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978-0-521-88269-9 — Roman Military Service: Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and
Early Principate
Sara Elise Phang
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ROMAN MILITARY SERVICE

In this book Sara Phang explores the ideals and realities of Roman military discipline, which affected the behavior of soldiers in combat, their punishment for infractions, and their economic activities, such as compensation and other benefits, work, and consumption. Her thematically organized study analyzes these aspects of discipline using both literary and documentary sources. Phang emphasizes social and cultural conflicts in the Roman army. Contrary to the impression that Roman emperors “bought” their soldiers and indulged them, discipline restrained such behavior and legitimized and stabilized the imperial power. Phang argues that emperors and aristocratic commanders gained prestige from imposing discipline, while displaying leadership in person and a willingness to compromise with a restive soldiery.

Sara Elise Phang is a scholar of Roman history and author of *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC–AD 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army*, which won the Gustave O. Arlt Award in the Humanities in Classical Studies.

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IN MEMORY OF DR. SAMUEL H. PHANG
AND DR. LILLIAN PHANG LEE
WHOM I KNEW TOO BRIEFLY

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



In 134 BC, Scipio Aemilianus, one of the two consuls of that year, imposed severe military discipline and training on the Roman army at Numantia in Spain. The army had been demoralized by repeated defeats and the surrender of a previous commander, C. Hostilius Mancinus, to the Numantines.

Scipio expelled all traders and prostitutes; also the soothsayers and diviners, which they were continually consulting because they were demoralized by defeat. For the future he forbade the bringing in of anything not necessary, even a victim for purposes of divination. He also ordered all wagons and their superfluous contents to be sold, and all pack animals, except such as he himself permitted to remain. For cooking utensils it was only permitted to have a spit, a brass kettle, and one cup. Their food was limited to plain boiled and roasted meats. They were forbidden to have beds, and Scipio was the first to sleep on straw. . . . He did not venture to engage the enemy until he had trained his army by many laborious exercises. He traversed all the neighboring plains and duly fortified new camps one after another, and then demolished them, dug up trenches and filled them up again, constructed high walls and overthrew them, personally overseeing the work from morning until night. . . . (Appian, *Iber.* 85–86)

Scipio trained his soldiers this way, with digging and on the march, until “he judged that the army was alert, obedient to himself, and patient in labor.”

This episode is representative of Roman ideals of discipline, but from a modern point of view it contains many strange features. Scipio emphasizes labor and the building of camps to restore discipline; from the late seventeenth century onward, a modern army would use drill. Scipio also emphasizes austerity, to a degree unexplained merely by the need to reduce baggage. In other anecdotes of discipline, the commander forbids his soldiers to buy baked bread; Pescennius Niger, a rival of the emperor Septimius Severus, allegedly forbade cooked food and made his soldiers drink water. Yet other literary accounts of military discipline

and indiscipline stress the evils of giving soldiers excessive payments of money and denounce soldiers' slipping into an effeminate way of life. Discipline also imposed a legal ban on marriage for serving soldiers. These representations of military discipline are not based simply on functional concerns. They articulate political, social, and cultural tensions and anxieties. This book explains what the Romans believed about military discipline, how it was specific to their society and culture, and how emperors and commanders exercised command consistent with discipline.

This book began over ten years ago, with my student paper on the representations of the Roman army in Latin literature. It is also an outgrowth of (and complement to) my doctoral dissertation and first book *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC–AD 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), which concerns the ban on legal marriage mentioned above. The present work is different in emphasis. It does not focus on gender or the property law of military personnel, subjects of the earlier book and a subsequent paper. This book focuses on economic and social themes and emphasizes literary sources rather than papyri and inscriptions. *Disciplina militaris* was shaped by and addressed ancient Roman political, economic, social, and cultural phenomena. The analytical framework is that of Weberian sociology, though it also uses the *habitus* theory of Pierre Bourdieu.

It is impossible for any one work to do justice to the breadth of Roman army studies and Roman social history. Some works and authors are left out. I have chosen not to rehearse in detail technical issues (such as the pay scales of the Roman army) or to survey archaeological evidence. *Roman Military Service* does not discuss the status of veterans; it pertains to serving soldiers. *Roman Military Service* is also not intended to replace Roy W. Davies' *Service in the Roman Army* (1989), the various standard works on the Roman army, or narrative histories of campaigns and wars.

I thank the members of the University of Southern California Department of Classics for their hospitality while I held an Andrew W. Mellon fellowship in Classics in 2001–02, especially Clifford Ando, Tom Habinek, and Amy Richlin. I am grateful to Amy Richlin for advice, Iain Ferris's *Enemies of Rome*, and Brig-Gen. Silas Casey's *Infantry Tactics*. I am especially grateful to Karen Dang for her discussions and friendship. I would also like to thank Paul Erdkamp and the contributors to Erdkamp 2007, as well as Jean-Jacques Aubert and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi, Walter Scheidel, and Rosemary Moore. Moore's work on the discipline of the Roman army emphasizes the Republic; my study emphasizes the first

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two centuries of the Empire, for which the mid- and late Republic provides a background.

I would also like to thank the Center for Hellenic Studies for a Summer Stipend in 2003 and my use of the CHS library thereafter, where later stages of the research for this book were done. At the CHS I thank especially Temple Wright, who provided the new books I needed, and the staff of the Dumbarton Oaks collection for use of their library. I also did research at the Library of Congress, and the staff there also receive my thanks. I would also like to thank William V. Harris for supporting my early graduate work and dissertation work on the Roman army.

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ABBREVIATIONS



Major classical authors and works are cited as in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1996); periodicals as in *L'Année Philologique*. Abbreviations and full references to papyri, ostraka, and tablets appear in *The Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic, and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets*, ed. J. S. Oates, R. S. Bagnall, et al. (2005)

<i>AArchHung</i>	<i>Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>L'Année Épigraphique</i>
<i>AESC</i>	<i>Annales (Économies Sociétés Civilisations)</i>
<i>AHB</i>	<i>Ancient History Bulletin</i>
<i>AJPh</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>Amm.</i>	Ammianus Marcellinus
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> , ed. Joseph Vogt et al. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1972–)
<i>Asclep. Tact.</i>	Asclepiodotus, <i>Tactica</i>
<i>Aug. RGDA</i>	Augustus, <i>Res Gestae Divi Augusti: The Achievements of the Divine Augustus</i> , ed. P. A. Brunt and J. M. Moore (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967)
<i>Aur. Vict. Caes.</i>	Sex. Aurelius Victor, <i>De Caesaribus</i>
<i>AW</i>	<i>The Ancient World</i>
<i>BHAC</i>	<i>Bonner Historia-Augusta Colloquium</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the Univ. of London</i>
<i>BJ</i>	<i>Bonner Jahrbücher</i>
<i>BMC</i>	<i>Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum</i> , ed. H. Mattingly and R. A. G. Carson (London: British Museum, 1923–)
Campbell 1994	<i>The Roman Army 31 BC–AD 337: A Sourcebook</i> , ed. and trans. Brian Campbell (London/New York: Routledge, 1994)
<i>CbLA</i>	<i>Chartae Latinae Antiquiores</i> , ed. Albert Bruckner and Robert Marichal (Olten: U. Graf, 1954–)
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> , ed. Th. Mommsen et al. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1893–)
<i>CA</i>	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>

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<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>CPb</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
Daris	<i>Documenti per la storia dell'esercito romano in Egitto</i> , ed. S. Daris (Milan: S. Cruore, 1964)
<i>DHA</i>	<i>Dialogues d'histoire ancienne</i>
Eutr.	Eutropius, <i>Breviarium</i>
Flor.	Florus, <i>Epitome</i>
Gell.	Aulus Gellius, <i>Noctes Atticae</i>
<i>G&R</i>	<i>Greece & Rome</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>HSCPb</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>HTbR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
Hdn.	Herodian
Hdt.	Herodotus, <i>The Histories</i>
Hes. Op.	Hesiod, <i>Works and Days</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , ed. H. Dessau (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916)
<i>IRT</i>	<i>Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania</i> , ed. J. M. Reynolds, J. B. Ward Perkins, et al. (Rome: British School, 1952)
<i>JHSex</i>	<i>Journal of the History of Sexuality</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
Justin	Justinus, <i>Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus</i>
Lact. Mort. Pers.	Lactantius, <i>De mortibus persecutorum</i>
<i>LEC</i>	<i>Les Études Classiques</i>
<i>Lib. Or.</i>	Libanius, <i>Orations</i>
Macer <i>Re mil.</i>	Aemilius Macer, <i>De re militari</i>
Menander <i>Re mil.</i>	Arrius Menander, <i>De re militari</i>
Macrob. Sat.	Macrobius, <i>Saturnalia</i>
Maur. Strat.	Maurice, <i>Strategikon</i>
Max. Tyr. Or.	Maximus of Tyre, <i>Orations</i>
<i>MAAR</i>	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome</i>
Modestinus <i>Poen.</i>	Herennius Modestinus, <i>De poenis</i>
Musurillo	<i>Acts of the Christian Martyrs</i> , ed. H. Musurillo (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972)

Onas. <i>Strat.</i>	Onasander, <i>Strategos</i>
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>
Paul <i>Poen. mil.</i>	Paulus, <i>De poenis militum</i>
PCPhS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
RE	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertums-wissenschaft</i> , ed. G. Wissowa et al. (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1890–)
REA	<i>Revue des Études Anciennes</i>
REL	<i>Revue des Études Latines</i>
RFIC	<i>Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica</i>
RIB	<i>Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> , ed. R. G. Collingwood and R. P. Wright (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965–95)
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
RIC	<i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> , ed. H. B. Mattingly et al. (London: Spink, 1923–81)
RMR	<i>Roman Military Records on Papyrus</i> , ed. R. O. Fink (Cleveland, OH: Case Western Reserve, 1971)
RSA	<i>Rivista storica dell'Antichità</i>
SCI	<i>Scripta Classical Israelica</i>
SDHI	<i>Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TR	<i>Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis</i>
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>
ZRG	<i>Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte (Romanistische Abteilung)</i>