, 787—789, 783—784.

[50] Since 'De corona' deals at length with the subject of the military, it receives attention separately below.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

"There is no agreement between the divine and the human sacrament, the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot serve two masters — God and Caesar".

The sacrament (*sacramentum*) to which Tertullian refers is the oath of military service. The oath was recited on three occasions: enlistment, the third of every January, and on the anniversary of the emperor's accession to power. At those times soldiers swore unconditional allegiance to the emperor[52]. In addition, Tertullian objected to the worship of Mithra, the most common unofficial cult conducted among the soldiers. When he mentioned the phrase, "camp of light and camp of darkness," his point is to compare the church, which met in conventional houses, with the cult of Mithra celebrated most frequently in subterranean sanctuaries which were, therefore, dark[53].

On the basis of the idolatrous nature of the army religion, Tertullian decided the question of whether a Christian may enter the military or a military man may enter the church. Since everyone in the service was in danger of being contaminated by the army's religious observances, the answer was "No"[54]! However, some people must have taken an opposite view because Tertullian answered the objection that figures in the Old Testament carried and used weapons; on the contrary, when the Lord disarmed Peter, he thereby unbelted every soldier[55]. No dress is lawful for Christians if it is

51 De idololatria 19, 2: *Non conuenit sacramento diuino et humano, signo Christi et signo diaboli, castris lucis et castris tenebrarum; non potest una anima duobus deberi, deo et Caesari.* (Tr. ANF.)

52 KLINGMULLER, Sacramentum, in: RE, I A, 2 (1920), pp. 1667—1674. E. CUQ, Sacramentum, in: Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines, ed. by C. V. DAREMBERG and E. SAGLIO, IV² (1877), pp. 951—955. GERO's assertion (Miles Gloriosus, p. 295) that "in this period the Christian in the army was not really exposed to a greater danger of idolatry than in civilian life" is simply not true. The recitation of the oath, not to mention other religious observances, was a regular and unavoidable feature of military life. To a rigorous Christian, like Tertullian, the army veritably lived and breathed idolatry. In addition, Tertullian's numerous references to the *sacramentum* in military contexts make it obvious that Roman army religion concerned him a great deal.

53 M. J. VERMASERN, Mithras, the Secret God (New York, 1963). Chapters six and seven deal with the nature of the Mithraic sanctuaries.

54 De idololatria 19, 1: *At nunc de isto quaeritur, an fidelis ad militiam conuerti possit et an militia ad fidem admitti, etiam caligata uel inferior quaeque, cui non sit necessitas immolationum uel capitalium iudiciorum.* ("But now inquiry is made about this point, whether a believer may turn himself toward military service, and whether the military may be admitted unto the faith, even the rank and file, or each inferior grade, to whom there is no necessity for taking part in sacrifices or capital punishments." Tr. ANF.)
Tertullian then says there is no agreement between divine and human sacraments. (See above note 30.)

55 Ibid., 19, 3. *Quomodo autem bellabit, immo quomodo etiam in pace militabit sine gladio, quem dominus abstulit? Nam etsi adierant milites ad Iohannem et formam obseruationis acceperant, si etiam centurio crediderat, omnem postea militem dominus in Petro exarmando discinxit. Nullus habitus licitus est apud nos illicito actui adscriptus* ("But how will a Christian man war, nay, how will he serve even in peace without a sword, which the Lord

worn in an unlawful action. It is difficult to make much sense out of Tertullian's argument based on military dress unless it is placed in the context of what the Roman army itself thought about its uniform, including the sword belt. Army regulations ordered every soldier to be in full uniform for every religious festival; we know of two Christian soldiers who were punished for breaking this regulation[56]. Moreover, the army still had on its calendar of religious festivals the day of *armilustrium* devoted to sanctifying its weapons; the sword and the belt from which it hung were considered part of the soldier's correct uniform[57]. (The treatise 'De corona', discussed below, further develops the theme based on the idolatrous nature of the soldier's uniform.) Therefore, the idolatrous uniform explains what Tertullian meant about the 'unlawfulness' of the military profession.

There can be no more unequivocal statements concerning idolatry than those in Tertullian's treatise 'On the Shows'. Idolatry is the chief sin against God[58], even more objectionable than murder; all idolatry is condemned by God[59]. Everything connected with the shows is based on idolatry which caused Tertullian to reject them. In the combat parade (a gladiatorial parade, not a military parade), the participants' crowns are one example of the idolatry which Tertullian despises[60]. Idolatry is serious because of the evil things done in connection with idols, although objects themselves are not evil; but, thought Tertullian, it is not possible to distinguish the idol from the idolatrous act. Therefore, "the polluted things pollute us[61]." Later in the same treatise Tertullian used a military analogy which illustrated his position regarding military religion[62]. Since he considered the games and shows characteristic of Roman society, he encouraged Christians to absent themselves from them; deserting the "distinctive badge" (*signaculum*) of a society is the clearest rejection of that society. For example, when one deserts to the enemy he leaves behind him the oath to the commander, arms, and the standards. Therefore, Tertullian's mind, oath, arms, and standards are the symbols of the official army religion which he so thoroughly despised.

has taken away? For soldiers had come to John and had received the formula of their rule; likewise, a centurion had believed; still the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier. No dress is lawful among us, if assigned to any unlawful action." Tr. ANF.)

[56] The two examples are the soldier who inspired the 'De corona' (see below) and Marcellus who threw off his insignia and sword belt at a military festival. (See Marcellus, below, pp. 780—783).

[57] Corpus Juris Civilis, Digestorum XLIX, 16, 14. Here it is prohibited for any to be out of uniform, or dispose of weapons or armor considered part of the uniform. All soldiers were required to wear full uniform in parades which took place in the presence of the deities of the paradeground. See GRAHAM WEBSTER, The Roman Imperial Army (London, 1969), p. 269, note 3.

[58] De spectaculis 2, 9: *Atquin summa offensa penes illum idololatria.*

[59] Ibid., 9, 6.

[60] Ibid., 11, 2.

[61] Ibid., 8, 10.

[62] Ibid., 24, 2.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

There is no doubt that Tertullian was sternly opposed to idolatrous symbols and practices; however, the question of whether he was pacifist in principle still remains to be answered. BAINTON, for example, argued that the pacifist position extended throughout his career and was not confined to his writings subsequent to his acceptance of Montanism, as Catholic historians have asserted[63]. In support of the argument for a consistent pacifist interpretation, BAINTON pointed to a famous statement from the 'Apology', Tertullian's earliest work, that Christians would rather be killed than kill[64]. However, as we have already seen, this statement is directed to Roman ears in an attempt to show that Christians are not going to lead an armed revolt; they would rather be friends of the empire than its enemies. As such, this statement has no bearing on the subject of military service. Echoing the 'Sermon on the Mount', Tertullian devoted a chapter to the duty of Christians to love their neighbors and enemies, but did not relate it to the subject of military service[65]. Or again, when Jesus took the sword from Peter in the Garden of Gethsemane, "...he cursed for the time to come the work of the sword...[66]" Both quotations, very general in nature and in unspecified contexts, could just as well apply to defending oneself from robbers or mothers-in-law, and cannot be used to support an argument that Tertullian held a doctrinal pacifism. Ideally, the Christian should never resort to a violent approach in solving his problems. Moreover, joining the army did not necessarily commit one to armed conflict; many soldiers sat out their career in readiness for battles which never came, and instead they farmed or built roads[67]. In this regard, being stationed in the North Africa of Tertullian's day would have been, for the bloodthirsty soldier, extremely boring[68].

In all of early Christian literature the only work devoted to the subject of the military is Tertullian's 'De corona' ('Concerning the Crown'), meaning a military crown. Unfortunately, he does not explicitly tell the time or place of the incident which provided the occasion for writing this treatise; probably the martyrdom was local[69]. When the soldiers in a camp lined up to receive their donatives, a bonus given by the emperor, one Christian soldier appeared with a bare head, crown in hand, to receive his gift. Since he was

63 BAINTON, The Early Church and War, HTR, XXXIX (1946), 202.

64 See note 39 above.

65 Adversus Marcionem IV, 16.

66 De patientia 3, 8.

67 MACMULLEN, Soldier, pp. 1—48. Here MACMULLEN describes all the peacetime duties and occupations of soldiers, such as farming, brick-making, road construction and repair, building fortifications and houses.

68 In Tertullian's part of the empire during the reign of Septimius Severus (193—211) the only trouble was the restlessness of the tribes in Tripolis. See H. M. D. PARKER, History of the Roman World 137—337, revised by B. H. WARMINGTON (London, 1958), p. 72.

69 JACQUES FONTAINE gives the date of composition as 211, the date of a donative distributed to the troops in celebration of Caracalla's accession to power. See JACQUES FONTAINE, Tertullien: De corona (Paris, 1966), pp. 41—42. The event took place either at Lambaesis or Carthage if the camp was close to Tertullian's home; probably it was a soldier of the *legio III Augusta*. However, no indication of place is suggested on the basis of internal evidence.

considered out of uniform bareheaded, and since he refused to put it back in place, he was sent to the stockade and, although Tertullian does not tell us, presumably died for his offense. He does tell us that there were other Christian soldiers in that detachment, for he rebukes those brothers of the martyr who "presumed to serve two lords"; they were the "laurel-crowned Christians" who perfunctorily paid tribute to the emperor[70]. While he implied that there were a number of Christians present, it is not possible to conjecture how large the number was.

As he presented the sketch of the incident, Tertullian intended to show that the issue involved was idolatry since the soldier awaited the donative of Christ while in prison[71]; by contrast, the emperor's donative appeared idolatrous. Another indication of the issue involved was Tertullian's statement that the soldier threw off his military insignia when questioned about his bare head.

The story of the soldier occupies only the first paragraph of the treatise; in the remainder Tertullian concerns himself with a detailed argument intended to prove how the crown was an idolatrous object. We will summarize his argument briefly to show how it relates to his rejection of military service in the last part of the treatise. In the first section (1, 6—7, 2) two points appear. First, tradition and custom are the guides for Christian ethics where nothing explicit is recorded in Scripture; "...what has not been freely allowed is forbidden[72]." Second, what is unnatural is forbidden, an argument derived from Stoic philosophy. This first section fits into Tertullian's general theme by showing that the military crown is an idolatrous object since it is not customary in the practice of the Church and it is *contra naturam*.

The second section (7,3—11,3) shows how the crown has always been connected with pagan cults. Various gods and mythical figures wore crowns, for example, Pandora, Diodorus, Hercules, Apollo, Bacchus, and Osiris. Probably a great deal of Tertullian's information on the classical tradition came from Claudius Saturninus, a writer about whom we know practically nothing; all his works have been lost. At any rate, the use of the crown belongs to pagan traditions and, therefore, Jewish and Christian traditions unanimously stand against it.

In the last chapter of this section (11), Tertullian argued that the military life was evil since it was connected with the crown and other pagan religious manifestations, not the opposite. "What sense is there in discussing the merely accidental (i.e., military life), when that on which it rests (the idolatrous crown) is to be condemned[73]?" Into his indictment of the army, Tertullian threw everything which he considered undesirable about army life — the military oath, use of the sword, guard duties like inflicting torture and punishment and watching over pagan sanctuaries, the *vexillum* or flag, trumpets, and cremation. Simultaneously, the rejection of the army is a

[70] De corona 1, 6.
[71] Ibid., 1, 3.
[72] Ibid., 2, 4.
[73] Ibid., 11, 1: *Quale est alioquin de accidentibus retractare, cum a praecendentibus culpa sit?*

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

rejection of the military crown. At this point Tertullian faced the practical question of whether a baptized Christian may remain in the army; he decided that a Christian should not enlist since it would involve deserting the camp of light for the camp of darkness (11, 4). Although he knew that some centurions in the New Testament were Christian and that no stigma was attached to them, he concluded that no Christian may remain in the service after baptism[74]. His basis for this decision was that, in attempting to satisfy both Roman and Christian precepts, the Christian would be torn apart. But since the army held countless dangers for the faith, the army life was unlawful.

In the last section (12—15) the discussion returned to the idolatrous nature of the crown; when one partakes of the Christian sacrament all religious observances connected with the crown become unlawful. In this connection the problem of the cult of Mithra arises; it has been suggested that the 'De corona' is actually a diatribe against that cult since it ends with the only surviving literary description of the initiation to the third grade of that cult, *miles* ("soldier")[75]. Taking place in a cavern, the ceremony consists of presenting the initiate a crown on the point of a sword, which he rejects and never again wears another crown since Mithra is his crown[76]. Was the bareheaded soldier, whose martyrdom inspired the treatise, actually a Christian masquerading as a Mithra worshipper, as DE PLINVAL has suggested? And was that the reason for including the information about the initiation in the last chapter of 'De corona'? To both questions the answer is "No". First, if the bare-headed soldier wanted to appear as a Mithra worshipper, he would not gain anything by substituting one religion for the other since both the official army religion and Mithraism were considered idolatrous. Moreover, he would not have been imprisoned if he was trying (successfully?) to imitate a soldier of Mithra. Second, Tertullian was concerned about Mithraism imitating Christianity; elsewhere he complained that the Mithraists copied the Eucharist under the influence of the devil[77]. Accordingly, Tertullian felt that Mithraism was particularly dangerous to Christians in the camps since it appeared most similar to Christianity, much more so, obviously, than the official army religion.

74 Ibid., 11, 4.

75 G. DE PLINVAL, Tertullien et le scandale de la couronne, Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck, S. J. (Gembloux, 1951), I, 183—188.

76 De corona 15, 3: *Erubescite, commilitiones eius, iam non ab ipso iudicandi, sed ab aliquo Mithrae milite. Qui cum initiatur in spelaeo, in castris uere tenebrarum, coronam interposito gladio sibi oblatam, quasi mimum martyrii, dehinc capiti suo accommodatam monetur obuia manu a capite pellere et in humerum, si forte, transferre ⟨dei⟩ dicens Mithran esse coronam suam, ...* ("Blush, ye fellow-soldiers of his, henceforth not to be condemned even by him, but by some soldier of Mithras, who, at his initiation in the gloomy cavern, in the camp, it may well be said, of darkness, when at the sword's point a crown is presented to him, as though in mimicry of martyrdom, and thereupon put upon his head, is admonished to resist and cast it off, and, if you like, transfer it to his shoulder, saying that Mithras is his crown ...". Tr. ANF.)

77 De praescriptione haereticorum 40, 1—4. Cf. G. LEASE, Mithraism and Christianity: Borrowings and Transformations, below in this same volume (ANRW II 23,2).

Additional evidence that Tertullian considered the military crown an idolatrous object is to be found in comparing this treatise with Clement of Alexandria's chapter 'On the Use of Ointments and Crowns' (Paedagogus II, chapter 8). The last half of this chapter contains some arguments against wearing crowns identical with those in 'De corona'. In 'De corona' (chapter 5) we find the argument that the head is no place for a crown of flowers because there is no sense organ in the top of the head for sensing the color, fragrance, or softness of flowers; Clement said the same. In chapter 9 Tertullian said that Christ was crowned, but with thorns; Clement gives Christians permission to be crowned in the same way. Clement, however, merely calls it idolatry for a Christian to wear a crown like Jesus who was crucified wearing one. The dead, reads chapter 10 of 'De corona', wear a crown and they too become idols; Clement agreed[78].

In our analysis of 'De corona' we have seen that, with the exception of one isolated comment, it is concerned with idolatry as the ground for rejecting military service. That exception, part of a list of many other objections to enlistment and certainly no more important than any other objection in that list, was concerned with the sword. Therefore, even late in his career when he had grown increasingly more rigid in his stand against the empire, Tertullian did not adopt a pacifist approach to the question of military service. In addition, his point of view did not change in substance from early to late writings, although it was expressed more vehemently as time passed.

2. Clement of Alexandria

At about the same time as Tertullian, Clement took a position quite different from that of the North African rigorist. Whereas Tertullian in 'De corona' adamantly refused to permit Christian enlistment, Clement never gave the slightest indication that enlistment would be a problem, nor did the nature of military life, religious or moral, concern him. On the contrary, the often quoted passage in the 'Protrepticus' makes it clear that Clement regarded military service as merely another occupation:

> "Practice husbandry, we say, if you are a husbandman; but while you till your fields, know God. Sail the sea, you who are devoted to navigation, yet always call on the heavenly Pilot. Has knowledge taken hold of you while engaged in military service? Listen to the Commander, who orders what is right[79]".

[78] Although Clement did not mention Clodius Saturninus, it is likely that he was the common source for Clement and Tertullian, if one wishes to explain the common arguments by a common source. For a complete comparison of Clement and Tertullian on the subject of crowns, see KARL BAUS, Der Kranz in Antike und Christentum (Bonn, 1940), pp. 52—53.

[79] Protrepticus, 10, 100. (Tr. by ALEXANDER ROBERTS and JAMES DONALDSON, ANF, Vol. II.)

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Whatever the occupation a man undertakes is not important, but in it he must find himself in relation to God; the military profession did not disturb the Christian's relationship to God, as Clement saw it. Another example of his neutral feelings about the military is his discussion of shoes; it was permissible for a man to go barefoot "except when he is on military service"[80]. His casual references to military subjects mean that he was not concerned with these problems.

From the nature of his random comments on military subjects it would appear that Clement never thought systematically about them; he had other random thoughts on the military. On the subject of military efficiency he thought that it would be dangerous for a unit to have on its rolls men who were effeminate or weak in either their thoughts or actions—e.g. those who wore women's clothes or who were easily seduced by feminine guile, like the Hebrews who should have fought the Midianites but were seduced by the Midianite women[81]. In every aspect of his life a soldier must be under control so that, if need be, he could demonstrate his masculinity by shedding his own blood[82]. In this regard, military discipline served as an example of his interpretation of the Christian life, emphasizing the discipline required for both. Unlike Origen, Clement was not embarrassed by the combative exploits of the Hebrews; in a section devoted to showing what the Greeks had learned from Moses, Clement argued that they had gained military and legislative knowledge from him[83]. In the same way as Moses had confused the pursuing Egyptians by marching through trackless desert, Miltiades confused the Persians at Marathon. In this connection, Clement offered his thoughts on the qualities of a good general; the general must be gifted with both caution and enterprise[84]. War itself is related to human lust and uncontrolled passion[85]; strife seeks power solely for the sake of domination while love uses its spirit to achieve noble ends[86]. It would seem, therefore, that Clement randomly discussed military subjects and that, since he did not develop any example into a lengthy statement, he was not disturbed by the relationship some Christians had to the military. Possibly he was not aware of any such Christians, although we cannot say for certain.

If Clement did not prohibit the Christian from enlisting it was not because he overlooked the subject of ethics. He discussed all sorts of ethical questions in the 'Paedagogus', but never did he raise any problem regarding the military. Since this work was intended to provide young Christians with catechetical and moral teaching, he would have certainly discussed the wrongfulness of the army if he had felt that it had dangers for them. Likewise, if Clement had been concerned with the idolatry of the army, it seems

80 Paedagogus II, 118. 2.
81 Stromata II, 83. 3—4.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., I, 158, 1—169, 1.
84 Ibid., II, 160, 1.
85 Paedagogus III, 13, 4—5.
86 Stromata I, 158, 5.

that he would have mentioned it when he discussed the subject of crowns; we have seen that in some ways his examples of the undesirability of wearing crowns paralleled those of Tertullian, except for the military crown. The way in which Clement presented military subjects, and the subjects he left out, leads to the conclusion that he did not find military life troublesome for the Christian. Not everybody in Alexandria felt that way, however, for Origen had serious misgivings about the religious nature of the Roman army.

3. Origen

About the year 178 the pagan philosopher Celsus wrote an attack on the Christians entitled 'The True Discourse'; unfortunately it has been lost. His attack was of such a devastating nature that Origen felt compelled to answer it seventy-five years later. All of what Origen wrote regarding the problem of Christians enlisting is in specific response to Celsus' accusation that Christians were not loyal, a chief point of this attack if not the paramount one. Sharing the common Roman mistrust of factions in its society, Celsus feared that Christians formed a group which could possibly trigger a revolt against the empire[87]. As we have seen, Tertullian in his 'Apology' had already addressed himself to the same accusation giving as a defense the fact that Christians were in all walks of life in the empire, including the army. Origen answered the question in a different way from Tertullian's 'Apology', but in a way similar to the 'De corona'.

The opening chapter of 'Contra Celsum' ('The Treatise against Celsus') begins with Origen's answer to the charge that Christians were a dangerous threat to the political stability of the empire; probably Christian talk of a coming Christian empire kindled Celsus' fears of sedition[88]. One indication that a revolt was forming, at least in Celsus' mind, was the Christian custom of holding secluded worship services. Admitting that Christians had secret meetings, Origen argued that it was reasonable to conduct meetings in secret to put down a tyrant; however, in this case the tyrant was not the emperor but the devil. For Celsus, another indication that the church planned rebellion was that it attracted such large numbers; only the anticipation of sedition could account for the church's swelling membership[89]. But the church did not exist for social upheaval since it was God's creation to carry out his will, Origen thought.

When Origen said that the devil was the tyrant whom the church existed to overthrow, not the emperor, he put the discussion in another orbit;

[87] The charge of sedition was not to be taken lightly in the Roman empire; Roman officials were wary about allowing groups to form which could grow into centers of discontent. For example, Trajan wrote to Pliny the Younger, legate to the province of Bithynia around 110, that it was not wise to have a company of firemen formed at Nicomedia. Whatever the primary purpose of the organization might be, there was always a danger that the group might become a political club. (Pliny, Epistles X, 39).

[88] R. M. Grant, From Augustus to Constantine (New York, 1970), p. 93.

[89] Contra Celsum III, 8.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

to a large extent the arguments of Origen and Celsus were like ships passing each other in the night. Using his thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, Celsus noted that the state of Israel had been formed by a rebellion against Pharaoh, implying that Christians might repeat the same uprising in the empire[90]. In Origen's view, however, Christians were different from Israelites since Christ, the lawgiver of the Christians, prohibited killing. Because everyone needs some measure of protection, Origen thought that the Christians would never be exterminated because God would fight on their behalf by restraining their enemies[91]. Therefore, since God is on their side, Christians have no need of rebellion. As Origen saw it, the Christian's battle was primarily a spiritual one; elsewhere he based his concept of spiritual warfare on Ephesians 6 : 11—12.

> "We do not, then, deny that there are many demons upon the earth, but we maintain that they exist and exercise power among the wicked, as a punishment of their wickedness. But they have no power over those who "have put on the whole armor of God," who have received strength to 'withstand the wiles of the devil' and who are ever engaged in contests with them, knowing that 'we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places'[92]."

He was particularly glad that the Roman empire, a gift of God's providence, had unified the world so that men would no longer find it necessary to engage in war, thereby hindering the spread of the Gospel. God had prepared the world in such a way that Christianity could spread without encountering wars[93]. Therefore, God had taken hold of the course of history to allow Christians to participate in spiritual, not bloody, warfare.

Origen carried the theme of the spirituality of Christian warfare into his Biblical exegesis. In his interpretation of Old Testament accounts of war and violence he consistently employed the exegetical method of allegory. On the one hand, the Hebrews represented an army which fought real battles and did real killing; on the other hand, Christians were called to fight battles of the spirit. Israel represented the visible army, Christians the invisible. In particular, two New Testament texts guided his allegorical interpretation. First, II Timothy 2 : 4, "No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to satisfy the one who enlisted him". Combining

90 Ibid., III, 7.

91 Ibid., III, 8.

92 Ibid., VIII, 34: Οὐχ ἀναιροῦμεν οὖν καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸ πολλοὺς εἶναι δαίμονας ἐπὶ γῆς ἀλλά φαμεν εἶναι μὲν αὐτοὺς καὶ δύνασθαι ἐν τοῖς φαύλοις διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων κακίαν, μηδὲν δὲ δύνασθαι πρὸς τοὺς ἐνδυσαμένους „τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ" καὶ ἀναλαβόντας ἰσχὺν „πρὸς τὸ" ἀντιστῆναι „πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου" καὶ μελετῶντας ἀεὶ τὰ ἐκείνων παλαίσματα τῷ ἐγνωκέναι „Ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη πρὸς αἷμα καὶ σάρκα ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου, πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις". (Tr. by Frederick Crombie, ANF, vol. IV.)

93 Ibid., II, 30.

this text with Numbers 31 : 33, where the soldiers are required to destroy all booty because it was impure, Origen taught that the world was impure and, therefore, the Christian ought to concern himself with spiritual values. The second text is Ephesians 6 : 12—17, where the command is to fight the powers and principalities using the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the sword of the spirit, and, in short, the whole armor of God. This is the kind of battle a Christian ought to visualize when he reads the Old Testament; the Old Testament battles against people prefigure the New Testament battles against demons[94]. The church had a mission to conquer legions of demons because in Mark 5 : 9 the demons said they were 'legion', because they were many[95]. Other analogies hold true: the army of Israel conquered the land of Canaan, the church conquers the world[96]; the church also fights for truth against the enemies who assail its dogmas[97].

When Celsus objected that the God of Moses and the God of Christ were not the same because they commanded widely differing things, Origen allegorized that objection away. Among the differences which Celsus pointed out was the manner in which Moses and Christ related to killing; God commanded Moses to kill all the enemies of Israel, but Jesus counseled people to turn the other cheek when struck[98]. On the contrary, Origen thought that Moses' command to kill all enemies must not be literal; there was a deeper meaning than the literal one.

> "If I must now explain how the just man 'slays his enemies' and prevails everywhere, it is to be observed that, when he says, 'Every morning I will destroy the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all workers of iniquity from the city of Jehovah', by 'the land' he means the flesh whose lusts are at enmity with God; and by 'the city of Jehovah' he designates his own soul, in which was the temple of God...[99]."

However, Origen recognized that the literal interpretation of the Old Testament pointed to the actual political state of ancient Israel. As such Israel was responsible for its own military defense; after the Gospel of Jesus had come, God no longer wanted that state to continue and let the Romans destroy their city and temple[100], which they did by means of a military action. It would seem, however, that Origen's order of priorities placed the

[94] De principiis IV, 1, 24; Homily on Numbers VII, 6 and XIX, 4.
[95] Homily on Numbers VII, 6.
[96] Ibid., XIII, 2.
[97] Ibid., XXV, 4; Commentary on John 6 : 3.
[98] Contra Celsum VII, 18.
[99] Ibid., VII, 22: Εἰ δὲ καὶ περὶ τοῦ καταφονεύειν δεῖ διηγήσασθαι ἅμα καὶ τὸ δυνατὸν τοῦ δικαίου περὶ πάντα, λεκτέον ὅτι φάσκων· „Εἰς τὰς πρωΐας ἀπέκτεινον πάντας τοὺς ἁμαρτωλοὺς τῆς γῆς, τοῦ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι ἐκ πόλεως κυρίου πάντας τοὺς ἐργαζομένους τὴν ἀνομίαν" γῆν μὲν τροπικῶς ἔλεγε τὴν σάρκα, ἧς „τὸ φρόνημα" „ἔχθρα ἐστὶν εἰς θεόν", πόλιν δὲ „κυρίου" τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν, ἐν ᾗ ἦν ναὸς θεοῦ ... (Tr. ANF.)
[100] Ibid., VII, 26.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

allegorical method higher than his feelings about war, since even the command to turn the other cheek does not escape allegorization[101].

While Christians ideally ought not to have to participate in wars, Origen admitted that wars may be necessary, though he seems to have made that concession grudgingly. In the "bees and ants" passage Origen showed that he did not oppose war properly undertaken[102]. The point in this passage was whether or not men are totally natural creatures; Origen thought not. Proof of man's exalted status in the world is his ability to build civilizations, legislate, punish offenders, and wage wars. However, Celsus contended that there was no difference between man and ants, since ants do these same things. Origen's reply was that Celsus had not damaged the Christian argument for the uniqueness of humanity, but had merely deprecated all societies and governments, especially "the wars which men undertake on behalf of their native countries"[103]. In fact, the bees teach men how to wage wars; "... the wars of the bees perhaps constitute a lesson for the conduct of just and orderly wars among men, if ever there should be a need for them"[104]. Although Origen never laid down specific criteria for a just war, the war must be for a righteous and just cause before Christians can, in good conscience, support it with their prayers[105].

When Origen took up the problem of military enlistment, he answered Celsus' complaint that Christians did not take part in the necessary functions of maintaining the empire in particular serving in the army and holding public office. In his answer Origen displayed a position consistent

101 De principiis IV, 18. Origen said that the command that the right cheek should be smitten was incredible since everyone who strikes hits the left cheek with the right hand, therefore this command cannot be taken literally.

102 Contra Celsum IV, 80—83.

103 Ibid., IV, 83.

104 Ibid., IV, 82.

105 Ibid., VIII, 73: Εἶτα δὲ καὶ ταῦτ' εἴποιμεν ἂν πρὸς τοὺς ἀλλοτρίους τῆς πίστεως καὶ ἀξιοῦντας ἡμᾶς στρατεύεσθαι ὑπὲρ τοῦ κοινοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπους ἀναιρεῖν ὅτι καὶ οἱ καθ' ὑμᾶς ἱερεῖς ἀγαλμάτων τινῶν καὶ νεωκόροι ὧν νομίζετε θεῶν τηροῦσιν ἑαυτῶν ἀμίαντον τὴν δεξιὰν διὰ τὰς θυσίας, ἵν' ἀναιμάκτοις χερσὶ καὶ καθαραῖς ἀπὸ φόνων προσάγωσι τὰς νενομισμένας θυσίας οἷς φατε θεοῖς· καὶ οὐ δή που πολέμου καταλαβόντος καὶ τοὺς ἱερεῖς στρατεύετε. Εἰ οὖν τοῦτ' εὐλόγως γίνεται, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἄλλων στρατευομένων καὶ οὗτοι στρατεύονται ὡς ἱερεῖς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ θεραπευταί, καθαρὰς μὲν τηροῦντες τὰς δεξιὰς ἀγωνιζόμενοι δὲ διὰ τῶν πρὸς θεὸν εὐχῶν ὑπὲρ τῶν δικαίως στρατευομένων καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ δικαίως βασιλεύοντος, ἵνα τὰ ἐναντία πάντα καὶ ἐχθρὰ τοῖς δικαίως πράττουσι καθαιρεθῇ; ("And to those enemies of our faith who require us to bear arms for the commonwealth, and to slay men, we can reply, 'Do those who are priests at certain shrines, and those who attend certain gods as you account them, keep their hands unstained and free from human blood, that they may with hands unstained and free from human blood offer the appointed sacrifices to your gods; and even when war is upon you, you never enlist the priests in the army. If that, then, is a laudable custom, how much more so, that while others are engaged in battle, these too should as the priests and ministers of God, keeping their hands pure, and wrestling in prayers to God on behalf of those who are fighting a righteous cause, and for those who reign righteously, that whatever is opposed to those who act righteously may be destroyed'." Tr. ANF.)
Notice the appeal to cultic purity which is much the same as the view of Cyprian. See below p. 753 note 128.

with others already discussed; Christians were meant to fight spiritual warfare and, in so doing, were loyal to the empire. Accordingly, Origen's objection to Christian enlistment was religious, not ethical; he was primarily opposed to Christians pledging loyalty to the emperor[106]. In order to expose the nerve of his argument it is necessary to summarize not only his statements on enlistment, but also the ground he articulated in approaching that point.

Since Romans 13 : 1—2 ("Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power except by God's permission; the powers that be are ordained of God; so that those who resist the power resist the ordinance of God") commands respect for the emperor, Origen claimed that he respected him since God's providence placed him there[107]. Nevertheless, the mandate to swear by the emperor's genius demanded that the Christian blaspheme God; this Origen would not do. Because everything good comes to the world through God and the Logos, not through the emperor, Origen could not swear by the emperor's genius[108]. This refusal, however, had disastrous implications, as Celsus saw it; the emperor will be left alone to stand against the barbarians who in the end will take over everything[109]. Citing a case in point, Celsus argued that even though their God had promised to help the Jews and Christians, these people now had no land to call their own, and misguided religious devotion would do the same for the empire "... if every one were to do the same as you"[110]. As we have already seen, the plight of the Jews was a consequence of their transgression in killing Jesus, thought Origen[111]. The prayers of the Christians are powerful — God spared five cities on the basis of the prayers of fifty men (Genesis 18 : 24—26), and a God who concerned himself even with the life of a sparrow (Matthew 10 : 29—30) will certainly watch over the empire[112]. Still, Celsus could not see how the barbarians of both Asia and Europe would be convinced of the rightfulness of a Christian empire. But, for Origen, the Logos will change the attitudes of these people, creating one harmonious soul in the world; Origen thought that all nations would unite to seek and follow God's will[113].

Evidently Celsus had come in contact with some Christians who declined to do military service, for he demanded that they be fellow generals with the emperor[114]. While Celsus did not say on what grounds they refused, probably it was that of religious incompatibility with imperial religion, since that is the context of the issue between Celsus and Origen. In reply to this accusation, Origen maintained his position that Christians are trained

[106] Henry Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum (Cambridge, 1953), pp. xxi—xxii.
[107] Contra Celsum VIII, 65.
[108] Ibid., VIII, 67.
[109] Ibid., VIII, 68.
[110] Ibid., VIII, 69.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., VIII, 70.
[113] Ibid., VIII, 72.
[114] Ibid., VIII, 73.

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

for spiritual warfare; by taking up the whole armor of God Christians help the emperor with their prayers. It was not the first time that a Christian had offered to pray for the emperor since we have already seen that Tertullian made the same statement in his 'Apology'. Unlike Origen, however, Tertullian in that work noted that, in addition to prayers, Christians actually joined the army; Origen permitted only prayers of intercession for the emperor and all men in authority[115]. Since prayers to God are more effective than entire armies, Origen felt that, by praying, Christians were doing more than their share for the preservation of the empire. Origen offered an additional argument against Christian enlistment on the ground that Romans did not encourage their priests to serve; these people had to keep their right hands pure from killing for the sake of sacrificial purity[116]. Christians should be accorded the same privilege as Roman priests so that they could fight in a prayerful way. While soldiers fight only the symptoms of conflict, Christians fight the underlying causes, the demons who stir up envy, encouraging men to break the peace; military soldiers only seem to be fighting. Of course, Christians ought to pray for divine support only for those emperors who are conducting wars as a means to a rightful end, though Origen never spelled out his view as to what a rightful cause might have been.

The thrust of Origen's argument against Christian enlistment was that Christians were set aside to become a spiritual force within the empire, they were the yeast which raised the loaf[117]. It would seem that Origen did not develop this argument to support pacifism since he used the same argument against Christians accepting public office, obviously a peaceful occupation[118]; Christians did not avoid the responsibility of public trust since they were concerned about the salvation of all men. If Origen had had bloodshed in mind when he prohibited enlistment, he would not have said that Christians should pray for the emperor's success in just wars; he was too consistent a thinker to let such a contradiction escape him[119].

To summarize briefly, Origen's statements on the enlistment of Christians were his answer to Celsus' accusation that Christians were disloyal, even dangerous, to the empire. It would be incorrect to assume that Origen developed his concept of the Christian's spiritual warfare in response to Celsus' complaint since he had used it in explaining the Old Testament in other contexts. Rather, Origen already had a clear impression of the Christian's relationship to society and to the Roman government. Unlike Tertullian, Origen displayed no knowledge of the Roman army and its unique religious observances, but if he had known of such things it is clear that he would have been opposed to them. With respect to the lack of precise knowledge of the army, Origen and Clement of Alexandria are similar,

115 I Timothy 2 : 1—2.
116 Contra Celsum VIII, 73.
117 Ibid., VIII, 74.
118 Ibid., VIII, 75.
119 KARPP, p. 500.

though their views of the relationship of Christians to society differ diametrically. Clement thought that military service was only another occupation through which a person tried to do God's will. While some have written about the Alexandrian school, no such school existed regarding military service or even ethics in general.

4. Hippolytus

In early third century Rome, Hippolytus wrote the 'Apostolic Tradition', dealing with the requirements of church membership. In it appear two brief statements concerning the military, and since they are very brief, it is not easy to understand what they actually prohibit and on what basis. First, a soldier who has the authority must not execute people and, if he is commanded to do so, must disobey the order[120]. It is not clear whether Hippolytus had in mind the persecution of Christians, military discipline, and/or the command to kill prisoners taken in war. Second, no catechumen or baptized Christian could enter the service without despising God, and, therefore, must be thrown out of the church[121]. Nor is it certain whether he objected to enlistment on the basis of combat, idolatry, and/or some other unspecified reason; it is possible to imagine various ways of despising God. Like Origen, he thought it unlawful for a military governor or a magistrate of a city to be a Christian; probably this position did not involve combat[122].

Most likely the way to understand Hippolytus' objections is to examine the context in which they occurred; the 'Apostolic Tradition' answered the questions of various people seeking church membership as to whether they would be able to maintain their occupations[123]. These were pimping, sculpting of idols, acting, teaching worldly knowledge, taking part in games, being a gladiator, being a priest of idols, being in the military, being a prostitute, being a magician, and being an astrologer[124]. Since he said that Christians were not permitted to take the oath (*sacramentum*)[125], probably that was his key objection. All the occupations listed have some evil which could be interpreted as having either immorality or idolatry involved — the army had both.

5. Cyprian

A North African theologian, Cyprian, is interesting for two reasons. First, he shows us that, although he was from the same locality as Tertullian,

[120] Apostolic Tradition XVI, 17.
[121] Ibid., XVI, 19.
[122] Ibid., XVI, 18.
[123] Ibid., XVI, 9.
[124] Ibid., XVI, 10—22.
[125] Ibid., XVI, 17.

he did not adopt the same point of view toward the military and toward Roman society in general. Second, while his writings use frequent metaphors based on military subjects, he said nothing about the ethics of Christians enlisting, nor did he ever criticize the Roman army's religious practices. Possibly his refusal to oppose Christian enlistment reflected his administrative skill and mentality; whereas Tertullian was rigorous to the point of promoting sects within the church, Cyprian was moderate and helped keep the church together during the aftermath of the Decian persecution in A.D. 250[126].

No church writer depended on military analogies as frequently as did Cyprian; reflecting his theology of the church, he employed them most when he discussed the church's nature and structure. The church is the camp[127], martyrs are the soldiers of God[128], and Christ is the commander of this army[129]. The battlefield of the army of Christ is the world[130], the soldiers fight in battles which are called persecutions[131], the devil commands an army which fights against the Christians[132]. In addition to suffering in persecution, one battles against the devil's army by avoiding vices such as avarice, ambition, drunkenness, envy, pride, and the lure of the world[133]. To fight these battles Christians train in the church, the camp where they are armed for spiritual combat[134].

Following the persecution of Decius, the lay and clerical people who left the church were known as the *lapsi*. Cyprian spoke of them in military terms as well — they were the rebels who had deserted the camp of Christ[135]. Regarding the clergy in particular, Cyprian thought "... that they ought not, on returning, to retain those arms of ordination and honor with which they rebelled against us"[136]. Moreover,

162 Although QUASTEN (Patrology, II, 340) suggests that Cyprian carefully followed Tertullian's writings as though he were Cyprian's teacher, especially in theology, such a degree of dependence cannot be proven. Unreliable as it may be the only link between the two is Jerome (De viribus illustribus 53), who related a story that every day Cyprian asked to be handed a copy of "the Master", meaning Tertullian. CHRISTINE MOHRMANN tells us that Cyprian never mentioned Tertullian (in fact, the first to refer to him was Lactantius), and that Jerome's regard for Tertullian was probably due to their similar distaste for the clergy of Rome. See CHRISTINE MOHRMANN, Saint Jérôme et Saint Augustin sur Tertullien, Vigiliae Christianae, V (1951), 111—112.

127 Epistles 10, 1; 12, 2; 57, 1; 73, 22. The numbering of the Epistles of Cyprian is taken from LE CHANOINE BAYARD, ed., Saint Cyprien, Correspondance (Paris, 1961).

128 Ibid., 10, 1; 28, 2; 57, 4—5; 58, 3.

129 Ibid., 25, 1.

130 Ibid., 13, 2.

131 Ibid., 28, 1; 57, 1; 58, 1. On the Exhortation to Martyrdom 13.

132 On the Exhortation to Martyrdom 10.

133 On the Mortality 4.

134 Epistle 57, 1.

135 Ibid., 72, 2; 73, 2.

136 Ibid., 72, 2: ... *nec debere eos revertentes eadem apud nos ordinationis et honoris arma retinere quibus contra nos rebellaverint.* (English translations of Cyprian by ERNEST WALLIS, ANF, vol. V.)

> "it is a good soldier's duty to defend the camp of his general against rebels and enemies. It is the duty of an illustrious leader to keep the standards entrusted to him"[137].

In this passage the 'standards' refer to the sacraments, chiefly baptism; he did not use the image of *sacramentum* in the same way as Tertullian, who used these metaphors less often.

Rather than indicating what his attitude to the military might have been, Cyprian's way of writing probably was formed by his classical education prior to his conversion; we know that he was skilled in oratory while he held public office[138]. It was natural to use the conventional metaphors derived from Ephesians 6 : 12—17 and it was just as natural to improvise on themes found there, such as Christian soldiers armed with modesty instead of the whole armor of God, as Paul had put it[139]. Nor did he choose military analogies exclusively, though this subject was one of those popular with Cyprian. At times he used a cluster of metaphors from various walks of life; in one passage he used in succession examples from agriculture, weather, the military, and navigation[140], and later in the same work there appears a cluster of military, navigational, and agricultural metaphors[141]. He seems to have liked navigational metaphors especially[142].

HARNACK thought that these metaphors had a beguiling influence on the church in so far as they were used to foster growth of medieval armies; the spiritual soldier of Christ was gradually transformed into the conventional soldier of the church[143]. But HARNACK would agree that Cyprian had no intention of furnishing propaganda for a war machine. His concern was to communicate well; a word picture familiar to all his readers illustrated his concept of what the church should be. If the medieval church adopted a military means of expansion, it can be argued that, metaphors notwithstanding, nothing is as beguiling as opportunity. The language derived from the athletic field, however, did not tempt HARNACK to write a book entitled 'Stadium Christi', even though later monks thought of themselves as athletes of Christ as well as soldiers of Christ.

Despite the fact that Cyprian used more military illustrations than any other Church Father, it did not produce a militant stance in his position on war and violence. He decried the mayhem caused by robbers, pirates, and a world filled with the bloody horror of the camps[144]. Continuing, he argued that when murder occurs on an individual basis, it is called a crime, but when it takes place on a massive scale it is called a virtue; in this regard

[137] Ibid., 73, 10: *Boni militis est adversus rebelles et hostes imperatoris sui castra defendere. Gloriosi ducis est commissa sibi signa sevare.*
[138] QUASTEN, Patrology, II, 341.
[139] Epistle 30, 6.
[140] On the Mortality 8.
[141] Ibid., 12.
[142] Epistle 68, 3.
[143] HARNACK, MC, pp. 1—10.
[144] Ad Donatum 1, 6.

the world was growing gradually worse. "God willed iron to be for the culture of the earth, but not for the purpose of homicide"[145].

However, Cyprian probably retained the Old Testament taboo relating to corpses and people slain with the sword, for he notes that "... after the Eucharist is carried in the hand it (the hand) is not to be spotted with the sword or blood"[146]. Indicative of the serious nature of contamination by dead bodies, Numbers 19 : 11—22 mentioned that a contaminated person must be considered unclean for seven days, during which period rites of purification must be practiced; if not, the person refusing them was to be "cut off from Israel"[147]. These rites of purification especially apply to one who has touched someone slain with a sword[148]. Elsewhere, Hebraic tradition prohibited anyone so defiled from partaking of the holy food[149]. It would seem, therefore, that Cyprian's statement relating the sword to the Eucharist was based on the Old Testament concept of ritual purity rather than on an injunction against killing based on moral considerations.

6. Minucius Felix

Minucius Felix's 'Octavius' bears resemblance to Tertullian's 'Apology' and 'Ad nationes' in so many ways that there has long been a debate about who influenced whom; the 'Octavius' cannot be dated precisely[150]. One similarity relates to our study: Minucius and Tertullian had the same idea about the warlike nature of the Romans[151]. They agreed that the spoils of war were used to build temples of the Romans and that the religions of the conquered lands suffered at their hands. Therefore, while apparently religious the Romans were in fact destroyers of religion.

Minucius thought it ironic that the Romans should worship the gods of the people they conquered even though those same gods were powerless to prevent their own conquest[152]. Moreover, the religions of the Romans were useless, if not detrimental, because the auspices and auguries have brought destruction to Roman armies[153].

As did Tertullian, Minucius criticized the Roman army religion. Replying to an accusation that Christians worshipped a cross and a criminal, Minucius reversed the argument, saying that the Romans worshipped a god consecrated of wood. "For your very standards, as well as your banners, and

145 On the Dress of Virgins 11.
146 On the Advantage of Patience 14.
147 Numbers 10 : 13.
148 Numbers 19 : 16.
149 Leviticus 22: 4—6. For how other societies likewise had taboos related to dead people, see: ROYDEN YERKES, Sacrifice in Grecian and Roman Religions and Early Judaism (New York, 1952), especially p. 185; and HUTTON WEBSTER, Taboo: A Sociological Study (Stanford University, California, 1942), pp. 202—207.
150 QUASTEN, Patrology, II, 159.
151 Octavius 6 and 25. Tertullian, Apology 25.
152 Octavius 25.
153 Ibid., 26.

flags of your camp, what else are they but crosses gilded and adorned"[154]? Minucius obviously thought that the religion of the Roman army was idolatrous, but he did not deny enlistment to any Christian on that basis or any other. Even though Minucius never explicitly forbade Christians to enlist, it might be argued that if asked he would have done so; on the basis of his distaste for army religion, he could have taken a position identical to that of Tertullian in 'De corona'. Since it is not certain that it was Tertullian who inspired Minucius instead of the other way around, it cannot be argued that Minucius would have prohibited enlistment because Tertullian, his mentor, did so.

The military metaphors which Minucius employs revolve around the theme of martyrdom[155]. Like a soldier, the martyr fights with pain, he treads under foot the horror of the executioner, he yields to God alone. God's soldiers, however, are not brought to an end by death, nor does God forsake them, but worldly soldiers are subject to both death and being abandoned by their officers.

7. Arnobius

Arnobius' 'Against the Pagans', representing a reply to pagan attacks similar to the replies in Tertullian's 'Apology' and Cyprian's 'To Demetrius', is dated by evidence in Jerome placing it in the reign of Diocletian[156]. The Christians had been blamed for many, if not all, of the calamities which happened to the empire. Arnobius fights history with history. The history of Rome before either Christ or Augustus was already acquainted with trouble. And who, asked Arnobius, was given the blame for ancient plagues and wars[157]? On the other hand, since the time of Christ there had been many spectacular victories and the boundaries of the empire had expanded considerably[158].

If the troubles in the empire were attributed to the disuse of ancient customs and the adoption of new forms of religion, the Romans must share the blame. Arnobius called attention to the disuse of the liturgies connected with declarations of war[159]. The *fetiales* were the priestly officials who were in charge of declaring war. A member of this group, the *pater patratus*, journeyed to the border of the state offending Rome and hurled a blood-dipped spear across. If, within thirty-three days, no satisfaction or restitution of the wrong was forthcoming, Roman armies would begin hostilities[160].

154 Ibid., 29 (Tr. by Ernest Wallis, ANF Vol. IV.)
155 Ibid., 37.
156 George Mc Cracken, Trans., Arnobius of Sicca, The Case Against the Pagans (Westminster, Maryland, 1949), Vol. I, Book 1, p. 12. McCracken argues, on the basis of internal evidence, for a date around 300.
157 Against the Pagans I, 3.
158 Ibid., I, 14.
159 Ibid., II, 67.
160 Samter, Fetiales, in: RE, VI, 2 (1909), 2259—2265.

The practice of these rubrics was still current at the time of Marcus Aurelius, but they were used less and less[161]. In the year 242 the emperor Gordian ceremoniously threw open the doors of the temple of Janus for the last time and set out for war against Persia[162].

Arnobius made many statements against war and the destruction which accompanies it. However, these statements are set in contexts which attack the Roman gods; it was they who could not prevent war or hold total control over it. In this connection Arnobius had Mars in mind[163]. Bloodshed, destruction of empires, cities in ruins, brothers killing brothers and children killing fathers are all the result of Mars' inability to control war. Conflagrations, shipwrecks, pestilence, slavery, are other things besides war which the gods could not prevent. Arnobius evidently was no more concerned with war than other problems when he conceived this attack[164]. The gods who fight for the Romans also fight for other peoples; Romans have suffered severe defeats at their hands[165]. These gods are not exemplary because they preside over debauchery as does Venus Militaris in the camps[166]. To be exemplary they should not "take part in the slaughter of war and the devastation of cities"[167]. Therefore, Arnobius' distaste for war is part of a theological criticism of Roman religion; its inability to bring peace is evidence that the Roman religion is untrue. In fact, Roman religion contributes to unrest in the world.

Arnobius concluded his treatise with an attack on the cult of Cybele and its Pessinountian stone said to have been the deciding factor in the war against Hannibal[168]. The Romans won, thought Arnobius, not because of the help of Cybele but because they had great leaders — Scipio Africanus was the foremost, although Arnobius does not mention him by name. He did admire military leadership; it was much more desirable to give the credit to a Roman general than to the Roman gods.

Although, like Minucius Felix, Arnobius made no explicit statement concerning enlistment, it would seem that he would have had objections based on idolatry had the problem arisen. His objections to Roman gods, if consistently applied, would have ruled out Roman military religion since Mars could neither prevent nor control war.

8. Lactantius

Of the Fathers surveyed here, so far only Tertullian changed his viewpoint on any military subject during his career. While Tertullian became

161 Cassius Dio LXXI, 33, 3.
162 Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Vita Gordiani 26, 3; Zosimus I, 18, 1; Eutropius 9, 2.
163 Against the Pagans III, 36.
164 Ibid., II, 76.
165 Ibid., IV, 4.
166 Ibid., IV, 7.
167 Ibid., VI, 2.
168 Ibid., VII, 50—51.

rigorously opposed to Christians serving, Lactantius seems to have relaxed his position on war, though he never made any explicit statement concerning enlistment. It is not difficult to understand Lactantius' position since Constantine, a great Christian general, offered the church a peaceful existence in exchange for its support. Like other men whose careers span powerful turning points in history, Lactantius' writings display both continuity and discontinuity. In his earlier work he opposed the destruction and waste of war, but later he could hardly restrain his enthusiasm for the victories of Constantine. The thread of continuity is the revenge of God which punished the Jews for murdering Christ and which destroyed the evil emperors for persecuting the church.

Other than a few scattered references to the horror of war and its futility, Lactantius, in the 'Divine Institutes' and its 'Epitome', gives no indication what his attitude to Christian enlistment might be. In these two works he is concerned, among other things, with articulating a Christian stand against homicide for whatever reason. His most vivid condemnations of homicide appear in connection with the discussion of the Roman games and gladiators[169]. For the Christian, even viewing homicide is not permitted; anyone who watches with pleasure the execution of a man even justly condemned is as guilty as the one who views an unlawful murder. Nevertheless, it is not clear how strictly Lactantius held the rule against homicide, since he admitted that there was a necessity for some killing, recognizing that a man may be compelled against his will to go to war[170]. The just man, however, does not voluntarily involve himself with war since his mind is at peace with every man; the just man has no need of war because his warfare is justice itself[171]. Lactantius was not convinced that wars were justified merely because the empire had a legal and religious liturgy for declaring them — the *fetiales*[172]. These laws and customs, Lactantius believed, must be submitted to the judgment of God, who calls in question all human customs and laws.

Reminiscent of Tertullian and Minucius Felix, Lactantius criticized the militaristic expansion of the Roman empire. If the Romans were compelled to give back everything they had taken by force they would be reduced to the level of abject poverty[173]. Even though becoming an athlete requires discipline and valor, the only certain way to fame and immortality is to lead an army[174]. As did some classical authors, he lamented that in war it is the best men who are killed[175].

169 Divine Institutes VI, 20. Epitome 63.
170 Divine Institutes V, 18.
171 Ibid., VI, 20.
172 Ibid., VI, 9.
173 Ibid., V, 17 (Here he quotes from Carneades, Cicero, Republic III, 12, 21). Epitome 56.
174 Divine Institutes I, 18.
175 Ibid., III, 17. He borrowed this thought almost literally from Lucretius (De rerum natura II, 1101); he was certainly influenced by his study of ancient philosophers. See: HARALD HAGENDAHL, Latin Fathers and the Classics. A Study on the Apologists, Jerome, and Other Christian Writers, Göteborgs Universitets Årsskrift, LXIV (Göteborg 1958), pp. 48—76.

Like Clement, Lactantius was not embarrassed by the warlike activities recorded in the Old Testament. Without commenting on the apparent horror and destruction, he recounted the demise of the Egyptians pursuing Moses[176]. Likewise the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 was just what the Jews deserved[177]. Jeremiah had correctly predicted the war in Jerusalem; "Her sun is gone down while it is yet day, she has been confounded and reviled and the residue of them I will deliver to the sword" (Jeremiah 15 : 9). This happened to the Jews because of their part in the crucifixion of Jesus, as Lactantius saw it. He therefore had a double standard which he applied to war. If it was "just any old war", it was wrong, but if the war was conducted on behalf of the people of God, it was praiseworthy. Perhaps it is easy to criticize Lactantius because he lacked a consistent view on the wars of Israel and Rome. In addition, his position is ambiguous regarding killing; some killing is wrong, some killing is necessary, all killing, as we have seen, is regrettable. Probably, the best way to understand his various views is that war and combat do not concern him to the point where he would have studied these problems systematically under one heading; instead his references to these subjects are random. Moreover, his writings from the time of Constantine's reign only intensify his contradictions.

The theme of God's revenge is very clear in his later work 'On the Deaths of the Persecutors'; here the military actions of Constantine and Licinius are interpreted as the work of God, but those emperors who precede Constantine appear in a totally different light. Beginning with Nero, then Domitian, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and finally in his own time, Diocletian, Galerius and Maximin Daia have their hideous and degrading deaths related with satisfaction. The principle of God's revenge as an hermeneutic of history, briefly suggested in the 'Epitome'[178], becomes a major theme when the Christians in the empire struggled to ascend to its government. Nowhere in 'On the Deaths of the Persecutors' do we find any condemnation of Christians enlisting, for the armies of Constantine and Licinius shoulder a sacred task, aided at crucial points by divine intervention. For example, Constantine is instructed in a dream to have the chi-rho emblem placed on the shields of his men[179]. Unfortunate Maxentius read in the Sibylline books that on that day "... the enemy of the Romans should perish", but it turned out that it was really Maxentius who perished. Later Lactantius told the story that, while sleeping, Licinius had a vision of an angel who recited a prayer to be taught to the soldiers in his army[181]. Before battle, the soldiers offered the prayer and the army of Maximin Daia was powerless to give even token resistance to Licinius. Would Lactantius have objected to a Christian serving in the armies of Constantine and Licinius?

176 Divine Institutes IV, 10.
177 Epitome 46.
178 Ibid.
179 On the Deaths of the Persecutors 46.
180 Ibid.
181 Ibid., 46.

9. Eusebius of Caesarea

While Lactantius' point of view regarding war changed during his career, Eusebius was consistent, since all of his writing was done after the initiation of the Great Persecution, and most of it was after Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge. During the early days of the precarious peace the church had just gained, Eusebius attempted to convince the empire, Christian and conservative Roman alike, that the reign of Constantine was the new Jerusalem entering history. Constantine had invited the church to become a participant in the new regime, meaning that Christians would no longer be able to view the affairs of the empire with detachment, as had Origen. Eusebius wanted to show that Christians were loyal to the empire, as did the early Tertullian and Origen, and that they could be counted on to remain loyal. To create that impression he wrote his history to illustrate how good (he borrowed the Roman definition of 'good') emperors never persecuted the church, but bad ones did.

In his 'Church History', Eusebius is careful to praise the emperors whom the Romans thought were good and to damn the memory of those who had suffered *damnatio memoriae* by decree of the senate. For example, in repeating Melito of Sardis that Christ had come into the world in the reign of Augustus[182], he implied that Roman and Christian history merged at that time. Christians should support Rome and Rome should protect the Christians since God gave the world both Christ and the Roman empire.

The persecution at Lyons-Vienne in 177 posed a problem for Eusebius, however, because it took place during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a 'good' emperor. But Eusebius attempted to ascribe it to Lucius Verus, Marcus' brother, who died in 169. Eusebius had in his hands the letter which the church of Lyons wrote to the churchmen in Asia and Phrygia[183]. Introducing the letter with a cluster of military metaphors, he made it clear that the battle, in which the victims at Lyons were actually the victors, was not against the Roman government but against devils and unseen adversaries[184]. In shifting the blame from the visible Roman authorities to the invisible demons Eusebius avoided direct criticism of the government; it was the government's favor he courted.

After a brief section noting what he thought was the connection between the persecution at Lyons and the rise of Montanism[185], Eusebius introduced the account of the Thundering Legion[186]. Although he began the account by saying that the persecution happened under Antoninus, meaning

[182] Ecclesiastical History IV, 26, 7. (Hereafter cited as HE.)

[183] In the account appearing in the 'Ecclesiastical History' the emperor is referred to as "Caesar". The question is whether Eusebius changed the emperor's name or it appeared that way in the document when Eusebius obtained it. (Ibid., V, 1, 47 and 48.)

[184] Ibid., V, preface 4.

[185] Ibid., V, 3, 4—4, 3.

[186] Ibid., V, 5. Tertullian's use of this account has already been examined; the story of the Thundering Legion will appear at length in Chapter III, below, pp. 766—773.

Lucius Verus, he wrote that the Thundering Legion was commanded in the victory over the Quadi by Marcus Aurelius, his brother[187]. It is clear that Eusebius is building an apologetic case because Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius ruled jointly from the death of Antoninus Pius in 161 until the death of Verus in 169. Obviously, what happened under one emperor happened under the other. In narrating the account of the Thundering Legion, Eusebius was proud that Christian soldiers had helped to turn the tables on the enemy; they were of decisive help to Marcus, a 'good' emperor.

Eusebius also used the explanation that the persecutions were due to the devil. During the persecution of Decius four soldiers were martyred at Alexandria: Besas, Ammon, Zeno, and Ptolemy, martyrdoms recorded by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria[188]. But in introducing the entire section, including his version of the sufferings of Origen, Eusebius claimed that the whole pogrom was undertaken at the instigation of the evil demon[189]; he did not wish to say that the demon wore a toga.

The martyrdom of Marinus took place in the reign of Gallienus when the church was not persecuted[190]. He was a candidate for the rank of centurion and would have apparently accepted the post had it not been for one of his fellow soldiers who denounced him as a Christian. Eusebius gave a rather matter-of-fact report of the incident, noting that the judge gave him a chance for a change of mind. Significantly we find in this account none of the condemnations on the part of the judge which were frequent in martyr literature. On the one hand, Eusebius wanted to include as many martyrs as possible, but on the other hand he did not want to promote anti-Roman sentiments.

At the beginning of book eight, containing the account of the Great Persecution, Eusebius again conspicuously refused to blame the Romans. Rather, the sinful luxury of the church, due to a generation of relaxation on the part of Roman officials, brought on this persecution. So divine judgment, as Eusebius interpreted it, began to purify the church, starting, of all places, in the army[191]. The chronology of events leading up to the Great Persecution, especially those associated with the military, is problematic and extremely difficult to determine precisely. One explanation of this deficiency would be that he simply did not know, or did not have any reliable way of finding out, what took place. But in view of his practice of avoiding direct accusations against the Roman government, it is likely that he deliberately left that part of his account vague, if he indeed knew the facts. Presumably Lactantius and Eusebius had the same event in mind when they spoke of Christian soldiers being dismissed from service[192]. Lactantius laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of Diocletian while Eusebius attributed it to "the

187 Ibid., V, 4, 3—5, 1.
188 Ibid., VI, 41, 16—22.
189 Ibid., VI, 39, 5.
190 Ibid., VII, 15.
191 Ibid., VIII, 1, 7.
192 Ibid., VIII, 4, 2—4, and Lactantius, On the Deaths of the Persecutors 10.

9. Eusebius of Caesarea

While Lactantius' point of view regarding war changed during his career, Eusebius was consistent, since all of his writing was done after the initiation of the Great Persecution, and most of it was after Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge. During the early days of the precarious peace the church had just gained, Eusebius attempted to convince the empire, Christian and conservative Roman alike, that the reign of Constantine was the new Jerusalem entering history. Constantine had invited the church to become a participant in the new regime, meaning that Christians would no longer be able to view the affairs of the empire with detachment, as had Origen. Eusebius wanted to show that Christians were loyal to the empire, as did the early Tertullian and Origen, and that they could be counted on to remain loyal. To create that impression he wrote his history to illustrate how good (he borrowed the Roman definition of 'good') emperors never persecuted the church, but bad ones did.

In his 'Church History', Eusebius is careful to praise the emperors whom the Romans thought were good and to damn the memory of those who had suffered *damnatio memoriae* by decree of the senate. For example, in repeating Melito of Sardis that Christ had come into the world in the reign of Augustus[182], he implied that Roman and Christian history merged at that time. Christians should support Rome and Rome should protect the Christians since God gave the world both Christ and the Roman empire.

The persecution at Lyons-Vienne in 177 posed a problem for Eusebius, however, because it took place during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a 'good' emperor. But Eusebius attempted to ascribe it to Lucius Verus, Marcus' brother, who died in 169. Eusebius had in his hands the letter which the church of Lyons wrote to the churchmen in Asia and Phrygia[183]. Introducing the letter with a cluster of military metaphors, he made it clear that the battle, in which the victims at Lyons were actually the victors, was not against the Roman government but against devils and unseen adversaries[184]. In shifting the blame from the visible Roman authorities to the invisible demons Eusebius avoided direct criticism of the government; it was the government's favor he courted.

After a brief section noting what he thought was the connection between the persecution at Lyons and the rise of Montanism[185], Eusebius introduced the account of the Thundering Legion[186]. Although he began the account by saying that the persecution happened under Antoninus, meaning

182 Ecclesiastical History IV, 26, 7. (Hereafter cited as HE.)

183 In the account appearing in the 'Ecclesiastical History' the emperor is referred to as "Caesar". The question is whether Eusebius changed the emperor's name or it appeared that way in the document when Eusebius obtained it. (Ibid., V, 1, 47 and 48.)

184 Ibid., V, preface 4.

185 Ibid., V, 3, 4—4, 3.

186 Ibid., V, 5. Tertullian's use of this account has already been examined; the story of the Thundering Legion will appear at length in Chapter III, below, pp. 766—773.

Lucius Verus, he wrote that the Thundering Legion was commanded in the victory over the Quadi by Marcus Aurelius, his brother[187]. It is clear that Eusebius is building an apologetic case because Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius ruled jointly from the death of Antoninus Pius in 161 until the death of Verus in 169. Obviously, what happened under one emperor happened under the other. In narrating the account of the Thundering Legion, Eusebius was proud that Christian soldiers had helped to turn the tables on the enemy; they were of decisive help to Marcus, a 'good' emperor.

Eusebius also used the explanation that the persecutions were due to the devil. During the persecution of Decius four soldiers were martyred at Alexandria: Besas, Ammon, Zeno, and Ptolemy, martyrdoms recorded by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria[188]. But in introducing the entire section, including his version of the sufferings of Origen, Eusebius claimed that the whole pogrom was undertaken at the instigation of the evil demon[189]; he did not wish to say that the demon wore a toga.

The martyrdom of Marinus took place in the reign of Gallienus when the church was not persecuted[190]. He was a candidate for the rank of centurion and would have apparently accepted the post had it not been for one of his fellow soldiers who denounced him as a Christian. Eusebius gave a rather matter-of-fact report of the incident, noting that the judge gave him a chance for a change of mind. Significantly we find in this account none of the condemnations on the part of the judge which were frequent in martyr literature. On the one hand, Eusebius wanted to include as many martyrs as possible, but on the other hand he did not want to promote anti-Roman sentiments.

At the beginning of book eight, containing the account of the Great Persecution, Eusebius again conspicuously refused to blame the Romans. Rather, the sinful luxury of the church, due to a generation of relaxation on the part of Roman officials, brought on this persecution. So divine judgment, as Eusebius interpreted it, began to purify the church, starting, of all places, in the army[191]. The chronology of events leading up to the Great Persecution, especially those associated with the military, is problematic and extremely difficult to determine precisely. One explanation of this deficiency would be that he simply did not know, or did not have any reliable way of finding out, what took place. But in view of his practice of avoiding direct accusations against the Roman government, it is likely that he deliberately left that part of his account vague, if he indeed knew the facts. Presumably Lactantius and Eusebius had the same event in mind when they spoke of Christian soldiers being dismissed from service[192]. Lactantius laid the blame squarely on the shoulders of Diocletian while Eusebius attributed it to "the

187 Ibid., V, 4, 3—5, 1.
188 Ibid., VI, 41, 16—22.
189 Ibid., VI, 39, 5.
190 Ibid., VII, 15.
191 Ibid., VIII, 1, 7.
192 Ibid., VIII, 4, 2—4, and Lactantius, On the Deaths of the Persecutors 10.

stratopedarchēs, whoever he was at the time"[193]. Eusebius refrained from criticizing Diocletian, since he thought it was Galerius who initiated the Great Persecution; because of it Galerius received the divine judgment. Eusebius needed no further proof than that Galerius died of a hideous disease, the symptoms of which Eusebius seemed to enjoy reporting[194].

Although Eusebius' unqualified praise of Constantine as a soldier receives lengthly attention in Chapter III, it should be mentioned here that Constantine's military success proved to Eusebius that God's favor rested on him. The language of the opening chapter of Eusebius' 'Life of Constantine' showed that he did not think that war was evil when waged for the sake of the church. "Already have we ourselves received him as a triumphant conqueror in the assembly of God's ministers, and greeted him with the due meed of praise on the twentieth anniversary of his reign"[195]. After Constantine defeated Licinius in 324 Eusebius attacked the memory of Licinius. In this case there was no need to speak ambiguously about Licinius; the right side had won and was then in control. Licinius, ungrateful friend of Constantine, attacked his benefactor simply because he hated the good. Therefore Eusebius had no need to pass the blame off on a demon; Licinius was simply a madman.

Eusebius took no stand on the question of military enlistment for Christians; the time for such a prohibition had passed. Although it is certain that the army of Constantine had religious observances which earlier writers considered idolatrous, Eusebius never mentioned any such problem in connection with the army of Constantine. In fact, Eusebius diplomatically avoided raising that argument from the dead; he had nothing to gain and everything to lose by provoking Constantine. Neither did bloodshed threaten Eusebius, especially if it was the armies of Maxentius and Licinius that bled. Peace was highest on Eusebius' list of priorities, but it was a peace which both the church and the empire must enjoy.

10. Apocryphal Gospels

In answer to the questions raised in the introduction regarding the right of these theologians to speak for the church, it is necessary to examine a genre of literature never before discussed in relationship to the subject of war, bloodshed, or enlistment. Admittedly, the Apocryphal Gospels are a circuitous path to answering this question, but a necessary one. Originating primarily from heretical sects, mostly Gnostic (nevertheless Christian sects), these gospels introduce into the discussion a different range of attitudes than

[193] HE VIII. 4, 3.: ὡς γαρ ὁ στρατοπεδάρχης, ὅστις ποτὲ ἦν ἐκεῖνος, . . .

[194] Ibid., VIII, 16. Herod also contracted a hideous disease for persecuting Jesus and his family (Ibid., I, 8). The only place where there appears any criticism against Diocletian is in the long form of the Martyrs of Palestine 2, 3; the short form has only "emperor" in the same context.

[195] Life of Constantine I, 1.

is shown in the Fathers; they were popular and crude literature appealing to the reader's simple emotions, in this case, the feeling of power[196]. Although it cannot be argued that the Apocryphal Gospels were fully representative of the laity of the early church, neither can it be claimed that the Fathers were. The Fathers of the church wrote their works; but since the Apocryphal Gospels were transmitted both in oral and in written forms, it is clear that they appealed to people whose educational skills differed widely. Generally speaking, the Fathers abhorred violence, but the apocryphal literature did not.

A major theme in the Gospel of Thomas is to show the supernatural power of Jesus in his youth before his baptism[197]; the picture there differs dramatically from the portrayal in the New Testament which tells us practically nothing of Jesus' adolescence. Rather than being a forgiving person, the youth Jesus carried grudges and left in his wake death and destruction. The parents of children in his village came to Mary and Joseph complaining that Jesus was killing their children, referring to an incident when Jesus caused a boy who had run into him to fall down dead[198]. On another occasion, Jesus made a small pond with a mud dike and rainwater; in it was a fish. A young son of a scribe maliciously broke the dike, drained the water, and the fish died. At this, Jesus caused the boy to dry up and die as the fish had done[199]. Once in school Jesus' teacher hit him on the head; Jesus cursed him and he too died[200]. When Joseph heard of this he told Mary never to let Jesus outside again "because those who anger him die". However, not every act of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas is destructive, but the emphasis is certainly on the spectacular; he raised people from the dead[201]. Working in the carpenter shop, Joseph misjudged a cut intended to make halves out of his last board; Jesus took the boards into his hands and they became equal[202].

We have no reliable way of estimating how widely this literature was read, but it apparently circulated from one end of the empire to the other. In the East, Eusebius fulminated against these gospels in his 'Church History', the Gospel of Thomas in particular[203]. Since Eusebius' attack was so violent there must have been a large number of people reading those writings to call down so much lightning. In the West, Irenaeus knew of at least the first part of the account of the incident in Thomas where Jesus caused his teacher to die[204]. In addition, some of the accounts narrated above

196 Oscar Cullman, in: Edgar Hennecke, Neutestamentliche Aprokryphen, ed. by Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Tübingen, 1959), I, 292—293.
197 Quasten, Patrology, I, 123.
198 Gospel of Thomas 4.
199 Ibid., 3.
200 Ibid., 11.
201 Ibid., 9, 10 and 17.
202 Ibid., 13.
203 HE III, 25, 6—7.
204 Against Heresies I, 20, 1.

from the Gospel of Thomas appear as well in Pseudo-Matthew, perhaps implying that oral tradition was responsible for the duplication[205]. If, as CULLMAN suggested, this material was written for the entertainment of its readers[206], it would seem that a large number of people were exposed to points of view not shared by the Church Fathers. Moreover, since the Apocryphal Gospels were not exclusively Gnostic but had many Catholic motives as well[207], it would have been difficult for the lay Christian to sort out which were which.

In view of the nature of the stories presented from the Gospel of Thomas (and Pseudo-Matthew), and considering the audiences to which they were directed, it is clear that a study of the Church Fathers alone is likely to present a dangerously biased impression of the experience of the early church. Even though it has been shown that the Fathers did not agree among themselves on the subjects of war, violence, and Christian enlistment, they would have disagreed unanimously with the view of Jesus' youth communicated in the Apocryphal Gospels and its implications for Christian ethics. In addition, it would appear, though it cannot be proven, that the Christian who was most likely to enlist read aprocryphal New Testament literature more than he read the Church Fathers, if he read at all. What effect oral tradition had on illiterate Christians is only guesswork, though one might imagine that stories about a super-Jesus would be more easily told than a theory concerning the eternal generation of the Logos.

11. Conclusion

Although the Church Fathers did not encourage violence, they were not unanimous in their views on the necessity of war; both Tertullian and Origen prayed for the emperors' success in waging war in defense of the empire. The sermon on the mount seems to have determined the Fathers' ethics concerning murder on a person-to-person basis, but not their thoughts about war. For example, Arnobius assumed that war was bad when he accused the Roman gods of their inability to prevent war. Eusebius and Lactantius could even be convinced that war was a good thing if fought on behalf of the church.

While no Father urged that Christians enlist, it is certain that their thoughts about war had no direct correspondence to prohibitions of joining the service, at least for those who prohibited it. There is practically no evidence from the Fathers which would support the argument that the early church denied enlistment on the ground that killing and war were opposed to the Christian ethic. The pacifist argument is an artificial construct bringing together passages, torn from context, and arranged in a way no

[205] Pseudo-Matthew 28, 29, 38.
[206] CULLMAN, pp. 292—293.
[207] Ibid.

Father ever could have done; no unequivocal statement to support that argument can be found, and certainly not one of any length such as a paragraph three or four sentences long.

Only Tertullian suggested that the immoral, licentious army life might be a problem to Christians in it, but it was not a major problem, judging from the silence of the rest of the church writers.

Although not every Father opposed military service explicitly or implicitly, those who did based their reasons not on ethical but on religious grounds. Tertullian found the religious observances of army men, official and unofficial, offensive to the extent that he devoted an entire treatise to that subject. Origen never mentioned army religion but objected to pledging allegiance to the emperor, and declined to let Christians fight, because their role was to carry on spiritual warfare, prayer in particular. In arguing that Christians were set apart, like Roman priests, he may have been thinking of the Old Testament priesthood. Probably the Old Testament influenced Cyprian too, but in his view of sacrificial purity, this purity was destroyed by shedding blood and touching a corpse, if the attack was successful. Although Hippolytus prohibited soldiers from executing people, he did not demand that they should leave the army; most likely his injunction applied to duties not involved in combat or normal military life.

By no means does the material presented in this chapter account for all the existing evidence relating to the early Christian experience with the Roman military. If the disapproval of military service ranged from utter disgust to a preference that Christians not join the army, the Church Fathers did not succeed in dissuading them from the military. Christian military tombstones, military martyr acts, and even the Fathers' scolding of Christians in uniform, show that they did not change the minds of some laymen, though they may have. The Apocryphal Gospels illustrate how the Fathers did not speak for everyone, at least not for Christians in the army. Moreover, in the reign of Constantine there is surprisingly little controversy over military service; if the Fathers were influential we should expect to find more, but this situation belongs to a succeeding chapter. Since the Fathers are only a part of the early church encounter with the army, the task remains to see what happened to Christians in the army, before and during the reign of Constantine.

III. Christians in the Roman Army from A.D. 173—312

In the preceding chapter the evidence, both explicitly and implicitly, pointed to the presence of Christians in the Roman army. We found that Tertullian, for example, explicity stated that there were Christians in its ranks and that even the 'De corona' was inspired by an actual situation of which he claimed to have knowledge. Implicitly, injunctions against enlisting,