

FOR THE EMPIRE, FOR EACH OTHER: THE MOTIVATIONS OF AUXILIARIES  
IN ANTIQUITY AND THE GREAT WAR

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores combat motivation among ancient Roman auxiliaries and members of the Indian Expeditionary Force D during the First World War. This study is an intellectual exercise that analyzes literature from psychology, ancient history, and modern history, supplemented by primary sources pertaining to the ancient and modern subject group. This thesis considers the impact of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors on combat motivation. This study shows that there are parallels in the motivations of the ancient auxiliaries and the modern IEF in terms of group cohesion, internalized martial identities, and economic benefits, but differences in terms of political benefits. The prospect of citizenship appears to have motivated ancient auxiliary recruitment, while the impact of political benefits appears unclear in the context of the IEF. This study shows that interdisciplinary studies of combat motivation can expand scholarly inquiries into new territory and can lead to new discussions.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Table of Contents .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	10
Chapter 3: Combat Motivation in the Ancient Auxiliaries .....	29
Chapter 4: Combat Motivation in the IEF D .....	64
Chapter 5: Synthesis and Conclusions .....	101
Bibliography .....	109
Curriculum Vitae	

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Auxiliaries in combat on Trajan’s Column .....	43
Figure 2: Legionaries shown performing building duties .....	44
Figure 3: Map showing Moesia Superior .....	48
Figure 4: Auxiliaries presenting trophies to Trajan .....	59
Figure 5: Paying respects to Trajan .....	60
Figure 6: Indian war cemetery at Neuve-Chapelle .....	71

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Utilizing auxiliary troops has been a tradition for thousands of years among European imperial powers from the Romans to the modern British Empire. Such practices were also commonplace among the Persians, Egyptians, Macedonians, and Greeks before the Romans rose to prominence in the Mediterranean World. The Romans often made use of non-Roman troops in their campaigns from their earliest expansion on the Italian peninsula until the later days of the empire. Such practices were necessary for Roman expansion, since it would have been nearly impossible to form a conquering army out of only adult, male citizens of Rome. The Roman auxiliaries were a unique institution in antiquity, distinct from mercenaries employed by other ancient empires in the sense that they were a permanent military force rather than one hired for a particular conflict. Non-Roman states and regions were often expected to levy troops as part of treaties with Rome which were often struck after the Romans had defeated them.

In the modern world, multi-national coalition warfare between European alliances became the norm, most famously in the First World War, in which both the Entente (Britain, France, and Russia) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire) were made up of political alliances that pitted states against each other because of obligations to provide military support. Most European powers marshalled large colonial forces to meet the unprecedented personnel demands of the Great War. The British had a massive pool of colonial resources from which to recruit, including white settler dominions such as Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia; the British recruited from colonized peoples in Rhodesia (currently known as Zimbabwe) as well, but by far the largest colonial force was drawn from India.

This thesis compares combat motivation among two historical auxiliary groups, the British and Spanish auxiliaries who served under the Romans in the Dacian Wars and the Indian Expeditionary Force D who served under the British in the First World War. This study will be an interdisciplinary intellectual exercise that will find connections between psychological, ancient historical, and modern historical literature and highlight new directions for the study of combat motivation. This study will also deploy the well-known evidence of ancient military diplomas in a new way, illustrating the presence and motivations of British and Spanish auxiliary soldiers in the Dacian Wars which are some of the least-documented conflicts in Roman history.

Colonial or auxiliary armies are very much different from a standard coalition force in the sense that colonized peoples have not historically possessed the political autonomy to enter into treaties or agreements as equals with a colonizing power. Despite a lack of formal political power, auxiliary and colonial armies often rivaled or even exceeded a colonizing army in terms of sheer numbers. The Roman auxiliaries were often on par with the Legions in terms of numbers, and the size of the Indian Expeditionary Force in the First World War (1.4 million) far exceeded the British Expeditionary Force.<sup>1</sup> While there are accounts of mutiny and rebellion among Roman auxiliary and British colonial units, both groups largely remained loyal to the imperial powers under which they fought which leads to the question of why they did so.

The question of combat motivation has been central for scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and even ancient military theorists have discussed how best to maintain morale and loyalty within military organizations in wartime. The ancient Chinese

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Imy, *Faithful Fighters: Identity and Power in the British Indian Army, South Asia in Motion* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019), 3.



warrior-philosopher Sun Tzu wrote that a clear system of rewards and punishment is necessary for a good and productive relationship between leaders and soldiers.<sup>2</sup> He also said that the prospect of reward will make soldiers go willingly into battle.<sup>3</sup> The ancient Roman military writer Vegetius said that the best way to avoid a mutiny is to keep troops' morale up by constantly exercising and drilling them so that they are confident in their ability to obtain glory.<sup>4</sup> He also suggested that making an example of ringleaders will deter further sedition, emphasizing his belief that fear will keep soldiers loyal.<sup>5</sup>

Most modern scholarship on combat motivation has been done from social psychological perspectives. As we will see in the next chapter, an early official study of combat motivation was done in Second World War by Roy Grinker and John Spiegel, which addressed what made allied soldiers persevere through the intense adversity they faced. Grinker and Spiegel's study was one of many done during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries but as I will highlight again in the following chapter most of these studies were focused on the soldiers of major Western powers and paid relatively little attention to historically underrepresented groups. From these sources we can construct a working definition of combat motivation, that which compels a person or a group of people to enlist in the military and engage in combat with an enemy force.

#### *The Nature and Importance of this Study*

This study will be a primarily intellectual exercise in comparing two distant groups to find parallels between their motivations, roles, and relationships with imperial powers. The first are the Roman auxiliaries who fought under the Emperor Trajan during

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<sup>2</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 1.9

<sup>3</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 2.11

<sup>4</sup> Vegetius, *De Re Militari*, 3.4

<sup>5</sup> Vegetius, *De Re Militari*, 3.4

the Dacian Wars of the early Second Century CE. The second is the Indian Expeditionary Force D that the British deployed to the Mesopotamian Front during the First World War. Before continuing, it is critical to establish the reason for selecting these two groups for a comparison. Firstly, both the Roman auxiliaries and the Indian Expeditionary Force were highly diverse groups of soldiers who were nevertheless critical to their imperial commanders' militaries. Roman auxiliaries were recruited from all corners of the empire, from Britain to Syria, and the British Indian army contained soldiers of various ethnicities, cultures, and religious faiths. Secondly, both groups played central roles in campaigns that expanded the Roman and British empires to the height of their power. The Romans eventually annexed Dacia and the British gained a critical foothold in the Middle East after the Great War. The modern Indian Expeditionary Force offers a better-documented case than that of the ancient auxiliaries.

This study is a valuable undertaking for multiple reasons. It expands upon previous studies of combat motivation and brings new sets of experiences and comparisons to the fore by highlighting and reinterpreting old evidence to form a new narrative. My study is unique in the sense that it will utilize a combination of literature and evidence from three different disciplines: Psychology, Classics, and History. This will allow me to craft a narrative that is informed by vastly different perspectives that have been woven together to produce an innovative discussion. This thesis will also constitute a foundation on which future studies of combat motivation and identity can be built since it is meant to start new discussions about old evidence and new applications of social psychological theories. While I will not be able to address the full extent of primary source material for both the ancient auxiliaries and the Indian expeditionary

forces due to constraints of time and resources, my goal is to lay a foundation for future work to be done in the area.

### *Methodology*

In the first content chapter, I will engage with modern social psychological literature to create the theoretical framework of this study and provide empirically tested theories for the discussion of the two historical subject groups. I will begin by discussing two critical studies on combat motivation, the previously mentioned work by Grinker and Spiegel, who were interested in combat motivation in the context of the Second World War, and a 1982 book by Anthony Kellett aptly titled *Combat Motivation*. I address these two works specifically because they represent some of the earliest scholarly examinations of combat motivation and set the stage for later empirical studies by social psychologists.

I will also address the 21<sup>st</sup> century literature on combat motivation which deployed more robust empirical methodologies in the studies' construction and application. The main theories that I draw from these studies are the importance of group cohesion, the importance of extrinsic motivators (money, prestige, and political benefits, for example), Self-Determination Theory, and Reversal Theory. These theories will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, but my purpose in highlighting them is to provide an empirical structure that will then be applied to the historical groups under investigation in this study.

The next two sections outline critical literature related to studying combat motivation in both ancient and modern history. The first includes studies of ancient warfare such as Jason Crowley's book *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite* and Conor Whately's article on combat motivation in the Roman Army during the Age of

Justinian in late antiquity. The second highlights the works of prominent scholars of the Indian Army, Kaushik Roy and David Omissi, in addition to the work of James Kitchen and Gajendra Singh. While historical studies of combat motivation among auxiliaries and colonial soldiers are comparatively rare, it is critical to draw attention to at least tangentially related studies to show the new direction in which this study takes the discussion.

The subsequent chapter explores the combat motivation of the Roman auxiliaries with those who fought in the Dacian Wars as the main case study. This chapter highlights the impact of regimental pride and Martial Race Theory on the ancient auxiliaries. It is clear group cohesion and internalized martial identities were prominent in the institution of the auxiliaries. The chapter also examines the impact of extrinsic motivators on the auxiliaries, with special emphasis on the prospect of Roman citizenship upon completion of an auxiliary soldier's term of service. This section will also include an exploration of the presence of auxiliary soldiers' families on campaign and the prospect of monetary gain through looting. Lastly, the chapter illustrates the relationship between the auxiliaries and Roman leadership, largely in the context of the Emperor Trajan's presence at the front and the observance of the imperial cult as well as the allowance of religious freedoms for non-Roman troops.

The Dacian Wars are one of the least documented pair of conflicts in Roman military history in terms of our literary evidence from ancient historians and writers. With that being the case, I utilize literary evidence primarily in the context of providing perspective on auxiliaries and non-Romans from other locations and time periods to gauge more general experiences of the auxiliaries and the Romans' attitudes toward them. To provide a fuller picture of the auxiliaries in Dacia I make use of epigraphic and

archaeological sources. The epigraphic sources are in the form of military diplomas which were given to each soldier and display the recipient's name, names of family members, the name of their cohort or cavalry unit, and the places in which they served. The other major material source that I use is Trajan's Column in Rome which is the first instance of auxiliaries being depicted visually on monumental architecture. These sources reveal the diversity and importance of the auxiliaries to the Roman army which in turn provides a clearer picture of what would have motivated them to fight.

Chapter 3 turns to a discussion of the soldiers of IEF and their experiences in the Great War under the British. This chapter sets the context for the First World War in the Middle East including the circumstances that brought the Ottoman Empire into the war. The British were concerned about losing their trade and communication networks with India that passed through the Middle East and the Suez Canal and were vulnerable to Ottoman attacks. The chapter then explores the historical background for the IEF and especially IEF D to contextualize their role in the Great War. That story is grounded in the Rebellion of 1857 and the shifting of control from the British East India Company to the British Government. Historians have shown the way in which the Indian Army's role changed from acting as a police force for the population and a buffer against invasion from the Afghanistan region to a fully mobilized expeditionary force being sent to fight in every major theatre of the First World War.

The third section of that chapter examines the impact of regimental identity and the implementation of Martial Race Theory on the motivation of members of the IEF. The British regimental system and martial race ideologies were only part of the equation when it came to the experiences of Indian soldiers. In fact, many communities within the Indian Army such as Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Muslims had strong histories of military

service and deeply moved by ideas of martial prowess and honour referred to by some communities as *izzat*. These communities possessed these self-identities independent of the British system, and that the British built on traditions that already existed. This will be a strong point of comparison with the Roman auxiliary example, as we will see a similar phenomenon in the ancient context.

The chapter includes discussion of the mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers in Basra in 1916, examination of the relationship between the British commanders and members of the IEF, and other extrinsic factors for motivation. Extrinsic factors such as economic and political benefits were strong motivators for enlistment into the Indian Army. The results of that discussion will show that these extrinsic factors complemented the intrinsic factors discussed previously.

This chapter also filters historical writing and evidence on the Indian Army's Great War experience through the lens of psychological theories. My main sources of evidence are letters written by members of the IEF that have been published in translation. These letters illuminate many aspects of the experiences of Indian soldiers in the Great War including the importance of religion, honour, and comradeship, but also day-to-day concerns of food, medical care, and thoughts of home. They are an immeasurably valuable source for any discussion of the Indian Army during the First World War, and especially so for this study of combat motivation.

Despite the value of these sources, they have limitations. Most of the letters were written in non-English languages such as Urdu, and so are not presented in their original language. When the letters were translated into English it is possible for the nuances present in other languages to be lost. This of course does not mean that the letters are any less valid as sources, but we must bear the drawbacks in mind. The letters were also

subject to censorship by British officials before being sent along to their intended recipients.<sup>6</sup> Mass censorship has powerful implications for the narratives that can be drawn from the letters because we can assume that there were accounts and reports that do not survive which may have been more critical of the British or of the war effort. As with the first caveat about translation, the fact that the letters were subject to censorship does not invalidate them as sources, it simply means that they must be used cautiously.

The final chapter of this thesis serves as a concluding synthesis to bring the material discussed in the previous chapters together. This chapter provides a more in-depth comparison of the experiences of ancient auxiliaries and the members of the IEF. The chapter applies the social psychological theories introduced in the second chapter to the historical subject groups. It also highlights important future directions for this subject of study. The next chapter examines some of the relevant background literature to this study and set the stage for the subsequent explorations of the ancient auxiliaries and the Indian Expeditionary Force.

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<sup>6</sup> Nikolas Gardner, 'Morale and Discipline in a Multiethnic Army: The Indian Army in Mesopotamia (1914-1917)', *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4, no. 1 (2013): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2013.772980>, pp. 3-4; See also David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and London: Macmillan Press LTD., 1994), pp. 4-9.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Scholarly literature surrounding combat motivation has evolved considerably over the decades, since the initial serious forays into the subject in the 1940s, when there was a great deal of interest in trying to understand various aspects of the Second World War. It is important to note that many studies on modern historical combat motivation focus on soldiers representing major industrialized powers such as the United States, Britain, and France. Fewer studies have explored combat motivation in underrepresented or colonized groups. However, some historical studies have investigated the human experiences of Indian troops during the First World War and offer clues about the unique nature of such service. In more recent years, the subject of combat motivation has attracted the attention of social psychologists.

In terms of the literature on combat motivation, Grinker and Spiegel, and Kellet respectively contributed two seminal works in the field in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter also includes works from the early 2000s by Wong and colleagues that investigate what motivated American soldiers to fight during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The discussion continued through the 2000s with studies having built upon and critiqued the work of Wong and colleagues that build the theoretical basis of combat motivation. This chapter also examines studies from the 2010s to illustrate the continuing evolution of combat motivation theory, with one of the key studies being Apter and Desselles' application of a general motivation theory known as Reversal Theory to combat motivation.

This chapter continues with humanistic approaches to studying ancient warfare. A critical piece of scholarship in this subject area is Jason Crowley's *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite* in which he discusses the role of group cohesion in Greek warfare.



This section also highlights scholarship on the Roman army, including a monograph by Ian Haynes devoted to the lives and experiences of Roman auxiliaries. This section also includes an article by Conor Whately that examines combat motivation among legionaries in Late Antiquity.

This chapter concludes by briefly discussing literature pertaining to the IEF's role in the Middle Eastern campaign of the First World War. This section begins with the scholarship of David Omissi and Roy Kaushik, whose studies have tackled issues of race, colonialism, and recruitment in the Indian army in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. James Kitchen has also written a monograph in which he explores morale and military identity among the British colonial forces in the Middle East during the First World War. This section also includes a book by Gajendra Singh that highlights testimonies of Indian soldiers from both World Wars.

#### Psychological Literature

One of the earliest studies of combat motivation was published in 1945 by Roy Grinker and John Spiegel, in a chapter titled *Motivation for Combat-Morale* in their book *Men under Stress*. This study came on the heels of the Second World War, which spurred scholars to try to understand the phenomena they had just witnessed, with aspects of motivation being foremost among them. This book chapter is an early, but nevertheless important, work that forms the basis of modern-day research into combat motivation and morale. Grinker and Spiegel suggest that there are four main factors that are critical for high motivation and morale: 1) faith in common purpose; 2) faith in leadership; 3) faith in each other (for my purposes, this can be referred to as group

cohesion); 4) adequate health and a strong work-life balance.<sup>7</sup> The authors acknowledge that the forces that motivate someone to fight are highly complex, and often the product of a combination of factors which are not always easily identified.<sup>8</sup> One of their key arguments is that the primary factors for good motivation are largely rooted in the unconscious mind.<sup>9</sup> This argument is a fascinating and relevant one, as it relates to the idea of the universal soldier. The universal soldier is a theoretical perspective that posits that, at their base level, soldiers from different historical eras are largely the same. There are some scholars, such as Martin Windrow and Frederick Wilkinson (1971), who expressly deny the existence of the universal soldier, and suggest that soldiers are exclusively a product of their time. This concept, however, must still be addressed, as it is one way in which comparisons between the two subject groups of this project can be made.<sup>10</sup>

Three years after Grinker and Spiegel's study, in 1948, Edward Shils and Morris Janowitz published their study *Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II*. Their study had two main goals: to analyze the influence of primary and secondary groups on "the high degree of stability of the German Army in World War II;" and to evaluate the impact of Western propaganda on the German Army's effectiveness.<sup>11</sup> Shils and Janowitz utilized data on German prisoners of war (POWs) that the Allies compiled from front-line interrogations, interviews at rear areas, captured

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<sup>7</sup> Roy R. Grinker and John P. Spiegel, *Men under Stress* (Philadelphia: Blakiston, 1945), 37

<sup>8</sup> Grinker and Spiegel, *Men under Stress*, 38

<sup>9</sup> Grinker and Spiegel, *Men under Stress*, 39

<sup>10</sup> For two different perspectives on the concept of the universal soldier, compare Jason Crowley's *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite: The Culture of Combat in Classical Athens* with Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*.

<sup>11</sup> Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, 'Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II', *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1948): 280.

documents, statements from freed Allied soldiers, reports from combat observers, and monthly opinion polls of sample groups of German POWs.<sup>12</sup> Their findings suggest that “Where conditions were such as to allow primary group life to function smoothly, and where the primary group developed a high degree of cohesion, morale was high and resistance effective or at least very determined, regardless in the main of the political attitudes of the soldier.”<sup>13</sup>

In 1982, Anthony Kellet published a book titled *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle*. One of the core tenants of the book is that the development of mass armies led to a greater appreciation for what motivated soldiers to fight.<sup>14</sup> Kellet primarily chose to focus on “external and situational factors rather than on internal ones.”<sup>15</sup> The author bases his discussion on evidence gathered from those who have participated in war, and from other researchers, but does not seek to prove any one hypothesis.<sup>16</sup> Kellet concludes that while factors such as primary group cohesion are undeniably critical, “a holistic approach, combining individual, organizational, and social factors with situational ones, offers a more complete explanation of combat motivation.”<sup>17</sup> This book can serve as a strong starting place for any investigation into combat motivation, especially in the modern era.

Bringing the discussion into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Johan van der Dennen’s 2005 article represents a meta-analysis of theories and literature pertaining to combat motivation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite its brevity, the article covers a variety of possible

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<sup>12</sup> Shils and Janowitz, ‘Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II,’ 282.

<sup>13</sup> Shils and Janowitz, ‘Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II,’ 315.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Kellett, *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle*, International Series in Management Science/Operations Research (Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff Pub., 1982), 4.

<sup>15</sup> Kellett, *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle*, 6.

<sup>16</sup> Kellett, *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle*, 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> Kellett, *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle*, 333.

factors that contribute to combat motivation including concepts of hatred for the enemy, fear of both the enemy and of the consequences of desertion, and a love for one's comrades.<sup>18</sup> The author also posits that shared suffering during training and in war itself can breed a closeness among comrades that compels them to fight.<sup>19</sup> Dennen concludes that, based on evidence collected from surveys, diaries, letters, memoirs, and other primary materials, combat motivation can be summed up in four factors: survival, obedience to authority, loyalty to one's combat group, and masculine honour.<sup>20</sup> This summary highlights several key themes in the field of combat motivation and aids in creating a strong background for the new research that was done in the early 2000s.

I would argue that Dennen's example of shared suffering is reminiscent of the Spartan *agoge*. The *agoge* was a system of education in which future Spartans were put through hellish training regimens and conditions from a young age to prepare them for battle. There is some debate about the authenticity of the image of the *agoge* that has come to us, due in large part to skepticism triggered by the so-called "Spartan Mirage." For example, Nigel Kennel (1995) argues that ancient authors like Plutarch and Pausanias, writing during the height of the Roman Empire, produced an image of Sparta using distorted non-contemporary sources, while Jean Ducat (2006) thinks that there is some genuinely ancient material in later portrayals of Spartan education.

In 2003, Leonard Wong, Thomas Kolditz, Raymond Millen, and Terrence Potter published their study titled *Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War*. Wong and colleagues investigated the underlying combat motivations for soldiers in the

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<sup>18</sup> Johan M.G. van der Dennen, 'Combat Motivation,' *Peace Review* 17, no. 1 (March 2005): 81.

<sup>19</sup> van der Dennen, 'Combat Motivation,' 81.

<sup>20</sup> van der Dennen, 'Combat Motivation,' 87.

context of the 2003 war in Iraq. They point out that the prevailing theories regarding soldiers' combat motivation suggest that soldiers are primarily motivated by group cohesion.<sup>21</sup> The researchers interviewed prisoners taken from the Iraqi army, US soldiers, and embedded members of the media, with the goal of discovering why soldiers fight. This article shows that there are distinct differences between the motivations of US and Iraqi soldiers. The former being primarily motivated by group cohesion and only slightly by ideological concerns about freedom, while the latter reported being motivated by fear of what would be done to them and their families if they refused to fight.<sup>22</sup>

This article provides a useful modern case study to underscore the theoretical background of combat motivation. The findings in this article are echoed by later authors like van der Dennen (described above) who explore the phenomenon of group cohesion in combat motivation. Both ideas described here, motivation by cohesion and by fear, provide critical considerations for the current study as some ancient units may have elected not to rebel or disobey out of fear of the Roman army.

Wong et al.'s study sparked points of contention in the field as well. MacCoun et al. (2006) point out the flaws in Wong et al.'s 2003 report on group cohesion among US soldiers in the Iraq war. They identify that Wong et al. contradict established research traditions in both organizational theory and social psychology. The authors also criticize Wong et al.'s methodology, including the conflation of social and task cohesion when it comes to performance, the issues surrounding the reliability of self-reports, and the lack

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<sup>21</sup> Leonard Wong et al., 'Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War' (Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2003), 2

<sup>22</sup> Wong et al., 'Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War,' 6; Wong et al., 'Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War,' 9.

of proof of causality expressed in the previous study.<sup>23</sup> They call on Wong and colleagues to explain the weaknesses of the literature to validate their own argument. Beyond methodological concerns, MacCoun et al.'s critiques of Wong et al.'s assertions are largely directed at whether social cohesion is adequately shown to affect combat performance. MacCoun et al. observe that respective Iraqi and American confidence in their own abilities to win the war could have been a key factor, and this is a consideration that will feature in my current study.<sup>24</sup>

Wong responded strongly to MacCoun et al.'s criticisms of his original study. He candidly asserts that the critiques made by MacCoun et al. show a misunderstanding of Wong and colleagues' initial study. Wong reaffirmed that his purpose was not to show that cohesion directly impacts battlefield performance, but to analyze the reasons why a soldier would be motivated to engage in combat.<sup>25</sup> While Wong's research is largely focused on modern soldiers, his work is still vital to the present discussion of how combat motivation can be applied to historical groups.

A third party entered the debate in 2007, when James Griffith published his article *Further Considerations Concerning the Cohesion-Performance Relation in Military Settings*. Griffith's article is largely a summary and interpretation of previous literature, with specific attention being paid to the debate between Wong et al. and MacCoun et al. before asserting his own conclusions. Griffith proposes what he believes is missing in the previous debate: the acknowledgement that the primary function of

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<sup>23</sup> Robert J. MacCoun, Elizabeth Kier, and Aaron Belkin, 'Does Social Cohesion Determine Motivation in Combat?' *Armed Forces & Society* 32, no. 4 (2006): 648-650.

<sup>24</sup> MacCoun, Kier, and Belkin, 'Does Social Cohesion Determine Motivation in Combat?' 651.

<sup>25</sup> Leonard Wong, 'Combat Motivation in Today's Soldiers: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute,' *Armed Forces & Society* 32, no. 4 (1 July 2006): 660.

group cohesion is revealed in historical accounts, though he does not give examples; and the acknowledgement that cohesion's role is as a moderating factor, not a main cause of performance.<sup>26</sup> This thesis applies Griffith's methodological suggestion by applying theories of combat motivation to distinct historical groups.

Bruce Newsome sparked a separate scholarly debate with his 2003 article *The Myth of Intrinsic Combat Motivation*. Newsome's study is an extensive review of the previous literature on combat motivation among soldiers. The primary goal of his study is to establish two distinctions: the distinction between motivation to enlist and the motivation to fight; and the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic combat motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation based on the inherent satisfaction of performing an action, and extrinsic motivation is based on the satisfaction gained from external rewards such as money, fame, or glory. Newsome first reviews the literature and prevailing theories that argue for the effectiveness and presence of intrinsic combat motivations, then reviews the opposing argument of extrinsic motivation. After another brief review of arguments in favour of intrinsic motivation that arose to challenge the theories on extrinsic motivation, Newsome concluded that the arguments for the importance of extrinsic combat motivation hold up better under empirical scrutiny.<sup>27</sup> The discussion of intrinsic versus extrinsic combat motivation has powerful implications for the current study, since a critical question of combat motivation concerning the subject groups will be if they found motivation within themselves or if it was predicated on external factors.

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<sup>26</sup> James Griffith, 'Further Considerations Concerning the Cohesion-Performance Relation in Military Settings', *Armed Forces & Society* 34, no. 1 (1 October 2007): 140.

<sup>27</sup> Bruce Newsome, 'The Myth of Intrinsic Combat Motivation,' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 4 (2003): 41.

Rune Henriksen responded to Newsome in 2007 with his published his article *Warriors in Combat – What Makes People Actively Fight in Combat?* Henriksen discussed and critiqued the conclusions put forth by Newsome regarding the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic combat motivation. Henriksen criticizes Newsome's conclusions on two fronts: he says that Newsome's conclusions do not sufficiently define what it is that makes soldiers actively engage in combat; and that it is unhelpful to wholly write off intrinsic motivation for combat, since it suggests that, in terms of the nature-nurture perspective, only recent nurture matters.<sup>28</sup> Henriksen connects nature with intrinsic factors, while linking nurture with extrinsic factors. This study highlights that intrinsic and extrinsic factors are both important for motivation and tend to be present simultaneously.

Scholarly attention returned to group cohesion in 2017 with Thomas Kühne's exploration of comradeship in the German army during the Second World War. Kühne begins by highlighting the question of why soldiers continued to fight and remain loyal, despite suffering physical and emotional abuse at the hands of officers in the German military.<sup>29</sup> The abuse of soldiers is something we also see in the context of the IEF, with Indian soldiers sometimes being subjected to vicious beatings at the hands of British officers.<sup>30</sup> Kühne discusses the regional basis for recruitment in the German army, which kept similar ethnic backgrounds together throughout their deployments.<sup>31</sup> Such practices were present both in the ancient Roman army and in British recruitment in India, and

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<sup>28</sup> Rune Henriksen, 'Warriors in Combat – What Makes People Actively Fight in Combat?,' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, no. 2 (2007): 194.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship: Hitler's Soldiers, Male Bonding and Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 26.

<sup>30</sup> For examples including a discussion of harsh corporal punishments inflicted on Indian soldiers, see Andrew T. Jarboe (2021) *Indian Soldiers in World War I: Race and Representation in an Imperial War*.

<sup>31</sup> Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship*, 109.



discussions of regimental and ethnic pride as potential motivators appear in later chapters of this study. One of Kühne's key conclusions is that "secondary symbols" (i.e., nationalist ideologies, belief in the cause, etc.) are required in conjunction with primary group cohesion to increase combat morale.<sup>32</sup> Without such secondary symbols, he argues, group cohesion has the potential to lead to soldiers mutinying *en masse*.<sup>33</sup>

Michal Pawiński and Georgina Chami's 2019 article *Why They Fight? Reconsidering the Role of Motivation in Combat Environments* moves away from emphasizing the primary group's role in military performance. The authors suggest that the combat motivation model does not sufficiently consider combat motivation to be separate from group cohesion.<sup>34</sup> Their proposed remedy to these shortcomings is based upon the Self-Determination Theory. They state that the Self-Determination Theory asserts that human motivation requires the psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy to be satisfied.<sup>35</sup> The authors level three specific criticisms against the group cohesion model: 1) the mono-dimensional view of combat motivation is not satisfactory; 2) motivation should not be based on heteronomy; and 3) the presence and likelihood of reporting bias.<sup>36</sup> Self-Determination Theory has a lot of promise, and it has potential to be used in combination with theories such as group cohesion and Reversal Theory, which is the subject of the final debate in combat motivation literature included in this chapter.

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<sup>32</sup> Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship*, 110.

<sup>33</sup> Kühne, *The Rise and Fall of Comradeship*, 110.

<sup>34</sup> Michal Pawiński and Georgina Chami, 'Why They Fight? Reconsidering the Role of Motivation in Combat Environments', *Defence Studies* 19, no. 3 (September 2019): 298

<sup>35</sup> Pawiński and Chami, 'Why They Fight? Reconsidering the Role of Motivation in Combat Environments,' 299.

<sup>36</sup> Pawiński and Chami, 'Why They Fight? Reconsidering the Role of Motivation in Combat Environments,' 300.

Michael Apter and Mitzi Desselles' 2019 study applies an older theory of motivation, known as Reversal Theory, to combat motivation.<sup>37</sup> Reversal Theory is a general and integrative psychological theory that seeks to reconcile subjective mental states with the motivations behind particular behaviours. In sum, it posits that individuals may be motivated to engage in similar behaviours for completely different reasons, and that there is an intimate relationship between a person's mental state and their behaviour. The authors describe eight states that form Reversal Theory: telic, paratelic, conforming, negativistic, mastery, sympathy, autic, and alloic.<sup>38</sup> The authors suggest that, despite the complex and dynamic set of factors that may motivate someone to fight, these eight states create a situation in which soldiers often switch between motivational states.<sup>39</sup> One vital aspect of Reversal Theory is the telic state. In this state, a soldier's primary concern is doing consequential things for the future, with the given example being prayer before battle.<sup>40</sup>

In response to Apter and Desselles' 2019 study, Dan McAdams (2019) published a short critique of Reversal Theory titled *Young Men Fight Wars, and They Do It for the Tribe*. Demonstrating faith in more conventional theories of combat motivation, McAdams says that, while Reversal Theory has many merits, it downplays the role that group processes play in combat motivation.<sup>41</sup> He advocates for the consideration of

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<sup>37</sup> While a fulsome discussion of Reversal Theory is beyond the scope of this project, I would direct interested parties to two of Apter's books on the subject: *The Experience of Motivation: The Theory of Psychological Reversals* (1982, Academic Press); *Reversal Theory: Motivation, Emotion and Personality* (1989, Routledge)

<sup>38</sup> Michael J. Apter and Mitzi L. Desselles, 'Understanding the Motivation to Fight: A Reversal Theory Perspective,' *Peace & Conflict* 25, no. 4 (November 2019): 336-37.

<sup>39</sup> Apter and Desselles, 'Understanding the Motivation to Fight,' 337.

<sup>40</sup> Apter and Desselles, 'Understanding the Motivation to Fight,' 336.

<sup>41</sup> Dan P. McAdams, 'Young Men Fight Wars, and They Do It for the Tribe,' *Peace & Conflict* 25, no. 4 (November 2019): 349

evolutionary psychology perspectives and argues that Apter and Desselles should have considered that young men have been conditioned to fight for their communities throughout human evolution.<sup>42</sup> This evolutionary perspective has sparked much debate among scholars. Despite its intriguing nature there are simply too many questions that cannot be answered to a satisfactory degree of verifiability for it to feature prominently in this study.

Apter and Desselles responded to McAdams' critiques by highlighting the ways in which Reversal Theory's structure of values and motives can both provide a template for the integration of different approaches and be applied at the individual and collective level. They further highlight that Reversal Theory is unique in its ability to bridge the gap between biological and social considerations by identifying the biological structure of motivational states.<sup>43</sup> The scholarly debate on this subject not only provides a wealth of perspectives and theories, but also forms a rich basis on which the present study can build when applying combat motivation theories to historical groups. Turning now to literature pertaining to the ancient world, the next section begins by highlighting Jason Crowley's *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite*

#### Scholarship on the Ancient World

In the critical third chapter of his book, Crowley investigates the low-level structure of the Athenian military, and focuses on the construction of military units based on *demes* and primary groups.<sup>44</sup> The author highlights the methodological

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<sup>42</sup> McAdams, 'Young Men Fight Wars, and They Do It for the Tribe,' 350.

<sup>43</sup> Michael J. Apter and Mitzi L. Desselles, 'Response to Commentaries on Understanding the Motivation to Fight: A Reversal Theory Perspective', *Peace & Conflict* 25, no. 4 (November 2019): 357.

<sup>44</sup> A *deme* refers to an ancient Athenian equivalent of a modern "neighbourhood," and hoplite soldiers often served with others from their *deme*, with whom they would have been familiar.

concerns with conducting a low-level analysis of the Athenian phalanx would make for a difficult task, due to the top-down nature of the available sources.<sup>45</sup> Despite the difficulties, after he presents compelling evidence for the longevity and resiliency of deme-based groups, Crowley suggests that, in the Greek world, the phalanx was comprised of an important and common primary group formed from the soldiers' own neighbourhoods.<sup>46</sup> Crowley's study of the Greek world adds value to this project by providing precedent for investigating military primary group cohesion in the ancient world.

In a study of the Roman context, Ian Haynes' chapter on cultural identity in the auxiliaries, in Goldsworthy, Haynes, and Adams' 1999 volume, published in association with Birkbeck College, works to shed light on some of the underrepresented peoples that will feature in the present study. Haynes primarily argues that the auxiliaries who served in the Roman army were 'Romanised' to a degree because they were expected to serve and operate in Roman institutions, and so they were easily distinguishable from their civilian peers.<sup>47</sup> Haynes concludes that the widespread adoption of Roman values and practices by the auxiliaries served to increase and sustain unit cohesion.<sup>48</sup> The idea that the auxiliaries adopted some Roman values and ideas will be a critical puzzle piece for the present study, as it suggests that these soldiers were either interested in endearing themselves to the Romans or genuinely becoming fond of their practices.

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<sup>45</sup> Jason Crowley, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite: The Culture of Combat in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 41.

<sup>46</sup> Crowley, *The Psychology of the Athenian Hoplite*, 48.

<sup>47</sup> Adrian Keith Goldsworthy et al., *The Roman Army as a Community: Including Papers of a Conference Held at Birkbeck College, University of London, on 11-12 January 1997*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series*, 1063-4304; No. 34 (Portsmouth, R.I.: *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 1999), 165.

<sup>48</sup> Goldsworthy et al., *The Roman Army as a Community*, 173.

Ian Haynes has also written an extensive work on the Roman auxiliaries entitled *Blood of the Provinces: The Roman Auxilia and the Making of Provincial Society from Augustus to the Severans* and published in 2013. One of the central tenets of this work is that Rome not only absorbed a diverse network of peoples and cultures into its empire, but that it had no choice but to do so if it was to survive.<sup>49</sup> To emphasize the point Haynes cites a quote from the ancient historian Tacitus who said that ‘it is by the blood of the provinces that the provinces are won.’<sup>50</sup> Another of the book’s goals is to show that it took a variety of culturally specific dynamics to maintain the loyalty of the auxiliaries, with many being derived from local traditions and customs.<sup>51</sup> Haynes warns against making any generalizing statements about the auxiliaries, reminding the reader that around two million men would have enrolled in the auxiliaries between the reigns of Augustus and the Severans.<sup>52</sup> While the focus of Haynes’ book is to demonstrate the auxiliaries’ role in shaping provincial society, it is an invaluable source to this study because of its remarkable insight into the lives and experiences of auxiliary soldiers.

Conor Whately discusses combat motivation and cohesion among legionaries in the age of Justinian in his 2017 article. A unique argument made by the author in this chapter is that the line between motivation and cohesion is challenged when fear is involved.<sup>53</sup> Whately also points out the presence of execution as punishment for soldiers breaking ranks in battle, suggesting that fear is represented in legal contexts as well.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ian Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces: The Roman Auxilia and the Making of Provincial Society from Augustus to the Severans* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2013), 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Provinciarum sanguine provincias vinci*, Hist. 4.17, Haynes (2013, 2)

<sup>51</sup> Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 4.

<sup>53</sup> Conor Whately, ‘Combat Motivation and Cohesion in the Age of Justinian,’ in *The World of Procopius*, ed. Geoffrey Greatrex and Sylvain Janniard (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 190.

<sup>54</sup> Whately, ‘Combat Motivation and Cohesion in the Age of Justinian,’ 190-91.

The author goes on to put great emphasis on the role of training and leadership in cohesion and combat motivation and concludes that while details are lacking in our ancient sources, there are still indications of the presence of both cohesion and motivation. He concludes by calling for more work to be done on the subject, as his results are only meant to be preliminary. The next section introduces some of the literature on the Indian Expeditionary Force during the First World War, beginning with the work of David Omissi.

### Scholarship on the Indian Expeditionary Force

David Omissi is one of the foremost scholars of the Indian Army, having written an extensive history entitled *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* published in 1994. While the book is a political and social history spanning several decades the third chapter on fighting spirit in the Indian Army is especially pertinent to the current study. This chapter contains a section on the importance of shame and honour among Indian soldiers who came from communities with strong martial backgrounds. More specifically, Omissi highlights that Indian soldiers often enlisted because they considered military service the right and honourable thing to do as opposed to joining for the economic benefits of service.<sup>55</sup> Omissi's extensive use of letters from Indian soldiers contributes greatly to the value of this source for the current study, as it allowed me to follow leads to finding such primary evidence for myself. This book is complemented well by the work of another historian of the Indian Army, Kaushik Roy.

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<sup>55</sup> David Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and London: Macmillan Press LTD., 1994), 77-78.

To begin his 2001 study into the construction of regiments in the Indian Army, Roy asks the question: why did Indian soldiers fight for the British? In contrast to previous authors' interpretations of the question, Kaushik credits the British managerial expertise with the creation of a loyal and effective fighting force in India.<sup>56</sup> The author further argues that creation of regimental identity was a critical trend that represented a process spanning over a century, and that the British combined European and Indian institutions in their regiment-building process, to great effect.<sup>57</sup> Later, in a 2013 article about race and recruitment in the Indian army, Roy highlights the British implementation of Martial Race theory in their recruitment campaigns. The author concluded that the previous tendency to recruit soldiers based on social class gave way to the practice of recruitment on a territorial basis after the calamities of the First World War forced the British to reconsider their methods.<sup>58</sup> Studies like these are critical to this thesis, because it is important to understand the cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds of the members of the IEF.

James Kitchen has also endeavoured to examine the morale of the British Imperial Army, including the IEF, in the Middle East. One of Kitchen's arguments is that the focus of some works of history on the defeat and incompetence of generals has skewed analyses of the IEF's actual role in the First World War.<sup>59</sup> Like Roy, Kitchen points out that the methods of Martial Race Theory had to change with the start of the

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<sup>56</sup> Kaushik Roy, 'The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913', *War in History* 8, no. 2 (2001): 128.

<sup>57</sup> Roy, 'The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,' 147.

<sup>58</sup> Kaushik Roy, 'Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880– 1918', *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 1346.

<sup>59</sup> James E. Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East: Morale and Military Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns 1916-1918*, *War, Culture and Society* (London, England: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 183.

First World War, since recruiting from such restricted groups of people could not hope to meet the demands of such a large-scale war.<sup>60</sup> Kitchen goes on to argue that the practical training of Indian troops for the war reflected an emphasis on the division as the primary unit and promoted increased teamwork.<sup>61</sup> One key point that Kitchen makes is that incentivizing men to enlist in India was shown to be less effective as the war continued, leading to recruitment by force and bribes in some areas.<sup>62</sup> This point is critical because it shows that extrinsic motivation was dwindling among Indian soldiers and recruits as the war went on, and it suggests that their combat motivation would have been predicated on intrinsic factors and group cohesion.

Gajendra Singh provides intriguing insight into the experience of Indian soldiers in the First World War in the context of the mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers, a contingent of Muslim-Indian cavalry in the IEF, in Mesopotamia that is backed by letters from the soldiers themselves. Singh highlights the fact that the correspondences of Muslim Indian soldiers reveal much in terms of their opinions on fighting the Ottomans.<sup>63</sup> The author shows through the letters that to fight against fellow Muslims was considered a sin by the soldiers of the 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>64</sup> Though sources like this do not explicitly deal with combat motivation, they are critical to the present study because they show instances in which religious devotion influenced combat motivation in some groups. The absence of combat motivation in these cases allows us to examine the role of religion in the experiences of Indian soldiers.

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<sup>60</sup> Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East*, 186.

<sup>61</sup> Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East*, 186.

<sup>62</sup> Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East*, 189.

<sup>63</sup> Gajendra Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy, War, Culture and Society* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 122.

<sup>64</sup> Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars*, 122.



The most relevant background source to this study is a 2021 chapter by Kaushik Roy that is specifically devoted to examining the combat motivation of the Indian Army in the Great War. Roy's central argument is that studies of combat motivation must combine battlefield history with the experiences of soldiers.<sup>65</sup> Roy states that there are four components to combat motivation: readiness (logistics), cohesion, military leadership, and credibility which is also known as the function of national will.<sup>66</sup> This is largely in line with previous social psychological ideas of what constitutes combat motivation. Roy also argues, as he has in the past, that the organizational structure of the British-Indian Army was critical for the effectiveness of the army.<sup>67</sup>

The literature on combat motivation has evolved dramatically since Grinker and Spiegel's 1945 study of what motivates soldiers to engage in combat, having just witnessed the events of the Second World War. As we have seen, many combat motivation theories have emphasized the roles of the primary group and cohesion in compelling soldiers to take up arms and engage in combat. More recent studies have sought to explore new avenues related to combat motivation and have made great strides in doing so despite almost immediate criticism. The current study will endeavour to participate in the extension of the field of combat motivation by seeking to apply the previously outlined theories to historical groups that have yet to be considered together.

The present discussion will ask the following questions: what motivated underrepresented and oppressed groups to fight on behalf of imperial powers, and did

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<sup>65</sup> Kaushik Roy, 'Combat Motivation of the Sepoys and Sowars during the First World War,' in *Indian Soldiers in the First World War: Re-Visiting a Global Conflict*, ed. Ashutosh Kumar and Claude Markovits (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 44.

<sup>66</sup> Roy, 'Combat Motivation of the Sepoys and Sowars during the First World War,' 44.

<sup>67</sup> Roy, 'Combat Motivation of the Sepoys and Sowars during the First World War,' 44-5.

such motivations change over time? I will begin by applying the combat motivation theories in this chapter to the auxiliary forces serving under the Roman Emperor Trajan during the Second Century CE as he sought to expand Rome's borders into the Danube. Comparisons will then be made between these auxiliaries and the Indian Expeditionary Force serving under British command as they sought to push into the Middle East during the First World War. Both groups fought ferociously on behalf of imperial powers that were all-too willing to use them to expand their empires, and this study will explore the question of why they did so and launch a new discussion on the subject of combat motivation.

### Chapter 3: Combat Motivation in the Ancient Auxiliaries

Since Rome's initial wars of expansion on the Italian peninsula, Rome deployed non-Roman units on its behalf and in support of the legions. Roman generals and consuls were often in command of these units. Consuls were the two annually elected heads of the Roman state throughout the Republic, and they retained a largely symbolic role under the emperors. One of the consuls' primary roles was to command the army, a feature of their *imperium*, or formal power. The Roman historian Livy reports that the consul Publius Valerius led two non-Roman groups, the Latins and the Hernici, into battle against another Italian city called Veii during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.<sup>68</sup> The Romans had struck treaties with these groups, which included the condition that the latter would provide soldiers upon request. These non-Roman groups were critical for Rome's expansion, since the city itself would have struggled to produce enough young, male citizens to sustain a conquering or occupying army.

As Rome transformed from a republic into an empire, the role and composition of both the legions and the non-Roman units who would become known as the auxiliaries evolved alongside it.<sup>69</sup> The first emperor, Augustus, discharged 300 000 soldiers after he secured his political position, likely to lessen the possibility of more civil wars.<sup>70</sup> Augustus also enacted reforms that were meant to redirect citizen-soldiers'

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<sup>68</sup> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.53

<sup>69</sup> While the Romans relied on Italian and non-Italian allies for much of its history, the auxiliaries do not appear to have assumed their formal role until sometime during the Late Republic or during Augustus' Principate. For some discussion on the topic, see Haynes (2013) *Blood of the Provinces: The Roman Auxilia and the Making of Provincial Society from Augustus to the Severans* and Keppie (1984) *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire*.

<sup>70</sup> Augustus *Res Gestae* 3. For some discussions of the civil wars in the Late Republic, see works such as Keaveney (2005) *Sulla: The Last Republican*, Keaveney (2007) *The Army in the Roman Revolution*, Marin (2009) *Blood in the Forum: The Struggle for the Roman Republic*, and Shotter (2005) *The Fall of the Roman Republic*.

loyalty away from their immediate commanders towards the Roman state and by extension to the emperor.<sup>71</sup> The Roman Army was divided into legions of about 5 000 soldiers apiece which were subdivided further into 10 cohorts, which were themselves subdivided into six centuries that consisted of about 80 troops each.<sup>72</sup> The first cohort was ‘double-strength’ and contained 800 soldiers who were responsible for protecting the legion’s commander and standard.<sup>73</sup> The auxiliaries in the imperial period were organized quite similarly into cohorts that were either quingenary (500 soldiers) or milliary (1000 soldiers) divided into centuries of about 80 men.<sup>74</sup> Eventually, as we see below, the role of the auxiliaries evolved from complimenting the legions to forming the core fighting force of the Roman Army.

Non-Romans filled the ranks of cavalry and light infantry, and during the Imperial period, Roman commanders would often send them into battle before the legions. The ancient author Tacitus indicates that the intent of this practice was to avoid sacrificing Roman blood to win a battle.<sup>75</sup> The use of non-citizen soldiers was a common phenomenon in antiquity, with many powerful states around the Mediterranean employing foreign mercenaries in some capacity. Xenophon’s *Anabasis* provides an account of Greek hoplites serving as mercenaries in Persia. He writes that upwards of 13 000 Greek mercenaries went on to join the Persian prince and pretender, Cyrus.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Kate Gilliver, ‘The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army,’ in *A Companion to the Roman Army*, ed. Paul Erdkamp, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 184.

<sup>72</sup> Gilliver, ‘The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army,’ 189.

<sup>73</sup> Stephen Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome: The Definitive History of Every Imperial Roman Legion* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2010), 60. A standard was a legion’s symbol that was carried before them, they helped with organization and rallying the troops.

<sup>74</sup> Gilliver, ‘The Augustan Reform and the Structure of the Imperial Army,’ 193.

<sup>75</sup> For an example, see Tacitus’ *Agricola* 35: “victory would be vastly more glorious if it cost no Roman blood...”

<sup>76</sup> Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.4.3

The use of mercenaries in the ancient world was by no means limited to the Persians, however. The ancient military historian Appian reports that, during the Second Punic War, the Carthaginians were employing mercenaries in their invasion of Italy.<sup>77</sup> Polybius notes this as well, stating that the Carthaginians employed mercenaries and were neglectful of their infantry as a result.<sup>78</sup> In the same passage, Polybius indicates that the Romans were superior in this regard because their soldiers fought for “country and children,” an interesting allusion to combat motivation.<sup>79</sup> These examples illustrate that it was common for powerful societies to hire mercenaries to compliment existing militaries.<sup>80</sup> However, the Roman institution of the auxiliaries was unique in two ways in comparison to mercenaries. First, the auxiliaries were permanent fixtures in the Roman military, not hired on a conflict-to-conflict basis. Second, the auxiliaries represented a long-term career path for non-Roman soldiers that would eventually lead to obtaining Roman citizenship.

The front-line fighting role of the auxiliaries continued in Dacia, the primary case study of this chapter. The two Dacian Wars took place from 101-102 CE and from 105-106 CE, during the reign of the Emperor Trajan, and led to the annexation of the Danube region. Trajan’s success in the area contrasted with the brief war in Dacia under Domitian, who himself was absent from the campaign as his forces were defeated in 88

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<sup>77</sup> Appian *Punic Wars* 2.7

<sup>78</sup> Polybius *Histories* 6.52

<sup>79</sup> Polybius *Histories* 6.52

<sup>80</sup> For in-depth discussions of mercenaries in the ancient world, see works such as Fox (2004) *The Long March: Xenophon and the Ten Thousand*, Griffith (1968) *The Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World*, Parke (1970) *Greek Mercenary Soldiers, from the Earliest Times to the Battle of Ipsus*, Trundle (2004) *Greek Mercenaries: From the Late Archaic Period to Alexander*, Trundle (2013) *The Business of War: Mercenaries*, and Wheeler (2007) *The Armies of Classical Greece*.

CE.<sup>81</sup> The insulting terms of Domitian's peace treaty with the Dacians and the Dacians' growing boldness provided the impetus for Trajan to launch the First Dacian War.<sup>82</sup> Trajan raised a colossal fighting force for the campaign, amounting to about 100 000 soldiers, about as many non-combatants, and about 30 000 horses, mules, and oxen.<sup>83</sup> The Romans had tremendous success, winning battle after bloody battle until they reached the gates of Sarmizegethusa, the Dacian capital, at which point the Dacian king Decebalus was forced to surrender to avoid a long siege.<sup>84</sup>

The second war broke out in 105 CE when Decebalus went on the offensive, attacking auxiliary forts throughout the region, and Trajan departed from Rome to retaliate shortly after receiving the news.<sup>85</sup> This time, Trajan led 12 legions and multitudes of auxiliaries across the Transylvanian Alps into Dacia.<sup>86</sup> The Romans once again reached Sarmizegethusa and laid siege to the place, with a rash initial assault without the benefit of siege engines being beaten back.<sup>87</sup> This time, the Romans would not accept a surrender. After a months-long ordeal the Romans succeeded in sacking the city, with Decebalus fleeing and later taking his own life after being cornered in the Carpathian Mountains.<sup>88</sup>

As Stephen Chappell has pointed out, the auxiliaries in Dacia primarily garrisoned forts at the edge of the frontier zone, while most legionaries occupied the

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<sup>81</sup> For a brief description of Domitian's Dacian campaign, see Cassius Dio *Histories* 67.6-7. Suetonius also alludes to this in his *Life of Domitian* 6 but does not elaborate.

<sup>82</sup> Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome*, 379. See also Cassius Dio *Histories* 68.15 for an account of Trajan's discontent with the situation.

<sup>83</sup> Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome*, 380.

<sup>84</sup> Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome*, 392-93.

<sup>85</sup> Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome*, 399.

<sup>86</sup> Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome*, 401.

<sup>87</sup> Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome*, 401-2.

<sup>88</sup> Dando-Collins, *Legions of Rome*, 402-5.

major urban centres.<sup>89</sup> Such a position made these auxiliaries the first line of defence against any foreign invasion of the province, and they were therefore in the most perilous position. Such positioning would have also made the auxiliaries more isolated from their legionary counterparts, and as a result, they were under less supervision. This chapter addresses the question of why the auxiliaries remained loyal and continued to fight for the Romans, in the context of extrinsic motivation and relationships with Roman leadership.

This chapter approaches this question in three ways. The first section explores the impact of regimental and ethnic identity on the combat motivation of auxiliaries. It highlights that the Romans often recruited auxiliary forces from a provincial area and deployed them elsewhere as units. Naming conventions for legions and auxiliary units often reflected the place from which the Romans recruited them, with cohort names being the Latinised version of the troops' place of origin (i.e., *Britannorum* for British auxiliaries). This section also addresses a critical issue entailed by these naming conventions. The Latinised names of auxiliary cohorts reflected Roman names for the troops' places of origin, and do not necessarily represent the self-identity of the soldiers themselves.

The second section explores the extrinsic factors that may have motivated auxiliary soldiers to enlist and fight. This section highlights material rewards and the prospect of citizenship upon completion of military service. This section includes an analysis of epigraphic evidence from Dacia that illustrates the granting of citizenship to auxiliaries and their families upon completion of their service. Evidence from Trajan's

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<sup>89</sup> Stephen Chappell, 'Auxiliary Regiments and New Cultural Formation in Imperial Dacia, 106–274 C.E.', *Classical World* 104, no. 1 (2010): 96.

Column, which depicts Trajan himself bestowing rewards upon non-Roman soldiers, indicates that monetary incentives existed alongside legal ones.

The final section examines the impact of the auxiliaries' confidence in and relationship with Roman leadership, and how these factors affected combat motivation. Evidence of religious worship will be considered, including the presence of non-Roman deities in votive inscriptions found in Dacia alongside evidence that the imperial cult was being worshipped (at least to a small extent) by auxiliary units. The allowance of religious freedoms, as well as the apparent acknowledgement of the divine nature of the emperors, could indicate a positive relationship between the auxiliaries and their Roman commanders.

#### Unit Pride and Group Cohesion

One of the preeminent focal points for scholarly discussions of combat motivation is the impact of group cohesion. As previously mentioned, social psychological studies have delved into the concept of group cohesion, but some historians have utilized this concept as well. Conor Whately, one of the ancient historians who has investigated combat motivation, utilizes the concepts of "horizontal cohesion" (group cohesion) and "vertical cohesion" (relationship with leadership) in his study.<sup>90</sup> While Whately also explores unit pride as a factor for group cohesion within the legion, this section investigates unit pride in the context of the auxiliaries, and what role a shared ethnic background plays in this pride.

A person's ethnicity and lineage were matters of significant importance in the ancient world. It gave one a sense of identity both as an individual and as a group.

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<sup>90</sup> Whately, 'Combat Motivation and Cohesion in the Age of Justinian,' 186.



Athenians were proud to be Athenian, Spartans were proud to be Spartan, Persians were proud to be Persian, and so on. In his seminal work on ethnicity in Greek Antiquity, Jonathan Hall asserts that ethnic identity is a social construct that needed to be claimed, not a biological one.<sup>91</sup> Kostas Vlassopoulos also comments that it was the individual *poleis*, not any sense of panhellenism that dominated the Greek world.<sup>92</sup> The Roman world was no exception. Some scholars have thoroughly investigated what it meant to be “Roman,” and others have investigated the identities and ethnicities of those who lived under Roman rule.<sup>93</sup> This study differs from most other investigations of identity, excluding Roymans (2004) who explores the Batavians’ role in the military and their identity, in the sense that it may illuminate the relationship between ethnic and regimental identity and combat motivation in the context of the auxiliaries.

Many ancient writers highlighted the place and circumstances of one’s birth in descriptions of both Romans and non-Romans. Julius Caesar begins his *Gallic War* with a description of Gaul’s peoples and geography, the particular significance of which is

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<sup>91</sup> Jonathan M. Hall, *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity*, ACLS Humanities E-Book. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 182.

<sup>92</sup> Kostas Vlassopoulos, ‘Ethnicity and Greek History: Re-Examining Our Assumptions’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 58, no. 2 (2015): 1; For examples of more fulsome discussions of identity in the Greek world, see Hall (2005) *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*; Hall (2013) *A History of the Archaic Greek World, ca. 1200-479 BCE*; Luraghi (2008) *The Ancient Messenians: Constructions of Ethnicity and Memory*; Malkin (1998) *The Returns of Odysseus: Colonization and Ethnicity*; Malkin (ed.) (2001) *Ancient Perceptions of Greek Ethnicity*; McInerney (2000) *Under the Folds of Parnassos: Land and Ethnicity in Ancient Phokis*; McInerney (ed.) (2014) *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*; Taylor and Vlassopoulos (2015) *Communities and Networks in the Ancient Greek World*; Siapkas (2003) *Heterological Ethnicity: Conceptualizing Identities in Ancient Greece*; Vlassopoulos (2007) *Free Spaces: Identity, Experience and Democracy in Classical Athens*.

<sup>93</sup> For examples of scholarship on identity in the Roman Empire, see Boatwright (2012) *Peoples of the Roman World*; Johnston (2017) *The Sons of Remus: Identity in Roman Gaul and Spain*; Laurence and Berry (eds.) (1998) *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire*; Mattingly (2011) *Imperialism, Power, and Identity: Experiencing the Roman Empire*; Mullen (2013) *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean: Multilingualism and Multiple Identities in the Iron Age and Roman Periods*; Revell (2016) *Ways of Being Roman: Discourses on Identity in the Roman West*; Roymans (1996) *From the Sword to the Plough: Three Studies on the Earliest Romanisation of Northern Gaul*; Roymans (2004) *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power: The Batavians in the Early Roman Empire*; Roymans (2019) *Conquest, Mass Violence, and Ethnic Stereotyping: Investigating Caesar’s Actions in the Germanic Frontier Zone*.

discussed below; Tacitus describes the peoples of Britannia and Germania in his *Agricola* and *Germania* respectively; and the former enemy of Rome, Josephus, immediately identifies himself as Hebrew in the opening passage of his *Jewish War*.<sup>94</sup> This pattern extended beyond the literary world as well, permeating the naming conventions of the Roman army.

The names of some Roman legions were drawn from their place of recruitment, with some examples being the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> *Italica* Legions and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> *Parthica* Legions. Such naming conventions were prevalent among the auxiliary cohorts as well, with their unit names often stemming from their geographic origin. We have evidence in the form of military diplomas that reveal the presence of cohorts such as the I *Britannorum* and the I and II *Hispanorum*, among others. Did remaining amongst soldiers with a shared ethnic and cultural identity have an impact on combat motivation and if so, was it a result of shared ethnicity leading to a more cohesive primary group, especially since they were often stationed away from their homelands?

### *Martial Race Theory*

One of the most critical concepts when discussing the interaction between ethnic identity and military service is the modern concept of Martial Race Theory. Cynthia Enloe (1980) argues that Martial Race Theory is a concept, created by colonial powers, suggesting that certain peoples are inherently predisposed to military roles, usually because of physical attributes.<sup>95</sup> Heather Streets-Salter has also weighed in on the

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<sup>94</sup> For scholarly discussions of Tacitus and ancient ethnography in general, see works such as Almagor and Skinner (2013) *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches*, Benario (1990) *Tacitus' "Germania" and Modern Germany*, Launay (2010) *Foundations of Anthropological Theory: From Classical Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, Olcott (1985) *Tacitus on the Ancient Amber-Gatherers: A Re-evaluation of "Germania,"* and Saddington (1970) *The Roman Auxilia in Tacitus, Josephus and Other Early Imperial Writers*.

<sup>95</sup> Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 39.

subject in her 2010 monograph on race and masculinity in the British imperial army. Streets-Salter highlights that the British heavily employed the idea of martial races in their recruiting strategy in India after the Rebellion of 1857.<sup>96</sup> Sheffield and Riseman (2019) point out that European global colonization led to various Indigenous peoples in places such as North America, Australia, and New Zealand being classified as martial races.<sup>97</sup> As we will see later, Roy Kaushik (2013) also discusses Martial Race Theory in the context of British recruitment of Indian soldiers during the world wars. Depending on the extent to which martial prowess was present in a particular people's self-identity, confidence in one's own ability to be a great warrior and confidence in one's comrades' capabilities would have had a profound impact on combat motivation.

Though the formal idea of Martial Race Theory has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the theory that some groups were predisposed to military service was prevalent in the ancient world as well. We can observe this phenomenon through the lens of specialized units. The Achaemenid Persians had an ethnically diverse military with which Xerxes invaded the Greek mainland, there are famous depictions of Greek mercenaries such as Xenophon's *Anabasis*, and Alexander the Great was known to have employed Thracians, Thessalians, and other 'allies' and mercenaries during his campaigns against Persia.<sup>98</sup> The Romans were certainly no different.

One Roman historian demonstrates that the Greek language contains a variety of options for referring to a group's warlike nature, with some indicating a more "savage"

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<sup>96</sup> Heather. Streets-Salter, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914*, 1st ed., Studies in Imperialism (Manchester, Eng.; Manchester University Press; 2010).

<sup>97</sup> R. Scott Sheffield and Noah J. Riseman, *Indigenous Peoples and the Second World War: The Politics, Experiences and Legacies of War in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 12-13.

<sup>98</sup> Herodotus indicates that Xerxes' Persian army contained 'the multitudes of Asia' (Herodotus *Histories* 7.9); For a summary of the troops who accompanied Alexander, see Diodorus *Library* 17.17.

disposition and others embodying a sense of valour or bravery. Describing, and subtly critiquing, the exploits of pre-Roman empires like those of Persia and Alexander the Great, Polybius points out that they did not come to meet or know of the “most warlike tribes” (τὰ μαχιμώτατα γένη) of the west.<sup>99</sup> One could assume that he was referring to Celtic, Gallic, Germanic, Spanish, and British tribes the Romans would later encounter. Later in the *Histories*, Polybius uses the same word for warlike (μαχιμώτατον) when referring to Gauls.<sup>100</sup> The word μάχιμος commonly refers to one who is fit for battle in the sense that the person to whom it is being applied belongs to a sort of “warrior caste.” Interestingly, his vocabulary is quite diverse when referring to Numidians (πολεμικῆς),<sup>101</sup> Arcadians and Spartans (ἀνδραγαθίας),<sup>102</sup> and Medians (ἀλκιμωτάτοις).<sup>103</sup> Latin authors were no less well-equipped to describe warlike nations and peoples, especially in the context of military conflicts.

In his *Gallic War*, Julius Caesar refers to a Gallic tribe called the Helvetii as warlike men (*homines bellicosos*) and enemies of the Roman people (*populi Romani inimicos*).<sup>104</sup> He uses another form of *bellicosus* later, when he refers to the Suevi as “the largest and most warlike nation of all the Germans.”<sup>105</sup> Marcus Tullius Cicero, an orator, lawyer, and contemporary of Caesar, refers to parts of Gaul being held by tribes who were savage (*immanibus*), barbarian (*barbaris*), and warlike (*bellicosus*).<sup>106</sup> Livy, when discussing Roman relations with Carthage, refers to the Carthaginians similarly as a

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<sup>99</sup> Polybius *Histories* 1.2

<sup>100</sup> Polybius *Histories* 18.41

<sup>101</sup> Polybius *Histories* 1.78, πολεμικῆς means warlike in the sense of being literally “fit for service.”

<sup>102</sup> Polybius *Histories* 2.38. Other translations for ἀνδραγαθίας include masculine virtue, and the word seems to be like the Latin word/Roman ideal of *virtus*.

<sup>103</sup> Polybius *Histories* 5.44, 5.55, ἀλκιμωτάτοις refers to someone who is literally “stout” or “brave.”

<sup>104</sup> Caesar *Gallic War* 1.10

<sup>105</sup> Caesar *Gallic War* 4.1. *Sueborum gens est maxima et bellicosissima Germanorum omnium.*

<sup>106</sup> Cicero *On the Consular Provinces* 13.33

“fiercer and more warlike foe” (*hostem acriorem bellicosoremque*) than they had encountered before.<sup>107</sup> Later, when referring to the Spanish, Livy refers to them as “so fierce and warlike a people” (*tam fera et bellicose gente*) and as a danger to Greek peoples living nearby.<sup>108</sup> A passage that is particularly telling is when he refers to the inhabitants of Galatia as having a warlike disposition, having retained their “Gallic tempers” (*bellicosiores ea tempestate erant, Gallicos adhuc*) and describing this trait as a “native strain” (*stirpe gentis*) that had not yet disappeared.<sup>109</sup> Descriptions of the “warlike” nature of non-Romans were quite common in historical literature, but the concept of martial races also appeared in the context of a famous military manual.

The *De Re Militari*, authored by the 4<sup>th</sup> Century CE military writer Vegetius, contains key references to the recruitment practices of the Roman army, especially in relation to recruiting from specific locations. Vegetius highlights that the Romans found success through training, because peoples such as the Germans and Spaniards surpassed them in size and strength and the Gauls were more numerous.<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, although he admits that all countries can produce good and bad soldiers, Vegetius indicates that some countries are better at producing soldiers because “some nations are naturally more warlike than others.”<sup>111</sup>

We have established that the idea of martial races existed in the ancient world, and the Roman army, but how would this impact combat motivation? Nico Roymans (2004) uses the case study of the ancient Batavians to illustrate a connection between

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<sup>107</sup> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 21.16

<sup>108</sup> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 34.9

<sup>109</sup> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 37.8

<sup>110</sup> Vegetius *De Re Militari* 1.1

<sup>111</sup> Vegetius *De Re Militari* 1.1

extended interaction with the Romans and the formation of self-identity. He argues that “Batavian identity was shaped in the forcefield between internal and external perception – between self-image and the image formed by outsiders – and was then named and appropriated as their own.”<sup>112</sup> Roymans’ thesis suggests that if Spanish, Gallic, and other non-Roman peoples were constantly exposed to the outside perception that they are fierce and warlike, they would come to see themselves in the same way. The adoption of such a self-identity would have been reinforced by the fact that being warlike granted them the opportunity to fulfil a combat role in the Roman army, thus improving their status in the eyes of their imperial commanders.

The adoption of a warlike self-identity is a critical idea to keep in mind when discussing the experiences of auxiliary soldiers. To build on this, it is relevant to discuss the presence and roles of non-Romans who were active participants in the Roman army. While we must keep in mind the Romano-centric nature of our literary sources, their depiction of non-Roman soldiers is nevertheless a valuable place to start in continuing this discussion.

### *Literary Evidence*

There was a tradition in Roman historical writing of identifying non-Roman military units by their ethnic origin that went back at least as far as accounts of Rome’s initial expansion on the Italian peninsula. The ancient historian Livy states that in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE a Roman consul called Publius Valerius attacked the Italian city of Veii “with an army to which had been added auxiliaries from the Latins and Hernici.”<sup>113</sup> The

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<sup>112</sup> Nico Roymans, *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power: The Batavians in the Early Roman Empire*, Amsterdam Archaeological Studies; 10 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 221.

<sup>113</sup> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 2.53

trend continues in accounts of 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE conflicts, with the ancient historian Polybius stating explicitly that a great many Sabines and Etruscans came to join Rome in what modern readers know as the Punic Wars.<sup>114</sup> By the time Polybius was writing his *Histories* in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, Rome had long since conquered and absorbed nearly the entire Italian peninsula into its burgeoning empire. Yet authors still referred to the Sabines and Etruscans, two of Rome's earliest conquests, as members of their own specific groups. An important note is that these groups may not yet have been granted full Roman citizenship before the Social War of the early First Century BCE, which would explain the way in which Roman writers referred to them and why they would have been treated as auxiliaries.

In his account of the Dacian Wars, the context of this chapter, the historian Cassius Dio is noticeably silent on the contributions of the auxiliaries in Trajan's campaigns. There is but one mention of a certain unnamed rider from the second campaign in Dacia who returned to the line after receiving news that the injury he sustained would be fatal and perished in battle after "displaying great feats of valour".<sup>115</sup> Horsemen were commonly a part of the auxiliaries, and if this wounded rider existed as more than a literary device, we could assume that he was no different. Since the auxiliaries were often sent into the fray ahead of the regular legions, it would also be no surprise that a rider would have been injured in combat. The alleged bravery of the rider certainly indicates an elevated level of combat motivation, but we cannot tell from this evidence whether such an act would have been out of loyalty to Trajan and the Romans, to his comrades and (presumably) his compatriots, or a bit of both.

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<sup>114</sup> Polybius *Histories* 2.24

<sup>115</sup> Cass. Dio *Roman History* 68.14.2

## *Trajan's Column*

Given that our written evidence on the auxiliaries in Dacia is so limited, we must turn to our material evidence for clues about regimental cohesion and ethnic identity, beginning with Trajan's Column in Rome. Trajan's Column was erected in celebration of his two victories against the Dacian king Decebalus and the annexation of Dacia and depicts the campaigns through images. The column is unique in the sense that it vividly depicts the presence and actions of auxiliary troops, whom the viewer can identify because of their distinctive appearance as bare-chested warriors with clearly non-Roman shields and weapons (see Figure 1). The very fact that the auxiliaries are depicted on monumental architecture as having such a prominent role in Trajan's campaigns is indicative of how the Romans viewed them, since such commemoration was a rarity prior to Trajan's reign. The column was also a critical symbol of Trajan's capabilities as an emperor, showing how he succeeded where Domitian failed in expanding the Empire and defeating the Dacians.<sup>116</sup>

The auxiliaries' relationship with Roman leadership is discussed later in this chapter, but for now, it is critical to note two things. First, the auxiliaries were a significant presence on the battlefield under Trajan, as they had been in earlier eras. Second, even if the images on the column are simply meant to be generalizations, auxiliaries clearly fought exclusively alongside one another on the front lines, since the column depicts legionaries in engineering roles such as building forts and bridges (see Figure 2).

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<sup>116</sup> For a fascinating discussion of Trajan's status as *optimus princeps*, see Bennett (1997) *Trajan: Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times*.





Figure 1. Auxiliaries in combat as shown on Trajan's Column. Image from National Geographic website, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column/>

As Ian Haynes points out, auxiliaries are shown doing the fighting in most of the battle scenes on the column (19 of 20) and are fighting alone or among other irregulars in most of these (12 of 19).<sup>117</sup> The frequency with which the auxiliaries are depicted in combat on the column supports the notion that, during the Imperial Period, it was the auxiliaries who formed the front ranks of the Roman battle formation. Under such duress, it is conceivable that the individual and collective bonds between soldiers and their compatriots were strengthened and provided them with the necessary motivation to continue fighting.

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<sup>117</sup> Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces: The Roman Auxilia and the Making of Provincial Society from Augustus to the Severans*, 67.



Figure 2. Legionaries shown performing building duties, as opposed to occupying combat roles. Image from National Geographic website, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column/>

In addition to telling us how the auxiliaries were deployed, the way in which the auxiliaries are depicted on Trajan's Column is critical for understanding regimental identity. The way in which the auxiliaries are shown to us by the artist relies heavily on caricature, in the sense that the distinct groups of people are reduced to their essence (i.e., bare chested, bearded warriors or those carrying distinctively non-Roman equipment). I would suggest that there is a rather mundane explanation for this artistic choice. The artist who carved the images was relying on descriptions of these forces that they heard from others, and they would have chosen the homogenous style of depicting the figures on the column because the representation of what happened was all that was required, and it would take far less time than carving likenesses of individual soldiers. Fortunately, a representation of events will suffice for the purpose of this chapter. The column tells us that there were groups of people who were clearly distinct from the Romans themselves, and they were distinct in terms of their ethnic background as well as in terms of the equipment they brandished.

In a later chapter, Haynes points out that regimental identity among soldiers came from the Roman system of naming and organisation, and he argues that such

identities were not how auxiliaries viewed themselves but were a product of how the Romans viewed them.<sup>118</sup> One could theoretically apply this argument to interpretations of the auxiliaries on Trajan's Column and suggest that the appearance of auxiliaries represents nothing more than a Roman view of non-Roman soldiers. This is a reasonable argument, but there is another side to this issue worth examining that involves peoples' ability to form their own identity. In fact, the panels on Trajan's Column that show auxiliaries carrying severed enemy heads in their mouths perhaps shows the individual martial nature of these communities, since Romans are never depicted as doing anything similar in iconography. There is also literary evidence to show the ability of non-Roman communities to form and retain their own identities. Let us consider Caesar's *Gallic War* for a moment.

In the opening passage of the *Gallic War*, Julius Caesar begins with a geographic and ethnographic description of Gaul (encompassing modern day Switzerland, France, and Belgium) before writing his account of his military campaigns in that region. The first sentence reads as follows, "All Gaul is divided into three parts, one of which the Belgae inhabit, the Aquitani another, *those who in their own language are called Celts, in ours Gauls, the third* (emphasis mine)."<sup>119</sup> Here, in Julius Caesar's own words, we can see an example of how the Romans had one concept of an Other's identity, while acknowledging how Others perceived themselves in their own language. This illustrates how non-Romans were indeed capable of forming their own ethnic and cultural identity, independent of Roman influence. We know that there was an ongoing relationship

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<sup>118</sup> Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 286.

<sup>119</sup> Caesar *Gallic War* 1.1, *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur*

between Romans and Gauls, because Caesar also mentions interactions between Roman merchants and Gallic communities in the same passage of the *Gallic War*.<sup>120</sup>

Despite this evidence that cultures could retain their self-identity while maintaining frequent relations with Rome, an economic relationship is not equivalent to a relationship based on serving in the Roman military as a non-citizen. It is possible that service in the Roman military was a more assimilative experience, and auxiliary soldiers could have formed new identities. This would be especially true if their goal was to become Roman citizens, an endeavour that certainly would have required a change in practice and self-identity. To investigate further, we can augment evidence from Trajan's Column with other physical evidence in the form of military diplomas found in Dacia.

### *Military Diplomas*

There has been a multitude of military diplomas found in Dacia, and they have much to tell us about the variety of origins from which auxiliary units originated. Diplomas were often inscribed in bronze, and they were granted to both auxiliaries and legionaries upon completion of their term of service. The primary function of the diplomas was to describe the career of the soldier to whom it was given but, in the case of auxiliaries, they were also proof of citizenship. This aspect of the diplomas will be discussed in more detail below, but for now the names of the auxiliary units and their geographical and ethnic implications are the focus.

A diploma that has been dated to a few years before the first Dacian War, about 99 CE, grants us some intriguing context for units that were stationed in the

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<sup>120</sup> Caesar *Gallic War* 1.1

neighbouring province of Moesia Superior before the conflict (Figure 3). The recipient of the diploma appears to have been a part of the *cohortis II Hispanorum* or the 2<sup>nd</sup> Spanish cohort.<sup>121</sup> As previously stated, the names of auxiliary cohorts tended to reflect the geographic area in which it was created and from which recruits were drawn. Therefore, we can say with some level of certainty that there were Spanish recruits serving near Dacia immediately before the outbreak of the first Dacian War in 101 CE.

The presence of veterans of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Spanish cohort, as well as some from the 1<sup>st</sup> Spanish cohort, is well attested by other diplomas found in Dacia that have been dated to the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, suggesting that they maintained a presence there during and after the Dacian Wars.<sup>122</sup> The other major presence described by the diplomas is that of the veterans of British cohorts, namely the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> British cohorts.<sup>123</sup> The diplomas classified as CIL 16, 00160 and CIL 16, 00163 respectively are most critical for attesting to the presence of British cohorts during the Dacian Wars, as they have been dated to 106 CE and 110 CE respectively, indicating that the recipients were likely present during the campaigns. In cross-referencing with the previous observations about the iconography on Trajan's Column, the evidence suggests that it could very well have been these British cohorts who were one of the groups depicted doing the bulk of the fighting during the wars.

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<sup>121</sup> IDR-01, 00026

<sup>122</sup> AE 2009, CIL 16, 00075, CIL 16, 00163, AE 2018, 01324, AE 2002, 01223,

<sup>123</sup> IDR-03-04, 00012, AE 2009, 01177, IDR-01, 00007, CIL 16, 00160, CIL 16, 00163, AE 1979, 00489



Figure 3. Map showing the location of Moesia Superior in relation to Dacia.<sup>124</sup>

We have now established the presence of at least two Spanish and two British cohorts in and around Dacia near the time of the Dacian Wars, which is a critical new finding that illuminates which auxiliaries were fighting in Dacia. While this is an important finding, how is it related to combat motivation? One connection comes to us via the geographic location of Dacia in relation to the provinces of *Hispania* and *Britannia*, from where these cohorts originated. Referring again to Figure 3, we can see that Moesia Superior and Dacia are in the Eastern part of the Empire, and consequently are a great distance from *Hispania* and *Britannia*. It is possible that the distance from their homeland would have strengthened the bonds between auxiliary soldiers, who would have represented each other's lone source of cultural, linguistic, and ethnic familiarity.

The Romans had a long tradition of incorporating non-Roman units into their military. Despite the elaborate accounts of this practice by historians such as Livy and Polybius, Cassius Dio is noticeably silent about the role of the auxiliaries during the Dacian Wars. As previously mentioned, the lone reference to an auxiliary soldier comes

<sup>124</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:RomanEmpire\\_117\\_-\\_Moesia\\_Superior\\_and\\_Moesia\\_Inferior.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:RomanEmpire_117_-_Moesia_Superior_and_Moesia_Inferior.svg)

from Dio's anecdote about the cavalryman who valiantly returned to the front after being wounded. While the story may well have been simply intended as a literary device to hold the reader's attention, stories tend to come from somewhere, and this one may have come from narratives of the auxiliaries' fervent commitment to fighting alongside their comrades. Such a scenario illustrates an elevated level of combat motivation and represents a situation in which group cohesion has had a remarkable impact.

While literary sources for the auxiliaries in Dacia are not extensive, a great deal of insight can be gained from material evidence. In fact, Trajan's Column provides a unique window into the role, identity, and group cohesion of auxiliaries during the Dacian Wars. From Trajan's Column, we can see that there was a massive auxiliary presence in Dacia, and that they were doing the bulk of the fighting. As previously mentioned, the auxiliaries are uniformly portrayed as being distinctly non-Roman in their appearance through their equipment, weapons, and beards. Such distinct iconography illustrates that the military force present in Dacia was notably diverse in terms of the ethnic background of its soldiers.

The ethnic diversity of the auxiliaries is corroborated by the military diplomas granted to each soldier upon completion of their military service. Diplomas from Dacia have shown that the auxiliaries present there came from other provinces such as Britannia and Hispania, which were located at the opposite end of the European continent from the place in which they served. A consequence of this, and perhaps an intended one on the part of the Romans, is that an auxiliary soldier's comrades were the only familiarity they had, increasing their group cohesion as a result.

The motivating factors of unit pride and a shared ethnic background were a driving force for an auxiliary soldier to continue fighting. However, it is difficult to

believe that internal and ideological factors alone would be enough to convince a soldier experiencing the chaos and bloodshed of warfare to persevere and fight the basic human instinct to flee a dangerous and deadly situation. Soldiers are human beings, and human beings often require something more tangible to be motivated.

### Extrinsic Motivation

Thus far, this chapter has examined the way in which unit and ethnic identity impacted combat motivation for the auxiliaries under Trajan. These factors represent intrinsic motivation, since they are internalised, social constructs harboured and agreed upon by individuals, and are not tangible benefits nor do they lead to external rewards such as money or fame. In this section, I will investigate the extent to which external rewards may have impacted combat motivation. The focus of this section will be the promise of citizenship upon completion of a soldier's term of service. In what follows I will also examine the granting of material rewards and honours to auxiliaries for their service, returning to Trajan's Column where such rewards are depicted in the iconography.

### *Citizenship*

Citizenship was one of the most important aspects of being Roman in the ancient world. Not only would it satisfy the inherent human need for social belonging and identity, but it also granted someone a host of rights and privileges that were inaccessible to non-citizen residents of the Empire, and certainly to those living outside of the Empire's boundaries. Such rights and privileges included owning land, voting, and being seen as a person in the eyes of Roman law.



Roman citizenship was not always seen as such a generous benefit to be pursued and, in fact, some peoples resented the very idea of being “Roman.” Williamson (2005) points out the case of the Lucani, a proud, southern-Italian group who had been rivals with Rome before and who had supported Hannibal during the Second Punic War.<sup>125</sup> They also highlight the creation of a bronze tablet bearing a message that portrayed themselves as being distinct from Rome, which was inscribed in Oscan (the Lucanian language) and displayed prominently.<sup>126</sup>

The linguistic choice made by the Lucani was certainly a conscious one, given that their native tongue was Oscan, not Latin. Language is something that I have not discussed to a great extent thus far, primarily due to the nature of the sources I have addressed, but it is a key factor in one’s identity. In Canada, many groups and individuals still maintain being anglophone or francophone as part of their identity, sometimes even to a greater extent than identifying as generally Canadian. Even among francophone communities, there are differentiations made between dialects such as Quebecois and Acadian which form the basis of starkly different identities.<sup>127</sup>

In the case of the Lucani, we see that Roman citizenship was certainly not a highly sought-after commodity for all communities, and especially not during the Republic. However, as time went on, there was a dramatic shift both in the way in which

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<sup>125</sup> Callie Williamson, *The Laws of the Roman People: Public Law in the Expansion and Decline of the Roman Republic*, ACLS Humanities E-Book. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 191.

<sup>126</sup> Williamson, *The Laws of the Roman People*, 191-2. It is important to note that this took place not long before the Social War in Italy (91-87 BCE).

<sup>127</sup> For discussions of Acadian identity see works such as Boudreau (2016) *À l'ombre de la langue légitime: l'Acadie dans la francophonie*, Doucet (1999), *Notes from Exile: On Being Acadian*, Griffiths (1992) *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784*, and Griffiths (2005) *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People, 1604-1755*. For discussions of Quebecois identity see works such as Juteau “Ontariois and Quebecois as Distinct Collectivities” in Louder and Waddell (1993) *French America: Mobility, Identity, and Minority Experience across the Continent*, Morrison (2019) *Moments of Crisis: Religion and National Identity in Quebec*, and Zubrzycki (2016) *Beheading the Saint: Nationalism, Religion, and Secularism in Quebec*.

citizenship was awarded and how it was viewed. During the Republic era and Rome's initial expansion on the Italian peninsula, citizenship was often given to cities after the Romans conquered them as in the cases of Tusculum, Lanuvium Aricia, Nomentum, and Pedum.<sup>128</sup> As has been established, citizenship was later a reward for military service, instead of a consequence of defeat at the hands of the Romans.

This phenomenon is illustrated by the fact that the granting of citizenship was listed on the military diplomas given to auxiliaries upon their discharge from the army. These diplomas also seem to indicate that the recipient's wife would be included in the granting of citizenship. One diploma, which has been dated to c. 99 CE, indicates that citizenship was extended to wives who were married to the soldier at the time of discharge, or a woman whom a soldier married later.<sup>129</sup> A later diploma, dated to sometime between 117 and 138 CE, uses a similar construction when referring to the wives of auxiliaries and their status in relation to citizenship.<sup>130</sup> Such evidence reveals that the extrinsic benefits of military service went beyond a soldier's individual status and rights, and extended to loved ones, perhaps further motivating them to fight on and fight well.

An extensive study done by Elizabeth Greene further illuminates the nature of marital relationships maintained by auxiliary soldiers. Greene asserts that the ultimate motivation for an auxiliary soldier surely must have been the reward of citizenship at the end of their term of service, especially because this reward was extended to their wives

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<sup>128</sup> Williamson, *The Laws of the Roman People*, 193.

<sup>129</sup> IDR-01, 00026, *conub[ium cum uxorib(us) quas] / tunc ha[b]uissent c[um est civitas iis] / data aut siqui caelib(es) [essent cum iis quas] / postea duxissent dum[taxat singuli singulas]*

<sup>130</sup> IDR-03-04, 00012

and existing children.<sup>131</sup> Green further cites the archaeological record, which heavily implies the presence of women and families in and around imperial forts.<sup>132</sup> As also cited in Greene, one military diploma from a soldier in *ala I Flavia Gaetulorum*, a unit that was also in Dacia, names a wife and five children from the same region as the soldier himself.<sup>133</sup>

The presence of women and children at military forts adds another dimension to the auxiliaries' motivation. Not only would they have had the long-term goal of full citizenship for their wives and children, but in many cases those same families would have been in relative proximity to them. Protecting their loved ones from danger, in combination with the desire to support their comrades on the battlefield, would have made for a potent combination of motivating factors. The fact that many of their wives were of the same origin as themselves would have also added to the limited sense of familiarity that was present with one's fellow soldiers. Greene's study shows that most soldiers' wives were either from the same tribal origin as them or joined their husbands later, having been married previously.<sup>134</sup>

The prospect of citizenship and the presence of loved ones while performing military service would have undoubtedly been powerful extrinsic motivators for auxiliary soldiers. However, there are more tangible extrinsic motivators that surely would have played a part, namely the prospect of rewards such as the spoils of war and the distribution of booty among the soldiers.

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<sup>131</sup> Elizabeth M. Greene, 'Conubium Cum Uxoribus: Wives and Children in the Roman Military Diplomas,' *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 28 (2015): 131.

<sup>132</sup> Greene, 'Conubium Cum Uxoribus: Wives and Children in the Roman Military Diplomas,' 136.

<sup>133</sup> RMD-04, 00241

<sup>134</sup> Greene, 'Conubium Cum Uxoribus: Wives and Children in the Roman Military Diplomas,' 138.

## *Monetary Gain*

One of the more tangible motivators for an auxiliary soldier was surely the prospect of consistent long-term earnings that were offered for service in the Roman Army and in the auxiliaries. Ian Haynes points out that wages represented a real benefit of military service that may have been valued more highly than the prestige that came with military service in some communities.<sup>135</sup> Suetonius tells us that Augustus standardized promotion awards, terms of service, and pay rates for all soldiers, which surely would have included the auxiliaries.<sup>136</sup> Haynes also includes a table showing the pay rates for soldiers in the legions and auxiliaries from Augustus to approximate figures under Maximinus. The figures indicate that after Domitian increased soldiers' pay during his reign (81-96 CE) auxiliary infantry could make up to 5/6 the rate of a legionary.<sup>137</sup> Steady pay is an attractive prospect for most individuals, given the unpredictability of farming conditions and the universal necessity of paying taxes. However, there were ways in which an auxiliary soldier could supplement his income while performing military service.

Common methods for soldiers to earn extra money in the ancient world were looting the battlefield after an enemy had been defeated and pillaging enemy camps and cities. Jonathan Roth (1999) argues that the reasons for plundering and pillaging were not simply for money, but to strike fear into the hearts of enemies.<sup>138</sup> This is true, especially when discussing the macro level strategies of sieges and urban warfare, but on

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<sup>135</sup> Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 47.

<sup>136</sup> Suetonius *Augustus* 49

<sup>137</sup> Haynes, *Blood of the Provinces*, 48.

<sup>138</sup> Jonathan P. Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War (264 B.C.-A.D. 235)*, *Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition*, 0166-1302; v. 23 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 305.

the micro level monetary gain was more than likely at the forefront of an individual soldier's mind when engaging in post-battle looting. Joanne Ball (2015) points out that, since metal was an immensely valuable resource in the ancient world, it is unlikely that battlefields were not looted extensively.<sup>139</sup>

There are explicit references to the practice of looting in Roman historical sources as well. Livy refers to it as a frequent practice during the Republic period and within "certain rules of war" that make it a sad but not unjust occurrence for the victims of looting and pillaging.<sup>140</sup> Looting for money specifically is reported by authors such as Plutarch, in his biography of the late Second and early 1<sup>st</sup>-Century BCE general Lucullus. Plutarch describes the way in which Lucullus allowed his troops to pillage wagons and camps for their gold.<sup>141</sup> Tacitus describes looting during the Imperial period in vivid detail in his *Historiae*, describing how men would even kill each other in the pursuit of loot and booty when the city of Cremona was sacked by Roman forces.<sup>142</sup> We have an abundance of evidence that looting was a common practice for centuries, but we are also told what became of the booty after it was taken and how soldiers benefitted from it.

It was customary practice for generals to give shares of spoils to the troops who helped obtain it, for the purpose of maintaining the loyalty of those units. Caesar writes of booty being distributed among his troops after a victory over a group called the *Nervii* during the Gallic War.<sup>143</sup> The historian Cassius Dio writes of an event during the Punic

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<sup>139</sup> Joanne Ball, 'To the Victor the Spoils? Post-Battle Looting in the Roman World', in *Ancient Warfare: Introducing Current Research*, ed. Geoff Lee, Helene Whittaker, and Graham Wrightson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 309-310.

<sup>140</sup> Livy *Ab Urbe Condita* 31.30

<sup>141</sup> Plutarch *Lucullus* 17.6-7

<sup>142</sup> Tacitus *The History* 3.33

<sup>143</sup> Caesar *Gallic War* 6.3

Wars where a city called Mutistratus on Sicily was sacked and a general called Atilius Latinus Calatinus proclaimed that all the booty and inhabitants in the city belonged to whoever could get their hands on them.<sup>144</sup> Polybius provides a lengthier account of the Romans' procedure for distributing booty during the Republic. He adds that sometimes the whole of a legion's booty is sold, and the profits are distributed amongst the soldiers.<sup>145</sup> Polybius also writes that although only half at most of any given Roman force would be assigned to the collection of booty, all soldiers knew that they would get their fair share because of the oath that they had all taken when they joined the army.<sup>146</sup> These accounts primarily focus on the Legions and make no explicit reference to the auxiliaries, but it would be fair to assume that they would have also engaged in looting during the Imperial period since an absence of evidence does not always constitute evidence of absence. The prospect of extra money from looting would certainly have been an attractive benefit to joining the army, but would it have impacted combat motivation?

Some scholars have briefly discussed the motivating factors of booty. Ball insists that the prospect of booty being shared among the soldiers was a powerful motivator throughout both the Republic and the Empire, while acknowledging that Roth (1999) is unconvinced that booty was a strong motivator for joining the military on its own.<sup>147</sup> The prospect of booty or extra money may not have been a highly motivating factor on its own, but it may have been in combination with the fact that many soldiers, including

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<sup>144</sup> Cass. Dio. *Roman History* 11.11

<sup>145</sup> Polybius *Histories* 10.16

<sup>146</sup> Polybius *Histories* 10.16

<sup>147</sup> Ball, 'To the Victor the Spoils? Post-Battle Looting in the Roman World,' 314.

auxiliaries in Dacia, had wives and children who would have benefitted from their husband and father obtaining more money.

### Relationship with Leadership

The final major factor that I will examine in this chapter is the impact of the relationship between soldiers and leadership on combat motivation. We know that auxiliary soldiers were often commanded by Roman citizens, and that the campaign in Dacia was overseen personally by Trajan himself. While direct evidence of interactions between auxiliary soldiers and their Roman leaders is difficult to come by, given the nature of our sources, there are ways in which we can get glimpses into how auxiliaries viewed their commanders and the emperor himself. One way in which we can view this relationship is by returning to Trajan's Column and analyzing the depictions of Trajan's direct interactions with non-Roman soldiers.

#### *Trajan at the Front*

As has been previously established, Domitian was not present during Rome's initial campaigns in Dacia which ended in failure and a peace treaty with the Dacians.<sup>148</sup> While Domitian was not known as a man who was often at the front, Trajan spent a large portion of his career personally leading armies and was one of the commanders in the Jewish Wars under Vespasian.<sup>149</sup> Cassius Dio's account is highly critical of Domitian's wartime leadership, and portrays Trajan as being staunchly against the previous peace agreement.<sup>150</sup> How the soldiers themselves felt about Domitian and

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<sup>148</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 67.7

<sup>149</sup> Trajan's activities during the Jewish Wars are described by Josephus in *The Wars of the Jews* 3.289, 3.453, 3.485, and 4.440.

<sup>150</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 67.6, 68.6

Trajan respectively is difficult to illuminate, but one could assume that having the emperor present on campaign would have been positive for morale. Dio, writing after Domitian's memory was condemned, makes an interesting comment to his effect, stating that before it was not the Romans who were conquered, but Domitian, whereas now the Dacians faced the Romans and Trajan.<sup>151</sup> This certainly indicates a higher level of confidence with Trajan at the helm, but we cannot say for certain if the opinion was shared by the soldiers themselves, and we must also keep in mind that Dio had the benefit of hindsight when he was writing.

Dio does describe some of Trajan's direct interactions with his soldiers during the campaigns. The most striking descriptions come from the battle at Tapae, which is said to have been a bloody and costly struggle for both sides. Dio tells us that when the Romans ran out of bandages for the wounded, Trajan offered up his own clothing to be cut into ribbons and used for his soldiers.<sup>152</sup> After the battle, Dio reports that Trajan had an altar built for the fallen and ordered funeral rites to be performed there annually.<sup>153</sup>

We see at least two instances of Trajan interacting with what appears to be non-Roman personnel on Trajan's Column. The first appears to be a situation in which two members of the auxiliaries are presenting Trajan with a pair of severed heads collected from the battlefield (see figure 4). We can confirm that the two men presenting their macabre trophies are not legionaries because of their distinctive equipment and the fact that they had clearly been doing the fighting which we have established was mostly delegated to the auxiliaries. Legionaries would also rarely be depicted engaging in the

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<sup>151</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 68.6

<sup>152</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 68.8

<sup>153</sup> Cassius Dio *Roman History* 68.8



practice of beheading an enemy and taking their head as a trophy, given the “barbaric” connotation of such an act. The fact that these two auxiliaries are depicted as bringing tributes directly to Trajan suggests that they were interested in gaining his favour, or at least the Roman artists thought they were based on the accounts they received. A third option is that Trajan wished to have himself be portrayed in this way to bolster his own reputation, but we cannot say for certain. In any case, Trajan clearly wanted his audience to see that he interacted with auxiliaries.



Figure 4. A panel from Trajan’s Column showing a pair of auxiliaries presenting heads to Trajan. Image from National Geographic website: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column>

The second instance of Trajan interacting with non-Romans that is depicted on Trajan’s Column is less clear, but is noteworthy, nonetheless. The panel shows a non-Roman person bowing before Trajan and clasping his hand, perhaps showing fealty to him, or receiving his favour (figure 5). It is unclear from the image who the person is, but there are similar-looking individuals below Trajan, who appear to be waiting for their turn to approach him. Their dress suggests that they could be off-duty auxiliaries out of their armour and if so, this image is quite telling about their relationship to Trajan.

It would show that, at least from the Romans' (or Trajan's) perspective, there was a certain level of respect and even reverence for the emperor.



Figure 5. A panel from Trajan's Column showing possibly non-Roman personnel paying their respects or receiving favour from Trajan. Image from National Geographic website:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column>

While there is little detailed evidence of Trajan's interactions with soldiers during the Dacian Wars, much less the impact his presence had on their morale or motivation, there is evidence that allows us to construct an overarching narrative. Dio's story of Trajan donating his clothing to be used as bandages, taken together with the images from Trajan's Column, creates a compelling image of an emperor who was highly invested in the well-being of his soldiers. Such benevolence would have inspired the tributes and supplication shown on the column and would have surely boosted morale and motivation among the troops. This speaks to Trajan's direct influence on his soldiers, but there is another intriguing set of evidence for his indirect influence, the impact of the imperial cult.

#### *Observance of the Imperial Cult*

There was always a deep connection between religion, politics, and the military for the Romans, especially during the imperial period where from Augustus onward emperors held the office of *pontifex maximus* in addition to their political and military powers. During the Imperial period the connection became even deeper with the practice of apotheosis, the deification of emperors.<sup>154</sup> Stephen Chappell (2010) briefly addresses the subject of emperor worship in the Roman military and the auxiliaries within the context of his study which critiques the notion that legionaries and auxiliaries were agents of “Romanization” in the Danube region.

Discussing votive inscriptions, Chappell points out that auxiliary dedications number only about half of those erected by legionaries.<sup>155</sup> He also argues that, since auxiliary dedications were collective in many instances, auxiliaries were largely disinterested in participating on an individual basis.<sup>156</sup> Of greatest interest for this study is the fact that 19 out of 24 collective inscriptions were found to have been dedicated to the imperial cult, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and Mars, all imperially cultivated.<sup>157</sup> However, not all votive inscriptions were done communally, nor were they all to Roman deities. Chappell also presents evidence that auxiliaries made dedications to deities such as Mithras and Bel on an individual basis.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> For discussions of the history of apotheosis and emperor worship, see works such as Cole (2013) *Cicero and the Rise of Deification at Rome*, Fishwick (1987) *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West*, Gradel (2002) *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, Koortbojian (2013) *The Divination of Caesar and Augustus: Precedents, Consequences, and Implications*, McIntyre (2019) *Imperial Cult*, Price (1984) *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*, Taylor (1975) *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor*, and Wardman (1982) *Religion and Statecraft among the Romans*

<sup>155</sup> Chappell, ‘Auxiliary Regiments and New Cultural Formation in Imperial Dacia, 106–274 C.E.’ 101.

<sup>156</sup> Chappell, ‘Auxiliary Regiments and New Cultural Formation in Imperial Dacia, 106–274 C.E.’ 102.

<sup>157</sup> Chappell, ‘Auxiliary Regiments and New Cultural Formation in Imperial Dacia, 106–274 C.E.’ 103-4.

<sup>158</sup> Chappell, ‘Auxiliary Regiments and New Cultural Formation in Imperial Dacia, 106–274 C.E.’ 103.

The collective nature of the inscriptions that were dedicated to state-focused cults indicates a desire to indoctrinate auxiliaries into these religions, possibly to foster loyalty to the empire and to their units. Communal worship would certainly have had the potential to increase group cohesion as well through having a routine and cultivating shared belief systems. On the other hand, the allowance of individualized religious practices would have removed the notion that the Romans sought either to fully assimilate the auxiliaries into their way of life or to force the auxiliaries to forfeit their own individuality.

The prevalence of the imperial cult in communal inscriptions has intriguing implications for the auxiliaries' relationship with Roman leadership. Given the fact that Trajan was highly present during the Dacian campaigns, the idea that emperors could become gods, or were descended from gods would have had a profound effect on the confidence of his troops. Modern scholars, like Anthony Kellett (1982) have asserted that confidence in leadership is certainly a factor for combat motivation, and this would have been the case in an ancient military as well. Perhaps they would have been imbued with a sense of divine favour, and therefore would have been more inclined to fight.

We have seen that there were a series of intrinsic and extrinsic factors which contributed to ancient auxiliaries' combat motivation. There is powerful evidence to suggest that the auxiliaries contained individuals from a variety of non-Roman ethnic backgrounds, having been recruited from places such as *Hispania* and *Britannia*, and that such regimental identity would have been the only familiarity these soldiers had. We also have evidence for extrinsic factors such as the prospect of Roman citizenship for themselves and their families, and battlefield loot to supplement soldiers' income. The above themes will be explored in the context of the Indian Expeditionary Force's

experience during the First World War. The next chapter will explore the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors on the soldiers of the IEF, for which we have far more detailed and plentiful evidence in the form of recruitment records and personal correspondences of the soldiers themselves. This exploration will allow us to better understand how the experiences and motivations of soldiers serving under imperial powers have changed over time, and further illuminate the stories of the people who made up these forces.

## **Chapter 4: Combat Motivation in the IEF D**

In the previous chapter, we saw that the auxiliaries who served under Trajan in the Dacian campaigns were a diverse collection of soldiers who were transplanted from their homelands to the Danube region to fight on behalf of the Roman Empire. These soldiers were motivated by their bond with each other through their shared backgrounds; the prospect of citizenship for themselves, their wives, and their children; and other external rewards such as money and prestige. Approximately 1800 years later, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, imperial powers were still deploying soldiers recruited from colonial territories to fight under their banner. One of the most active empires in terms of mobilising colonial troops was the British. Nowhere was this more on display than during the First World War, where the British called upon troops from white settler communities from Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland, and The West Indies, as well as from racialized majorities from India to fight for the Empire.

This chapter focuses on the Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF) broadly and more specifically on the example of the Indian Expeditionary Force D (IEF D). The IEF D was the fourth such expeditionary force that the British Government raised for service in the Great War and was sent to invade Mesopotamia via the crucial region of Basra in November of 1914. This chapter illuminates the experiences and motivations of members of the IEF through an examination of combat motivation. It also highlights parallels and points of comparison between the IEF and Rome's auxiliaries, with the IEF being a better-documented case that will assist in illuminating the Roman case. The case study of the IEF D is particularly useful because both they and the auxiliaries in Dacia were instrumental in the expansion of their respective empires. This chapter shows that

concepts such as the importance of group cohesion and shared ideas of racial, ethnic, and religious identity remained since antiquity.

After discussing the context of the Great War in the Middle East and the background of the IEF D, this chapter explores the impact of regimental and personal identity on the combat motivation of the IEF D's soldiers. The British Indian Army was a highly diverse group comprised of different geographic origins, ethnic backgrounds, and religious beliefs such as Punjabi Muslims, Sikhs, Hindu Rajputs, and Gurkhas from what is today Nepal. Much like the auxiliaries we saw in the previous chapter, these diverse groups of soldiers found themselves fighting alongside one another. Where this scenario differed is the nature of the relationships between different religions and ethnicities in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as opposed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. In antiquity, diversity in religious practices was more likely to be accepted and even encouraged, since in most polytheistic and henotheistic religions it was correct practice and not correct belief that was of greatest importance.<sup>159</sup> We saw an example of this in the previous chapter with the diversity of deities being worshiped by auxiliaries and legionaries alike, and the unifying force of the imperial cult.

Among the religions practiced by members of the IEF, such as Sikhism, Islam, and Hinduism, large rifts have formed that have led to animosity and in some cases violence between their communities. This section shows that shared backgrounds and beliefs with one's immediate comrades was still a key factor in promoting intra-group

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<sup>159</sup> Henotheism is the term applied to a group of people who believe in the existence of multiple gods and goddesses but prioritize the worship of one over the others. For some studies of ancient Greek and Roman religion, see Ando (2003) *Roman Religion*, Ando (2009) *The Matter of the Gods: Religion and the Roman Empire*, Easterling and Muir (1985) *Greek Religion and Society*, Kindt (2012) *Rethinking Greek Religion*, Mikalson (2010) *Ancient Greek Religion*, Parker (2011) *On Greek Religion*, Rüpke (2016) *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome*, Scheid and Lloyd (2003) *An Introduction to Roman Religion*, and Zaidman and Schmitt (1992) *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*.

cohesion and combat motivation, despite the greater divide that may have existed between groups.

The following section examines the unique case of the mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers in Mesopotamia and identifies problems with viewing the incident as a lack of motivation. Mutinies are interesting in discussions of combat motivation because they represent a situation in which either combat motivation may be non-existent, or there is an elevated level of group cohesion in a unit whose members decide that it is no longer in their best interest to fight for anyone other than themselves. The mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers is pertinent to this discussion because it highlights the nuances of individual groups with their own autonomy and motivations within the institution of an imperial army.<sup>160</sup>

The final section of this chapter examines extrinsic motivating factors, beginning with a brief discussion of the relationship between members of the IEF and British leadership. This section also includes a discussion of economic benefits of service. Economic motivators are a theme for the Rome's auxiliaries and the members of the IEF and are a fascinating point of comparison. Where the modern situation differs is that certain groups within India did not necessarily want to become closer to the British but wanted more political autonomy in an era of movements towards self-determinism and resistance to colonialism.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Examples of mutiny in the ancient Roman context are discussed in Lee Brice's chapter titled *Indiscipline in the Roman Army of the Late Republic and Principate* in his 2020 edited volume *New Approaches to Greek and Roman Warfare*.

<sup>161</sup> While an in-depth discussion of 20<sup>th</sup> century nationalist movements is beyond the scope of this chapter, see the following for discussions on the subject: Berberoglu (1995) *The National Question: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the 20th Century*, Das (2011) "Imperialism, Nationalism and the First World War" in Keene and Neiberg *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in First World War Studies*, Gilbert (2018) "The War Got in the Way: Annie Besant, the Contingencies of the Great War,



The Great War was not relegated to the European continent, but saw battlefields spread out all over the globe. Participants fought battles in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and in the Pacific Front of China and the Pacific islands. The scope of the conflict necessitated the recruitment and deployment of colonial troops on an unprecedented scale both in Europe and elsewhere. One theatre outside of Europe was in the Middle East, which, although not far removed from continental Europe, was the setting for one of the most vital theatres of the Great War. To better understand the experiences and motivations of the IEF D in the Great War, we must first examine the context of how the IEF came to be and how the IEF D came to be sent to the Ottoman Front.

### The Context

#### *The IEF and Martial Race Theory*

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the outbreak of the First World War, the makeup and role of the British-Indian army evolved dramatically. As Kaushik Roy (2013) points out, the initial role of the army was to act as a police force in India and to conduct small-scale wars along the northern borders.<sup>162</sup> The implementation of Martial Race Theory, put forth by Field-Marshal Frederick Roberts, transformed recruiting practices in India by focusing on drawing troops only from certain locations and ethnic origins who were deemed “fit” to bear arms. As we saw in the previous chapter, this practice was also quite common in the Roman auxiliaries and so there are strong parallels here.

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and the Course of Indian Nationalism” in Long and Talbot *India and World War I: A Centennial Assessment*, and Rosenthal and Rodić (2014) *The New Nationalism and the First World War*.

<sup>162</sup> Kaushik Roy, *The Army in British India: From Colonial Warfare to Total War 1857-1947*, Bloomsbury Studies in Military History (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 77.

Martial Race Theory, much like similar thought processes in antiquity, was based on the notion that certain races or ethnicities possessed physical qualities that make them predisposed to warfare. In the context of Indian communities, those who originated from the Northern and Northwestern areas of India were considered taller, fitter, and hardier than those from other regions of the subcontinent. Furthermore, people from lower castes who farmed and performed other manual labour were considered better soldiers because of their perceived lack of political ambition and their high levels of physical fitness.

The impetus for the implementation of ideas about so-called martial races in recruitment practices can be traced back to the Indian Rebellion of 1857 in which large portions of the Indian Army revolted against the East India Company.<sup>163</sup> The fighting was intense and bloody, but the rebellion was eventually crushed in 1859, with the British Crown assuming full control of the subcontinent. Lord Roberts had taken part in the fighting and so it is unsurprising that he sought to prevent such an occurrence from happening again. One of the key methods for ensuring security was the implementation of a rigid, European-style regimental system.

Roy argues that “it was neither amalgamation of the army with India’s society nor a superior weapons system but managerial expertise that was the chief factor in enabling the British to structure a combat-effective and loyal army from the subcontinent’s manpower.”<sup>164</sup> He writes that each regiment was given their own symbol/standard and colours to differentiate them from other groups, and that this was meant to create an environment that fostered intra-group cohesion by placing heavy

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<sup>163</sup> The rebellion is also known as the Sepoy Rebellion or the First War of Independence.

<sup>164</sup> Roy, ‘The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,’ 128.

emphasis on the distinction of these groups.<sup>165</sup> Roy connects this practice with that of the Romans, who gave each legion its own standard around which they could rally and organize themselves.<sup>166</sup> As we have seen in this study, the comparison can be taken beyond the legions and applied to the auxiliaries as well.

Roy goes on to illustrate the way in which different regiments were encouraged to adopt different features into their uniforms to distinguish themselves from others and to increase their own pride and prestige.<sup>167</sup> The British also made a point of staging inter-regimental contests such as cross-country races, football tournaments, and shooting competitions to strengthen primary group cohesion among the soldiers, a practice that was implemented in other colonial and white settler forces as well.<sup>168</sup> One could also imagine that these contests also served to build inter-group rivalries.

The efforts made by the British to increase morale and combat motivation through the promotion of group cohesion certainly would have had a tremendous impact by the time of the Great War. The Indian Army could even be considered a group of many smaller armies that simply existed under the same umbrella, becoming loyal to each another and harbouring individual loyalties to the British. Discussions about the organization and ethnic composition of the Indian Army persisted in the years leading up to the Great War as well.

The government of India (GOI) created an army commission in 1912 of which Field Marshal Lord Nicholson was president.<sup>169</sup> Its members were Lieutenant-General

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<sup>165</sup> Roy, 'The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,' 139.

<sup>166</sup> Roy, 'The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,' 140.

<sup>167</sup> Roy, 'The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,' 141.

<sup>168</sup> Roy, 'The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,' 143; See French (2004) for a discussion of widespread practices.

<sup>169</sup> Kaushik Roy, 'Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880– 1918', *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 1325.

Percy Lake, Lieutenant-General Robert I. Scallon, and William S. Meyer who was an Indian Civil Service officer, and Lieutenant-Colonel C. W. G. Richardson from the 21<sup>st</sup> Punjabis, who was the committee's secretary.<sup>170</sup> While the committee was short lived (its last meeting was in January of 1913), one of the key suggestions it made was that although there is no 'racial' difference between Jats and Jat Sikh peoples, they should be in separate regiments to avoid conspiracies against the Raj.<sup>171</sup> Such rhetoric reflects the 'divide and rule' tactic that was common among colonial empires which was designed to lessen the likelihood of uprising or rebellion. As we saw in the previous chapter, organizing auxiliaries by geographic origin was not a twentieth century phenomenon, but has its roots in the ancient past and was seen as a sound tactical decision as well as a protective measure.

Immediately prior to the outbreak of the Great War, the British-Indian army was 263 555 strong, including all ranks of British and Indian personnel. By the end of 1914 there were 100 000 sepoy and sowars from the Indian Army fighting abroad.<sup>172</sup> As George Morton Jack points out, the British did not possess a continental army at the beginning of the Great War, and "at an ad hoc war council at 10 Downing Street on 6 August, Haig advised that the Indian Army be mobilized."<sup>173</sup> One of the first places that Indian troops were sent was the Western Front where they, alongside soldiers from all over the globe, suffered in the miserable conditions of the trenches.

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<sup>170</sup> Kaushik Roy, 'Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880– 1918', *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 1325.

<sup>171</sup> Kaushik Roy, 'Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880– 1918', *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (2013): 1325.

<sup>172</sup> A sepoy refers to an Indian person serving in the colonial army, and a sowar refers to an Indian person in the cavalry.

<sup>173</sup> George Morton Jack, 'The Indian Army on the Western Front, 1914-1915: A Portrait of Collaboration', *War in History* 13, no. 3 (2006): 337.

The first Indian Expeditionary Force fought in Belgium at the first Battle of Ypres in 1914, and later in northern France at Neuve-Chapelle, and Loos in 1915, suffering 34 252 combat casualties. Neuve-Chapelle is currently home to a memorial created by Sir Herbert Baker and Charles Wheeler dedicated to fallen Indian soldiers from that battle (Figure 6). Indian soldiers were also present in almost every other major theatre of the First World War, including Egypt, Palestine, Gallipoli, and East Africa, but this chapter will draw on examples from the IEF D as its case study.



Figure 6. Neuve-Chapelle Indian Memorial.<sup>174</sup>

Plans for the creation of this fourth expeditionary force began after reports of Ottoman mobilization in Baghdad had reached London, and the matter was of great concern to Sir Edmund Barrow who was the Military Secretary at the India Office in London. As previously mentioned, the bulk of the alarm was due to the importance of Middle Eastern trade and communications routes between Britain and India which could have been threatened by hostile parties. Of particular importance was the port of Basra and the nearby oil fields, which would be the initial foothold for the IEF D and would have tremendous implications for the overall war effort.

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<sup>174</sup> Image from [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5f/Indian\\_war\\_cemetery\\_near\\_La\\_Bassee\\_%2889687636304%29.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5f/Indian_war_cemetery_near_La_Bassee_%2889687636304%29.jpg)

As a result, on 16 October 1914 the 16<sup>th</sup> Indian Brigade of the 6<sup>th</sup> (Poona) Division of the Indian Army, originally scheduled to reinforce the IEF A in France, was diverted to Bahrain in the Persian Gulf where they awaited further orders. As war with the Ottomans grew increasingly imminent, the brigade moved to Shatt al-Arab on 31 October and readied themselves to attack. On 6 November, the first shots of the campaign were fired by the HMS Odin and by 11 November the brigade had landed in Abadan and fought off an Ottoman counterattack to maintain their foothold. It was this brigade and eventually the rest of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division that formed the core of the IEF D.<sup>175</sup> Before engaging in a more in-depth discussion of the experiences and motivations of members of the IEF, it is vital to also understand the context of how the war spread to the Middle East.

### *The Great War in the Middle East*

The geopolitical environment in 1914 was one of extreme tension and uncertainty. The world was full of emerging powers and states who were vying for territorial holdings around the world, and European imperial powers were trying to maintain their grips on the colonial holdings they had. Tension and uncertainty were not exclusively relegated to relations between powers on continental Europe, extending to the Ottoman Empire as well. The Ottomans had lost a great deal of their territory in the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, and the British were especially concerned that their communication and trade routes to India through the Suez Canal would be threatened by hostile forces in the area if the Ottoman Empire collapsed completely.<sup>176</sup> As mentioned

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<sup>175</sup> Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *First World War in the Middle East* (London: Hurst, 2014), 123.

<sup>176</sup> Robin Prior, 'The Ottoman Front,' in *The Cambridge History of the First World War: Volume 1: Global War*, ed. Jay Winter, vol. 1, *The Cambridge History of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 297.

by Kristian Ulrichsen, by 1914 more than two-thirds of imports and about half of all exports that passed through the Basra were controlled by the British or British-Indian government.<sup>177</sup>

A key resource in the Middle East during the leadup to the First World War was the oil fields that produced a critical oil supply for the British military. One of the most productive oil refineries in the area in 1914 was located on an island called Abadan at the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab river and was constructed by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC).<sup>178</sup> Britain's interests in the area had been protected by a treaty struck with Russia in 1907, which divided Persia into three sections with the north being under Russian jurisdiction, the centre being neutral, and the south being held by the British.<sup>179</sup> In fact, the British government went on to control 51% of APOC's stock after Churchill's 1914 oil bill passed with resounding support.<sup>180</sup> Britain's controlling interest in the company is detailed clearly in the agreement with APOC, which says that "The Company [APOC] shall not enter into or be party to any Trust or Combine but shall always be and remain an independent British Company."<sup>181</sup>

The importance of Basra and the oil fields are worth noting both for their significance to the wider war effort and for emphasizing the importance of the IEF D. Protection of these interests during the war would have been vital to the British not only for financial and territorial reasons, but also because the motorized vehicles that the

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<sup>177</sup> Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, *The Logistics and Politics of the British Campaigns in the Middle East, 1914-1922*, Studies in Military and Strategic History 2011: 1 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25.

<sup>178</sup> Timothy C. Winegard, *The First World Oil War* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 53.

<sup>179</sup> Winegard, *The First World Oil War*, 33.

<sup>180</sup> Winegard, *The First World Oil War*, 62.

<sup>181</sup> Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1914, vol. 54, Cd. 7419

British army relied upon for combat and logistical purposes all required oil to function. The importance of oil to the British war effort is emphasized by H. P. Willmott (2009), who illustrates that the switch from coal to oil in the British navy removed concerns over variations in coal quality and thus made for more efficiently powered ships.<sup>182</sup> In one of the first official histories of the Great War, Sir Julian Corbett wrote that "Since the end of September it had become clear that in view of the increasing hostility of Turkey something definite must be done to uphold our interests in the Persian Gulf, and particularly to protect the refinery and the pipe line of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company."<sup>183</sup> Referring to Basra in particular, he says that "The key of the situation in the Gulf area was the ancient and still famous port of Basra in the Shatt-al-Arab."<sup>184</sup> The vital nature of the oil fields for quite literally fuelling the British war effort places the IEF D in one of the most critical and yet underrated roles of the Great War. Political concerns in the Middle East, in addition to economic ones, were also mounting.

In 1913, a powerful trio seized control of the Turkish state: Enver Pasha as the Minister of War, Jemal Pasha as Minister of the Navy, and Talat Pasha as Minister of the Interior. Each of these three were interested in pursuing an alliance with a different power, Germany, France, and Russia, respectively. However, the Entente were unwilling to agree to Turkish demands that the Aegean Islands, lost during the Balkan Wars, be

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<sup>182</sup> H. P. Willmott, *The Last Century of Sea Power*, vol. 1 (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), pp. 144-5. For more discussions of the significance of the navy in the Great War, see works such as Friedman (2014) *Fighting the Great War at Sea: Strategy, Tactics and Technology*, Massie (2003) *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea*, and Spector (2001) *At War, at Sea: Sailors and Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century*.

<sup>183</sup> Sir Julian S. Corbett, *Naval Operations: To the Battle of the Falklands, December 1914*, vol. 1, History of the Great War Based on Official Documents by Direction of the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence. (London, New York, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras: Longmans, Green and Co., 1920), pp. 375

<sup>184</sup> Corbett, *Naval Operations*, 376.



returned to them and to the abolition of taxes forced upon Turkey after the wars. As war approached in the summer of 1914, the Ottomans were being swayed by the Germans' more attractive promises, and after a brief period of neutrality joined their alliance officially in October. On November 5<sup>th</sup>, Britain and France declared war on the Ottoman Empire only three days after Russia had done so on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Robin Prior suggests that despite not actively desiring a war with the Ottomans, France and Britain were compelled to do so to protect their interests in the area in the event of a full Ottoman collapse.<sup>185</sup> As previously mentioned, one of the British interests was surely their communication and trade route with India, and so it is unsurprising that British-Indian forces were eventually deployed to the area.

The Mesopotamian campaign would require two attempts to achieve success. The first foray into the area met with initial success, with the IEF securing Basra before pushing into modern day Iraq. What halted their advance were two age-old enemies of any army: logistics and weather. As the IEF D advanced further into Mesopotamia, the IEF D's supply and transport networks became overburdened and stretched far too thin.<sup>186</sup> Anderson (2011) points to an unwillingness to reconcile the IEF D's logistical needs with British strategic aims.<sup>187</sup> This, combined with casualties due to the fighting or disease, started to take a heavy toll on the personnel available for any further advances.<sup>188</sup> The situation was compounded by the fact that the transportation equipment available was not suited for upriver travel on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, and heavy

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<sup>185</sup> Prior, 'The Ottoman Front,' 298.

<sup>186</sup> Ulrichsen, *First World War in the Middle East*, 126

<sup>187</sup> Ross Anderson, 'Logistics of the Indian Expeditionary Force D in Mesopotamia: 1914-1918', in *The Indian Army in the Two World Wars*, ed. Roy Kaushik (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 106.

<sup>188</sup> Ulrichsen, *First World War in the Middle East*, 136.

rains turned the sand into mud and made overland travel through the desert environment extremely difficult.<sup>189</sup>

The hardships faced by the IEF D in Mesopotamia are described in a few surviving letters from the first campaign written by the soldiers themselves. One soldier, Ressaïdar Hushyar Singh, who served in the 16<sup>th</sup> Light Cavalry, writes to a comrade in France that ‘we have got a fine opportunity of fighting,’ but laments that ‘you are having a very different time from us, for you have everything you can want while the country here is absolutely uninhabited and desolate.’<sup>190</sup> He does admit that ‘when we are winning we are equally indifferent to comfort and inconvenience.’<sup>191</sup> From this letter, we can see that at least some soldiers valued the opportunity of fighting and yet acknowledged the difficult situation in which they found themselves.

The logistical hardships and negative impact of the rains is illustrated by a soldier of the IEF D’s 21<sup>st</sup> Combined Field Ambulance. Abdul Rauf Khan wrote to Lance Dafadar Abdul Jabar Khan that ‘in truth you must be comfortable there [France], since the public there are so civilized, and money, too, is plentiful.’<sup>192</sup> He goes on to say that ‘it rains very heavily and the entire surface of the land becomes a quagmire in which the slush is knee deep.’<sup>193</sup> From this letter we get the sense that both the logistical concerns and adverse weather were wreaking havoc on the IEF D, but it does not appear

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<sup>189</sup> Prior, ‘The Ottoman Front,’ 300; Ulrichsen, *First World War in the Middle East*, 128.

<sup>190</sup> Ressaïdar Hushyar Singh (Sikh, 34) to Jemadar Harband Singh (9<sup>th</sup> Hodson’s Horse, France, 24), 30 January 1916, in David Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, and London: Macmillan Press LTD., 1999).

<sup>191</sup> Ressaïdar Hushyar Singh (Sikh, 34) to Jemadar Harband Singh (9<sup>th</sup> Hodson’s Horse, France, 24), 30 January 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>192</sup> Abdul Rauf Khan to Lance Dafadar Abdul Jabar Khan (Hindustani Muslim, 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, France), 7 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>193</sup> Abdul Rauf Khan to Lance Dafadar Abdul Jabar Khan (Hindustani Muslim, 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, France), 7 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

that it affected their motivation to fight. An instance where the motivation to fight was distinctly absent will be discussed below.

We can also gain interesting insight into the conditions in Mesopotamia through a letter written by someone whose brother (Sadikall Khan) was serving in that theatre in 1916. Abdul Najid Khan writes that his brother reported that he ‘is constantly ill, and that every few days his health changes... that he is neither fit to fight nor ill enough to return to India.’<sup>194</sup> In terms of food, Abdul Najid Khan reports that Sadikall lamented that ‘except for dates and the heat, nothing is to be found.’<sup>195</sup> This certainly paints a bleak picture of the situation in Mesopotamia during the initial foray into the region by the IEF D, and so it is unsurprising that their initial success petered out despite the strong fighting spirit of the Indian soldiers. The situation in Mesopotamia was starkly different from that of Europe, where there were friendly French and Belgian farms and towns from which soldiers could obtain some comfort items and extra food.<sup>196</sup> While parallel evidence does not survive from Roman soldiers and auxiliaries, the experiences of the members of the IEF D can illuminate the way in which a lack of resources can lead to a decrease in morale in other historical contexts.

The situation was made worse by the unwillingness of the British-Indian chain of command to send any significant reinforcements or additional vehicles, leaving the local commanders to make impossible choices between transporting food or soldiers on their small boats.<sup>197</sup> Ulrichsen (2014) points to the *laissez faire* economic policy at Delhi for

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<sup>194</sup> Abdul Najid Khan (Muslim) to Suliman Khan (3<sup>rd</sup> Skinner’s Horse, France), 18 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>195</sup> Abdul Najid Khan (Muslim) to Suliman Khan (3<sup>rd</sup> Skinner’s Horse, France), 18 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>196</sup> Jack, ‘The Indian Army on the Western Front, 1914-1915,’ 360.

<sup>197</sup> Prior, ‘The Ottoman Front,’ 312; Ulrichsen, *First World War in the Middle East*, 136.

the lack of attention to the logistical needs of the IEF D, stating that “The impact of this policy continually hindered attempts to expand the scope of the Indian war effort until 1916 even as operational requirements increased.”<sup>198</sup> An ambitious push forward was halted at the battle of Ctesiphon in November of 1915, at which an estimated 4300 Indian personnel were killed, wounded or captured.<sup>199</sup> The defeat at Ctesiphon forced the IEF D back to Kut-al-Amara where disaster awaited.<sup>200</sup> The initial campaign ended in a colossal failure with the surrender of Major General Charles Townshend at Kut-al-Amara on 29 April 1916, and the subjugation of the Indian soldiers to a horrific forced death march at the hands of the Ottomans.<sup>201</sup> We have a few letters from Indian soldiers that describe elements of the siege and reactions to the surrender.

One Sikh soldier, Gunga Singh, writes that the soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade were in a dire situation in terms of food and that a relief force was beaten back with heavy losses on 6 March 1916.<sup>202</sup> He goes on to say that ‘we are hopeful of being sent to join the relieving force.’<sup>203</sup> A member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Lancers in the Poona Division provides some reaction to the surrender of Kut-al-Amara. Risaldar-Major Kalander Khan Bahadur writes that ‘it was a great grief to all that relief could not reach them and that all our efforts were in vain.’<sup>204</sup> A somewhat different perspective comes from Karm Singh, a

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<sup>198</sup> Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, ‘Learning the Hard Way: The Indian Army in Mesopotamia, 1914-1918’, in *The British Indian Army: Virtue and Necessity*, ed. Rob Johnson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 54.

<sup>199</sup> Santanu Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 135.

<sup>200</sup> Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture*, 136.

<sup>201</sup> Prior, ‘The Ottoman Front,’ 314.

<sup>202</sup> Gunga Singh (Sikh) to Dafadar Jaswant Singh (attached 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, France), 16<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Depot, 21 April 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>203</sup> Gunga Singh (Sikh) to Dafadar Jaswant Singh (attached 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, France), 16<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Depot, 21 April 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>204</sup> Risaldar-Major Kalander Khan Bahadur to Risaldar Khurshed Ali Khan (Hindustani Muslim, 20<sup>th</sup> Deccan Horse, France), 7<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Poona, 5 May 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

soldier in a machine gun unit in the Sialkot Cavalry Brigade in France. While he is regretful about the surrender, he writes that ‘well, we should not grieve; nothing is to be gained by grieving.’<sup>205</sup> He also quite stoically remarks that ‘this event was written in their fate, and no one could have prevented it.’<sup>206</sup> From these letters approved by the censors, we can see a remarkable fortitude among members of the IEF in terms of their willingness to continue fighting despite adversity and setbacks.

After an inquiry into the initial campaign's failure, and much public and political outrage, a second campaign was launched into Mesopotamia in 1916.<sup>207</sup> The IEF was helmed by new leadership under general Maude, bolstered with a healthy amount of extra troops (50 000), and equipped with better river transport (an increase in transport capacity from 450 to 700 tons daily).<sup>208</sup> With improved logistical and personnel support, the IEF D had more sustained success and went on to capture Baghdad in March of 1917, the major goal of the operation.<sup>209</sup>

As we can see, amidst the chaos of the Great War an immensely important theatre formed in the Middle East in which the IEF D was front and centre in large-scale industrial warfare. With belligerents fighting each other to a standstill on the Western Front, and a doomed campaign in Gallipoli, the Mesopotamian theatre of the Great War provided an opportunity for the IEF D to produce a great deal of progress for the Entente. The Mesopotamian theatre also provided an opportunity for the IEF D to prove their mettle in the eyes of the British and win benefits for themselves and their people as

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<sup>205</sup> Karm Singh (Sikh) to Kalyan Singh (Jhelum District, Punjab), Machine Gun Section, Sialkot Cavalry Brigade, France, 8 June 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>206</sup> Karm Singh (Sikh) to Kalyan Singh (Jhelum District, Punjab), Machine Gun Section, Sialkot Cavalry Brigade, France, 8 June 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>207</sup> Prior, ‘The Ottoman Front,’ 314.

<sup>208</sup> Prior, ‘The Ottoman Front,’ 314.

<sup>209</sup> Prior, ‘The Ottoman Front,’ 314.

a result. What follows will examine the factors that may have impacted the combat motivation of members of the IEF, beginning with a discussion of how the implementation of Martial Race Theory interacted with pre-existing identities and values.

### Martial Self-Identities

As we have seen, the Indian Army under the British was comprised of soldiers from an incredibly diverse group of religious, cultural, and geographic backgrounds. However, the British did not necessarily seek to create harmony out of this diversity. Such diversity and division were beneficial in the eyes of the British since they reduced the likelihood of a widespread rebellion or mutiny from within their ranks. These divisions were in fact carefully cultivated by the British over the course of several decades through the implementation of the regimental system, which was instrumental to the fostering of primary group cohesion among Indian troops.<sup>210</sup>

#### *Martial Self Identity in the Indian Army*

As previously stated, the creation of a formal system of identifying and recruiting martial races in British India is attributed to Lord Frederick Roberts who was a leading military figure in India during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>211</sup> The dissemination of such ideas can also be attributed to one Lieutenant-General Sir George MacMunn, but

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<sup>210</sup> The regimental system was also heavily implemented into other colonial and dominion forces such as the Canadian, New Zealander, and Australian armies. For an extensive discussion of the subject, see David French (2004) *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People, c. 1870-2000*.

<sup>211</sup> While Lord Roberts can be considered the founder of the idea, Kaushik Roy (2013, 1312) points out that he mainly publicized the idea which was already popular at the time.

he was criticized by his contemporaries for producing unreliable narratives about Indian peoples.<sup>212</sup>

The populations whom the British mainly considered martial in this case were communities from Northern and Northwestern India including but not limited to Sikhs, Muslims, and Gurkhas. As we saw in the last chapter, the cultivation and classification of a group of people as a martial race is often the product of imperialistic pseudoscientific thinking and generalizations, and this was certainly true for the British in India.<sup>213</sup>

We have seen that, while the names for the non-Roman peoples who were brought into the auxiliaries were a product of how the Romans viewed them, colonized peoples were able to maintain their own self-identity (or at least some version of it) despite living within an imperial institution. This is a critical idea to keep in mind when discussing the Indian Army as well, since both cases represent extremely complex and nuanced scenarios which has further implications for primary group cohesion and combat motivation.

Some scholars have discussed the presence of pre-existing martial self-identities of Indian communities. Peers suggests that for Martial Race Theory to be successful, the target populations needed to buy into the idea and internalize their role as a martial race at least to some extent.<sup>214</sup> It would have been a far more difficult task to establish Martial Race Theory if the targeted communities were actively resisting the process.

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<sup>212</sup> Douglas M. Peers, 'The Martial Races and the Indian Army in the Victorian Era', in *A Military History of India and South Asia*, ed. Daniel P. Marston and Chandar S. Sundaram (Westport and London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 35.

<sup>213</sup> Peers, 'The Martial Races and the Indian Army in the Victorian Era,' 36). See also Cynthia Enloe (1982) *Ethnic Soldiers* for a landmark study of Martial Race Theory.

<sup>214</sup> Peers, 'The Martial Races and the Indian Army in the Victorian Era,' 37.

Kate Imy points out that “many communities and military officers emphasized linkages to warfare and martial cultures that predated colonialism.”<sup>215</sup> Omissi (2007) also weighs in, highlighting the fact that some of the communities who were considered martial races had strong pre-existing self-identities connected to martial prowess.<sup>216</sup> We saw an example of this phenomenon in the previous chapter, with non-Roman groups such as the Batavians exhibiting martial qualities that were notable to the Romans before they were conquered and exploited heavily afterward.

Some groups within Indian communities such as the Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Muslims all have long and complex military traditions stemming from conflict with rival communities, and from deep-seeded senses of honour and duty. Members of these three religious communities have a very complex historical relationship with one another, but they all found themselves fighting on behalf of the British during the Great War.<sup>217</sup> While it can be reasonably assumed that fear and trepidation filled the minds of most combatants of the Great War, senses of honour and duty were powerful motivators for many soldiers. David Omissi illustrates how Garewal Jats (a leading Sikh community) in the Ludhiana District saw military service as a matter of honour.<sup>218</sup>

There is even evidence to suggest that some members of the Sikh community who served as sepoy on the Western Front relished fierce combat. A wounded sepoy

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<sup>215</sup> Imy, *Faithful Fighters: Identity and Power in the British Indian Army*, 6.

<sup>216</sup> David Omissi, ‘The Indian Army in the First World War, 1914-1918’, in *A Military History of India and Southeast Asia*, ed. Daniel P. Marston and Chandar S. Sundaram (Westport and London: Praeger Security International, 2007), 75.

<sup>217</sup> While an in-depth discussion of all three groups’ military traditions is beyond the scope of this study, outstanding studies on the subjects can be found in volumes such as Reichberg, Syse, and Hartwell’s 2014 edited volume called *Religion, War, and Ethics: A Sourcebook of Textual Traditions*. This section will focus on the experiences of these communities during and leading up to the First World War.

<sup>218</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 77. Ludhiana is a city in Northern India and is a part of the Punjab region.



wrote from a hospital bed that ‘They were keen for the fight, and where one man fell another from behind stood in his place. And we took pleasure in the battle.’<sup>219</sup> Another, writing of their experience at the Somme, wrote about how bravely his comrades marched into battle: ‘Battalion after battalion follow their music, filled with enthusiasm, just as a snake dances to the pipe of the charmer and darts forward to strike.’<sup>220</sup> Yet another example comes from a member of the cavalry who fought in Mesopotamia. ‘I cannot describe how great fascination there is in fighting at the front,’ he writes and, as Omissi says, displays his desire to return to the front to continue fighting.<sup>221</sup>

Omissi also identifies the term *izzat*, which is an Urdu word that loosely translates to ‘honour,’ ‘prestige,’ ‘reputation,’ or ‘credit’ in English.<sup>222</sup> Earning *izzat* was incredibly important to many Urdu-speaking soldiers as it not only elevated his status in his own eyes, but in the eyes of his comrades and family as well. We have seen this concept before, reflected in the ancient Roman quality and ideal of *virtus* as we saw in the previous chapter. The letters cited here are but a few examples, but they illustrate two things that are directly pertinent to this study. The first is that they clearly demonstrate a long-standing and deeply personal tradition of martial prowess, which many colonial troops brought to bear in the Great War. The second is that we can see how the presence of martial self-identities that survive within imperial institutions can be found both in antiquity and the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>219</sup> Bariam Singh, 47 Sikhs, to friend in India, 31 March 1915, L/MIL/5/825 Pt.1, cited in Omissi (1994).

<sup>220</sup> Gajan Singh, 18 Lancers, to Sirdar Harbans Singh, Ludhiana District, 25 July 1916 L/MIL/5/826 Pt. 6, Omissi (1994)

<sup>221</sup> Kala Singh, 16 Cavalry, Baluchistan Agency, to Seo Deo Singh, 22 Cavalry, Rouen, 6 October 1916, Omissi (1994)

<sup>222</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 79.

Kaushik Roy cites an example of one group that made up the famous Gurkhas, the Khas, who would be outcasts in their own societies and rejected by their wives if they fled from battle.<sup>223</sup> Their experiences in the Great War itself are difficult to ascertain, as a great deal of what survives are the descriptions and references by others. We know that between 1914 and 1918, 55 589 Gurkhas were recruited across all expeditionary forces.<sup>224</sup> This is the third most out of any group in Indian society, exceeded only by Punjabi Muslims (136 126) and Sikhs (88 925).<sup>225</sup> One letter written by an English sergeant says of two groups, the Garhwalis and Gurkhas, ‘as long as a white soldier is going to be there, they fight like tigers’ while some other regiments of Indian soldiers ‘refuse to go over the top in a charge.’<sup>226</sup> The Gurkhas appear to have seen themselves as distinct from the rest of the IEF forces, and we are told that they even held a measure of contempt for Indian peoples in general, and especially those who observed higher-caste rituals and habits.<sup>227</sup> The Gurkha example shows as well as any that the presence of group cohesion was primarily intra-group and not inter-group. It illustrates the earlier point that the overall IEF was composed of many smaller armies as opposed to any sort of unified Indian Army.

Muslim communities were also critical members of the IEF and IEF D and they are known to have had powerful experiences in the Great War. Muslim groups in India were the targets of mistrust from an early stage, with many blaming them for the 1857

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<sup>223</sup> Roy, ‘The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,’ 131. The Gurkhas as we understand them were originally a group of four tribes (Magars, Gurungs, Khas, and Thakurs) that were brought together as a singular community by the British.

<sup>224</sup> Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars*, 253.

<sup>225</sup> Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars*, 253.

<sup>226</sup> Letter from an English Sergeant to a friend in London, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> London Regiment, 22 October 1915, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>227</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 10, 213, 239.

Rebellion despite many Muslims choosing to stand with the British rather than joining rebel groups.<sup>228</sup> Despite this mistrust, Rand and Wagner point out that Muslim recruits made up much of the force that crushed the Rebellion and that they remained an integral part of the Indian Army until 1947.<sup>229</sup> In fact, a total of 172 879 soldiers were recruited from communities of Punjabi Muslims and Hindustani Muslims between 1914 and 1918.<sup>230</sup>

It is clear from letters written by Muslim soldiers that their faith and tradition remained strong while away at war and that they very much retained their self-identity while serving under the British. In one letter, a Punjabi Muslim man, Juma Khan, writes that ‘it is the duty of young men to fight as lions in the field of battle.’<sup>231</sup> Another letter illustrates the deep connection between faith and martial duty in the eyes of Muslim men. Mahomed Nawaz Khan writes ‘Can there be any greater faithlessness than this to draw your pay in peace and then to cry out when war comes on?’<sup>232</sup> It is also quite clear from some letters, however, that as the war dragged on it became increasingly difficult for devout Muslims to maintain their religious dietary restrictions and to maintain their values. One letter from a Punjabi Muslim man, Jemadar Abdul Khan, reveals his distress about trying to avoid what is ‘unlawful’ while ‘many distinguished people here [France] have given up making any distinction between clean and unclean things, and I suppose

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<sup>228</sup> Gavin Rand and Kim A. Wagner, ‘Recruiting the “Martial Races”’: Identities and Military Service in Colonial India’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 46, no. 3/4 (2012): 240.

<sup>229</sup> Rand and Wagner, ‘Recruiting the “Martial Races,”’ 152.

<sup>230</sup> Roy, ‘Race and Recruitment in the Indian Army: 1880– 1918,’ 1340.

<sup>231</sup> Juma Khan (Punjabi Muslim) to Dulu Khan Gahi (India), 40<sup>th</sup> Pathans, 1 November 1915, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>232</sup> Mahomed Nawaz Khan to Trumpet-Major Haq Nawaz Khan (Punjabi Muslim, 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), Shahpur, 9 July 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

there is not one per cent of them who refuse to eat with the French.’<sup>233</sup> As we can see, Indian Muslim soldiers in many cases continued to fight while struggling to maintain their religious values. However, as we will see in the next section, there were some compromises that these groups would not make.

### *British Support for Indian Customs*

We can see that Indian populations had their own ingrained self-identities that existed outside of British institutions, but non-British ideas were impactful on relations between British and non-British peoples. As much as the British sought to impose European systems on Indian peoples and the Indian army, the local populations also had a tremendous impact on their colonizers. As Pradeep Barua points out, as early as the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the British encouraged their officers to learn the official languages of India and partake in so-called “Oriental studies.”<sup>234</sup> Naming conventions aside, the British clearly took an interest in engrossing themselves further in Indian culture so that they could better understand those whom they commanded.<sup>235</sup> According to Barua, the Rebellion of 1857 shattered the optimism and romanticism felt by some toward India and led to stricter security measures and cautious policies in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>236</sup> The environment in British India was one of immense self-contradiction,

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<sup>233</sup> Jemadar Abdul Khan (Punjabi Muslim) to Hazrat Sahib Khanka Mujidali (Delhi, India), 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, 20 February 1917, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>234</sup> Pradeep Barua, ‘Inventing Race: The British and India’s Martial Races’, *The Historian* 58, no. 1 (1995): 107.

<sup>235</sup> While it was seen as good strategy to familiarize oneself with Indian customs and languages, prolonged interaction with Indian customs and climates was a cause of worry for some (including medical texts and gossipers alike, see pp. 108 in Barua).

<sup>236</sup> Barua, ‘Inventing Race: The British and India’s Martial Races,’ 109.

with racist beliefs being propagated at the same time as the army was encouraging local belief systems, or at least the ones that were convenient.<sup>237</sup>

With increased imperial expansion into Africa and Asia by the British during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the advent of the eugenics movement led by Francis Galton, the British began to classify groups of Indian peoples according to pseudoscientific concepts of “superior” and “inferior” groups, which would become the martial races that I am discussing in this section.<sup>238</sup> Within the military, attempts were still made by the British to partake in local customs and to learn more fully about the soldiers under their command. The army would take special care to directly encourage the practice of an emerging branch of Hinduism among the Gurkhas, going so far as to change service rules to accommodate their religious beliefs and even financially backing rituals and sacrifices to Hindu deities such as *Deorali* and *Devi*.<sup>239</sup> All this was, according to Roy, in service of creating a special identity for the Gurkhas who were their favoured martial group.<sup>240</sup>

In terms of combat motivation, the granting and supporting of the religious traditions of the communities from which they wished to recruit would likely have had a tremendous impact on the willingness of these individuals to enlist and fight on behalf of the British. They would have been doubly motivated to at least enlist due to the strong and ancient military traditions within their own communities irrespective of British influence. Here again we can see the echoes of the experiences of the Roman auxiliaries,

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<sup>237</sup> For more fulsome discussions of postcolonial thought, see works such as Edward Said (1979) *Orientalism* and H. K. Bhabha (1994) *The Location of Culture*.

<sup>238</sup> Barua, ‘Inventing Race: The British and India’s Martial Races,’ 110.

<sup>239</sup> Roy, ‘The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,’ 134.

<sup>240</sup> Roy, ‘The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913,’ 134.

who were also drawn from communities that had their own martial prowess and came from distinctly non-Roman religious traditions. We also saw how the Romans were tolerant of alternative religious practices and allowed auxiliaries to worship their own deities alongside those of Rome. The British appear to have gone even further, tolerating, and even supporting religions that directly contradict the Church of England's doctrine, all in service of maintaining morale. In combination, we can see two powerful motivators (pride in one's own military tradition and a deep devotion to one's faith) that were present in the decades leading up to the Great War. We have also seen examples of how these motivators remained strong while soldiers were on campaign represented in the letters of some soldiers. However, the resolve and cohesion of Indian soldiers that was both linked to their self-identity and cultivated by the British through the regimental system could backfire in some cases, such as the mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers in the IEF D.

#### The Case of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers

At various times during the Great War, commanders on both sides found themselves having to deal with mutinies from within their own ranks and the ranks of colonial troops and workers. Maintaining morale among troops became increasingly important in the horrific conditions of the Great War. Alexander Watson illustrates that less emphasis was being placed on discipline and obedience and more was being placed on individual drive, initiative, and teamwork.<sup>241</sup> He goes on to state that Great War-era armies worked to foster soldierly pride and a “corporate military identity” and

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<sup>241</sup> Alexander Watson, ‘Mutinies and Military Morale’, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, ed. Hew Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 192.

regimental loyalty among their troops to boost loyalty.<sup>242</sup> We have already seen the way in which this loyalty-boosting strategy was applied to the Indian Army, but the forging of such primary group cohesion did not always translate to complete loyalty to the army as a whole.

Members of the French Army infamously mutinied in April of 1917, and some members of the German Navy did the same in early November 1918 just before the war officially ended.<sup>243</sup> Watson also highlights the fact that incidents of desertion tripled in the German army, quadrupled among Belgians, and quintupled among the Russians after the March revolution.<sup>244</sup> Mutinies in European armies are thought to have been inspired by poor service conditions and frustration with mounting casualties as opposed to any moral or political objection.<sup>245</sup> European armies were certainly not the only groups who resisted or mutinied against their commanders. Colonial troops also grew frustrated with conditions and casualties, but some groups had moral objections to what they were being asked to do in some cases. Most relevant to the current discussion is the mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers of the Indian Expeditionary Force, who refused to take part in any fighting against Muslims fighting for the Ottoman Empire. It is critical to note at the outset that the actions of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers were an isolated incident where part of a regiment

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<sup>242</sup> Watson, 'Mutinies and Military Morale,' 194.

<sup>243</sup> For some discussions of French and German mutinies during the Great War, see works such as French, David (1991) *Watching the Allies: British Intelligence and the French Mutinies of 1917*, Gilbert, Martin (2014) *The First World War: A Complete History*, Greenhalgh, Elizabeth (2014) *The French Army and the First World War*, Horn, Daniel (1969) *The German Naval Mutinies of World War I*, Smith, Leonard V. (1994) *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I*, van der Kiste, John (2017) *The End of the German Monarchy: The Decline and Fall of the Hohenzollerns*, Watson, Alexander (2014) "Mutinies and Military Morale," in Hew Strachan (ed.) *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War*, and Watt, Richard M. (1969) *The Kings Depart: The Tragedy of Germany: Versailles and the German Revolution*.

<sup>244</sup> Watson, 'Mutinies and Military Morale,' 199.

<sup>245</sup> Watson, 'Mutinies and Military Morale,' 199-200.

peacefully objected to orders and not a representative example of wider issues as the Rebellion of 1857 had been.

As previously mentioned, even though many Indian Muslims fought alongside the British in the Rebellion of 1857, they were still the target of blame and mistrust in the aftermath. Concerns about their loyalty were still present in the minds of British officials at the beginning of the war, and these were only compounded by the entrance of the Ottomans into the war. British uncertainty was largely driven by concerns over whether Indian Muslims would sympathize with the Ottomans.<sup>246</sup> Doubly concerning was the fact that the Sheikh-un-Islam declared *jihad* against the British on behalf of the Caliphate.<sup>247</sup> The mutiny broke out in February of 1916, when the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers were ordered to march forth from Basra to fight the Ottomans and the majority refused.<sup>248</sup> We are told that their resistance was based on an unwillingness to fight against fellow Muslims and a strong conviction to avoid conflict near Islamic holy places such as Karbala, Najaf, and Baghdad.<sup>249</sup> Gajendra Singh also points out that the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers had a prestigious service record dating back to the 1857 Rebellion and included First World War battles such as Neuve-Chapelle, Aubers, Festubert, Loos, La Bassee, Messines, Givenchy, and St. Julien.<sup>250</sup> This suggests that the mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers was not exclusively rooted in any sort of disdain for the British but was inspired by their personal values.

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<sup>246</sup> Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy*, 118.

<sup>247</sup> Santanu Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 244.

<sup>248</sup> Satarupa Lahiri, 'DESERTION – BETRAYAL OR ESCAPE', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 78 (2017): 759.

<sup>249</sup> Lahiri, 'DESERTION – BETRAYAL OR ESCAPE,' 759.

<sup>250</sup> Singh, *The Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy*, 119.



The group of letters that survive from Indian soldiers that talk about the mutiny are an incredibly fascinating variety of perspectives and opinions on the matter. The religious values that inspired the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers' refusal to fight the Ottomans are described in one letter written by Ashraf Ali Khan who writes that 'they all took the oath [not to fight against Muslims] and laid the Qur'an on their heads.'<sup>251</sup> Ashraf Ali Khan also writes that the Colonel Sahib of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers spoke about all the great deeds accomplished in France by his group when he arrived at Sialkot from where Ashraf Ali Khan's letter originated.<sup>252</sup> We can see from this letter that at least some were eager to remind their comrades of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers' exemplary service record prior to the mutiny.

Other letters grant powerful insight into the opinions of Indian soldiers who heard about the mutiny. One Ressaïdar Khan Alam Khan expresses his expectation that the recipient, Jemadar Sirdar Sultan Khan of the 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, 'will remain in every respect loyal to our King, and by your bravery will give proof of the fidelity of your race.'<sup>253</sup> He writes further, encouraging the recipient to 'Add to the renown of your race!'<sup>254</sup> This is a powerful response indeed, indicating a critical aspect of combat motivation, the desire to avoid shaming oneself in the eyes of family and comrades. A member of the 19<sup>th</sup> Lancers in France, Rahimdad Khan, also disagreed with the mutiny, stating that 'This was a great mistake to behave to our King in this way. The enemy no doubt are Turks, but in spite of this our men ought not to have been untrue to their

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<sup>251</sup> Ashraf Ali Khan to Signalling Instructor Dafadar Fateh Mahomed Khan (Hindustani Muslim, 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, France), 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Sialkot, 24 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>252</sup> Ashraf Ali Khan to Signalling Instructor Dafadar Fateh Mahomed Khan (Hindustani Muslim, 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, France), 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, Sialkot, 24 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>253</sup> Ressaïdar Khan Alam Khan to Jemadar Sirdar Sultan Khan (Punjabi Muslim, 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), Jullundur, Punjab, 4 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*. Importantly, a Ressaïdar is a middle rank in the Indian Cavalry.

<sup>254</sup> Ressaïdar Khan Alam Khan to Jemadar Sirdar Sultan Khan (Punjabi Muslim, 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), Jullundur, Punjab, 4 March 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

salt.<sup>255</sup> There is yet another response that is rife with passion written by a Veterinary Assistant named Kesu Shah to a member of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers. Kesu Shah begins his letter by saying that ‘When I read about the behaviour of the regiment I was overwhelmed by grief.’<sup>256</sup> He also reminds the recipient that ‘I feel sure that you will remember your hereditary services and show yourself worthy of your family traditions... Our duty is loyalty and bravery.’<sup>257</sup> This impassioned response further reveals how seriously some soldiers took military service, but it is only one side of the story of how the mutiny was viewed by Indian soldiers.

Some letters written by Indian soldiers show a great deal of sympathy for the mutineers and provide a wholly different perspective on the incident. A fascinating perspective comes to us from Fateh Ullah, a Punjabi Muslim writing to someone serving in France. They say that ‘the new Viceroy has ordered that these men [those arrested for the mutiny] should be sent to some other theatre of war, since they did not really decline to fight for the Sirkar, and should not have been called upon to fight against the Turks against their wish.’<sup>258</sup> Fateh Ullah goes on to say that they are in disbelief that the Viceroy’s orders have not been followed, especially seeing as the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers achieved such renown in other theatres such as France.<sup>259</sup> They also suggest that the arrest and imprisonment of the mutineers was done ‘simply to vindicate their [the British

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<sup>255</sup> Rahimdad Khan (Pathan) to Sher Khan (Mirpur, Kashmir?), 19<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France, 21 May 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>256</sup> Veterinary Assistant Kesu Shah (Punjabi Muslim) to Ressaïdar Abdul Rahim Khan (15<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Mesopotamia, 28), Rouen [France], 22 May 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>257</sup> Veterinary Assistant Kesu Shah (Punjabi Muslim) to Ressaïdar Abdul Rahim Khan (15<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Mesopotamia, 28), Rouen [France], 22 May 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>258</sup> Fateh Ullah (Punjabi Muslim) to Fateh Ahmed (Supply and Transport No. 5 Base Supply Depot, France), Lyallpur, Punjab, 30 June 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>259</sup> Fateh Ullah (Punjabi Muslim) to Fateh Ahmed (Supply and Transport No. 5 Base Supply Depot, France), Lyallpur, Punjab, 30 June 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

government's] authority.<sup>260</sup> An even more powerful statement of sympathy comes from a letter written by one Sher Dil Khan to a member of the 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers in France. He writes of the Lancers that 'it is clear that they were not to blame. Our Government is just. They only made a respectful representation, but some evil person deceived the regiment.'<sup>261</sup> Sher Dil Khan claims to have received letters from members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers who said that they never refused to serve but had only peacefully demonstrated and asked to be sent back to France and rejoin the fighting there.<sup>262</sup>

Letters written by members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers also survive and provide a third unique perspective on the mutiny and its aftermath. One was written by Alam Sher while he was still imprisoned. He assures the reader that although he is in custody and the result of the sentence will remain unknown until the war's end, the conditions are not very strict, and he is doing well.<sup>263</sup> Alam Sher does say that he wishes to hear how things are going at home and with the recipient who is still fighting.<sup>264</sup> The tone of the letter is not one of grief or hostility towards the British or the war effort, which corroborates the suggestion that the mutiny of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers was not because of anti-British or anti-war sentiments.

We also have letters from members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers after their release in 1917, including one by Safdar Ali Khan. He is joyful that they have been released,

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<sup>260</sup> Fateh Ullah (Punjabi Muslim) to Fateh Ahmed (Supply and Transport No. 5 Base Supply Depot, France), Lyallpur, Punjab, 30 June 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>261</sup> Sher Dil Khan (Punjabi Muslim) to Jemadar Sultan Khan (18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France, 33), Sargodha, Shahpur District, Punjab, 9 September 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>262</sup> Sher Dil Khan (Punjabi Muslim) to Jemadar Sultan Khan (18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France, 33), Sargodha, Shahpur District, Punjab, 9 September 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>263</sup> Prisoner Alam Sher (15<sup>th</sup> Lancers) to Lance Dafadar Alla Dad Khan (19<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), Central Jail, Madras, 19 September 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>264</sup> Prisoner Alam Sher (15<sup>th</sup> Lancers) to Lance Dafadar Alla Dad Khan (19<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), Central Jail, Madras, 19 September 1916, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

writing that ‘We have been released. We are blameless.’<sup>265</sup> However, Safdar Ali Khan alludes to a more negative experience while imprisoned, stating that ‘After having seen the face of Hell, and after having in fact lived there for one year and three months, we have returned in safety.’<sup>266</sup> A later letter, possibly from the same person, explains the conditions of their imprisonment in greater detail.<sup>267</sup> He writes that ‘There [in the Andaman Islands] we lived in comfort. It was only a case of our being under arrest.’<sup>268</sup> After reiterating that he and his comrades were blameless, he also addresses the reports that were circulated about the mutiny, stating that ‘Originally we were reported to be evilly-disposed people; but afterwards when our work was inspected by successive officials, and our conduct observed, they said with one accord that “these capable and well-behaved men are blameless”.’<sup>269</sup>

The evidence provided by these letters tells a compelling story which has significant implications for our discussion of combat motivation. The 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers committed mutiny in Basra, that much is known for certain, but the evidence from the letters suggests that it was not because of any lack of bravery or combat motivation. It is instead revealed that, despite the harsh criticisms heaped upon them, some members of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers chose to remain true to their religious beliefs and refused to fight their fellow Muslims so near to cherished holy sites. We have seen that they were willing to

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<sup>265</sup> Safdar Ali Khan to Signaller Jalib Hussain Khan (Punjabi Muslim of Baluchi origin, 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers, attached 27<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Saugor, UP, 17 July 1917, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>266</sup> Safdar Ali Khan to Signaller Jalib Hussain Khan (Punjabi Muslim of Baluchi origin, 18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers, attached 27<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Saugor, UP, 17 July 1917, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>267</sup> This letter is also from a Safdar Ali Khan, it is unclear at present whether it is the same person who wrote the previously discussed letter.

<sup>268</sup> Safdar Ali Khan (Punjabi Muslim) to Signaller Talib Hussain (18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), Remount Depot 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Saugor [UP], 8 October 1917, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>269</sup> Safdar Ali Khan (Punjabi Muslim) to Signaller Talib Hussain (18<sup>th</sup> Lancers, France), Remount Depot 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Saugor [UP], 8 October 1917, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

be sent back to France to fight on as they had done before, so what we have here is not in fact an absence of combat motivation but a window into the complexities and nuances of being a community within a community. We have seen how the Romans avoided such situations by stationing auxiliaries away from their home provinces and how vital this was to the security of the Empire. The final section of this chapter examines the impact of more general relationships between British and Indian interests on the latter's motivation.

### Extrinsic Motivation

As we have seen in the previous chapter, there were powerful extrinsic motivators that existed alongside powerful intrinsic motivating factors such as group cohesion, pride, and honour. We saw in the case of the Roman auxiliaries that political and economic benefits for themselves, and their immediate families, were likely driving forces for enlistment as well as engaging in combat. I also suggested that their relationship with the emperor and their Roman commanders may have also played a role. The better-documented case of the IEF can provide some strong parallels with the previously discussed ancient examples but as we will see there are stark differences as well. In this section I will examine what we know about the extrinsic factors that may have influenced Indian soldiers' motivation to enlist and fight in the Great War. These factors include relationships with British officers, home front support for the war effort, and the economic benefits of service.

As Nikolas Gardner points out, the upper-level officer ranks were entirely populated by British men, who were tasked with commanding a force of which Indian

soldiers made up around two-thirds.<sup>270</sup> In his 2021 chapter on the combat motivation of the Indian Army in the Great War, Kaushik Roy emphasises the role of leadership in motivating soldiers, stating that “officers are the brain of the army.”<sup>271</sup> A counterpoint can be found in the *Sepoy and the Raj*, in which Omissi indicates that the British officers may have overestimated their own impact on Indian soldiers’ morale. He writes that “The cult of the British officer partly reflected the tendency of the ruling elite to explain other processes in terms of themselves. It also suited the British to believe themselves essential.”<sup>272</sup>

Despite these skewed perspectives, there are still points that can be made about the relationship between officers and soldiers. On the Western Front, it has been illustrated that when British officers were wounded or killed there was great confusion and disruption among Indian troops, especially in the case of 1/4<sup>th</sup> Gurkhas and the 9<sup>th</sup> Bhopals at the southern end of the Western Front who had incurred heavy losses from a German counterattack.<sup>273</sup> In Mesopotamia the situation was similar, with the already limited number of British officers (King’s Commissioned Officers) sustaining heavy casualties, thus diminishing the morale of Indian soldiers.<sup>274</sup> The thirteen KCOs that were initially with the IEF D were critical in their roles as intermediaries because of their knowledge of Indian languages and because unlike the Indian Viceroy Commissioned Officers (VCOs) they had the literacy to interpret the orders they

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<sup>270</sup> Nikolas Gardner, ‘Morale and Discipline in a Multiethnic Army: The Indian Army in Mesopotamia (1914-1917)’, *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4, no. 1 (2013): 2.

<sup>271</sup> Roy, ‘Combat Motivation of the Sepoys and Sowars during the First World War,’ 52.

<sup>272</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 103-4.

<sup>273</sup> Jeffrey Greenhut, ‘The Imperial Reserve: The Indian Corps on the Western Front, 1914–15’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 12, no. 1 (1983): 60.

<sup>274</sup> Gardner, ‘Morale and Discipline in a Multiethnic Army,’ 7.

received and relay them to the troops.<sup>275</sup> Gardner also points out that the reinforcements for the KCOs were less well-versed in Indian languages and so were less able to motivate and communicate with them.<sup>276</sup>

The British officers would have indeed been in strong positions to have a direct impact on motivating the sepoys under their command, especially given the trend prior to the First World War of British officers supporting and even partaking in local Indian traditions (see above). However, as Gardner mentions, there are problems with evidence in this regard, namely that letters written by Indian soldiers themselves may not reflect their inner thoughts because of the censors and that evidence from British officers represents a skewed perspective of Indian values and motivations.<sup>277</sup> It is, then, difficult to provide concrete examples which can help to illuminate parallels with the Roman example. What we can say is that there was a complicated relationship between Indian soldiers and British commanders that in some cases may have resulted in higher morale, and in others a drop in morale. To find more prominent examples of extrinsic motivators for Indian soldiers, we must look elsewhere towards economic benefits.

### *Economic Incentives*

In the previous chapter, we discussed the way in which economic incentives were important to ancient auxiliaries and their families, mainly in the context of regular pay being augmented by looting. As much as the world of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was dramatically different from the ancient world, the almighty dollar retained its allure in the human mind. David Omissi highlights that Indian soldiers had a history of enlisting

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<sup>275</sup> Gardner, 'Morale and Discipline in a Multiethnic Army, 7.

<sup>276</sup> Gardner, 'Morale and Discipline in a Multiethnic Army, 7.

<sup>277</sup> Gardner, 'Morale and Discipline in a Multiethnic Army, 3-4.

in the military and passing along much of their financial reward to their families.<sup>278</sup> Land holdings were also matters of concern for Indian peoples, and in some communities joining the army was one of the few acceptable methods of earning enough money to avoid going into debt.<sup>279</sup> For others, the military was one of the only methods of earning a living wage at all with populations rising and available land becoming scarcer by the year. A Punjabi Muslim community called the Satti, for example, were often compelled by economic need to join the army and had sent upwards of 1 689 of their 9 730 males into military service by the outbreak of the Great War.<sup>280</sup> By 1914, the prices of wheat and sugar had increased as well, placing additional financial burdens on some communities who also turned to the military to compensate.<sup>281</sup>

During the First World War, a soldier's pay was likely a strong, tangible motivator to continue fighting, especially when pay increases occurred. At one point during the war pay for active soldiers was increased by 25 per cent as the British realized that more incentives were necessary to maintain morale and enlistment rates.<sup>282</sup> Indian soldiers would also eventually receive free rations and recruits were given an enlistment bonus of 50 rupees apiece to help drive up numbers.<sup>283</sup> Such measures evidently worked in terms of increasing morale. One soldier writes that, after hearing about an increase in pay and pension and the granting of free rations 'all the Indian troops gave rousing cheer on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, and prayed for the victory for the

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<sup>278</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 47-8.

<sup>279</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 49.

<sup>280</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 49.

<sup>281</sup> Roy, 'Combat Motivation of the Sepoys and Sowars during the First World War,' 57, see also Tan Tai Yong (2005) *The Garrison State: The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947*, pp. 102.

<sup>282</sup> Omissi, *The Sepoy and the Raj: The Indian Army, 1860-1940*, 58.

<sup>283</sup> Roy, 'Combat Motivation of the Sepoys and Sowars during the First World War,' 58.



Sirkar.’<sup>284</sup> The other extant letter that mentions the pay raise specifically addresses it in the context of discussing the desertion of some members of ‘D squadron.’<sup>285</sup> The raise and free rations seem to be mentioned matter-of-factly at the end of the letter, perhaps indicating that they should be enough to deter desertion, but we cannot know for certain. While surviving letters from members of the IEF do not mention the pay increase or free rations, we can assume that they were well-received by those troops as well.

We have seen how members of the IEF and IEF D played a vital role in the Great War in every theatre from France to Egypt, Palestine, Gallipoli, Africa, and Mesopotamia where they had their largest presence. Their capture of Basra and the defence of the nearby oil fields were paramount to the British war effort because of the logistical advantages it allowed in terms of fuel for naval, air, and land vehicles and machinery. We have also seen that, much like the ancient auxiliaries, Indian soldiers were motivated by a variety of factors that fall into categories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators.

The IEF was a diverse institution that drew together starkly different communities under the same banner, and yet were kept distinct from one another within the British regimental system in combination with Martial Race Theory. We have seen evidence to support that the British system, which had also been imposed on colonial and white settler forces within the empire, built upon existing divisions between Indian communities and served to increase intra-group cohesion while maintaining a divide and rule strategy. There are examples in letters written by Indian soldiers that show their

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<sup>284</sup> Woordi-Major Kala Khan (Punjabi Muslim) to Nadir Khan (Rawalpindi District, Punjab), Ordinance Base Depot, Rouen, France, 7 January 1917, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

<sup>285</sup> Ressaïdar Natha Singh (Sikh, 36) to Jemadar Mal Singh (38<sup>th</sup> CIH, Agar-Malwa, Rajputana, India, 36), 38<sup>th</sup> CIH, France, 22 January 1917, in Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*.

devotion to one another and to a lesser extent the overarching goals of the war effort. Studies have shown that Indian soldiers were loyal to the British insofar as they provided an opportunity for Indian soldiers to embody the concept of *izzat*. This provides an interesting point of comparison with the ancient auxiliaries, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

We have also seen that extrinsic factors including relationships with British officers, but mainly the economic benefits of service, likely played a role in motivating Indian soldiers to enlist and fight in the IEF. There is evidence to suggest that the British KCOs who were experienced with Indian languages and culture were better able to relay instructions and motivate the soldiers under their command than those who replaced them when casualties started to mount. However, we cannot paint as clear of a picture of this situation as one would like due to the nature of our sources. Economic benefits were clearer motivators, especially the increases in wages throughout the war and the increasing difficulty of making a living on the land in India due to population increases and poor harvests.

The next and final chapter of this study synthesizes the findings and theories from the previous three chapters and identifies parallels among them. In addition to drawing parallels and identifying dissimilarities between ancient auxiliaries and members of the IEF, the chapter also weaves in theories from the social psychological studies discussed in the second chapter. The chapter concludes by highlighting aspects of combat motivation in these historical groups that remain hidden and illustrate some future directions for this line of research.

## Chapter 5: Synthesis and Conclusions

This thesis has been an intellectual exercise that examined the literature of three distinct disciplines, psychology, ancient history, and modern history, to explore new directions in the study of combat motivation. This thesis compared two historical groups as case studies, ancient Roman auxiliaries during the Dacian Wars and the Indian Expeditionary Force during the First World War. This chapter presents conclusions on the major aspects of combat motivation that this study has highlighted: group cohesion, internalization of “martial race” labels, and extrinsic factors of money and prestige. The following section highlights areas that require further research and general future directions for this line of research.

One of the main findings of this thesis is that there are significant parallels between Rome’s auxiliaries and the Indian Expeditionary Force in terms of what motivated them to enlist in imperial armies and fight on behalf of imperial powers. We have seen that intrinsic motivators such as group cohesion and internalized martial identities can exist alongside extrinsic motivators such as economic and political benefits. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are not mutually exclusive, but one can be more powerful than the other depending on the context. Extrinsic motivators like the prospect of Roman citizenship for ancient auxiliaries, and economic benefits for both groups, were likely significant in motivating persons to enlist; but intrinsic motivators like group cohesion and earning honour by performing military duties were likely powerful motivators to participate in combat.

### *Group Cohesion*

One of the most critical factors for combat motivation once a member of an army reaches the battlefield is group cohesion. As far back as Grinker and Spiegel's study of combat motivation in the 1940s, faith in one's comrades has been identified as being a vital component of morale and motivation.<sup>286</sup> James Griffith (2007) has astutely pointed out that theories of combat motivation, and group cohesion, can be effectively applied to historical groups.<sup>287</sup>

This study endeavoured to do just that, beginning with the Roman auxiliaries. One of the most powerful sources of evidence for the auxiliaries was the collection of diplomas that survive from the Dacian Wars, which provide vital demographic information for the members of the auxiliaries. We have seen that members of the auxiliaries were drawn from faraway places such as modern-day Britain and Spain before being deployed in what is today Romania. This was in stark contrast to the case of the 15<sup>th</sup> Lancers who were ordered to attack fellow Muslims, which led to a peaceful refusal to fight.

There are many common themes between the subject groups of this study in terms of group cohesion. Both the Roman auxiliaries and the IEF were diverse institutions that were populated with recruits drawn from distinct groups within their commanders' respective empires. In both cases we can see that community-based organization remained largely intact within imperial military institutions. In fact, the Indian example can be quite illuminating when compared with the case of the auxiliaries. The case of the IEF shows us what community-based organization looked

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<sup>286</sup> Grinker and Spiegel, *Men under Stress*, 37.

<sup>287</sup> Griffith, 'Further Considerations Concerning the Cohesion-Performance Relation in Military Settings,' 140.

like in far greater detail than the evidence for the auxiliaries provides. Perhaps the practice of fostering competition for prestige and building up regimental identity was also implemented by the Romans to increase the fighting spirit of their auxiliaries whose cohorts were given distinct names and identities as well.

The apparent tactical advantages of such organization appear to not have been lost on either the Romans or the British. The importance of loyalty to one's primary group is a theme in different eras and among very different groups, but what motivated those groups to go to war and fight on behalf of their respective empires may lie both in internalized notions of "martial races" and extrinsic factors which are discussed below.

### *Martial Race Theory*

In the aftermath of the Rebellion of 1857, one Lord Roberts began to popularize the notion of there being certain groups of people who were predisposed to being good soldiers. This notion would later become formally known as Martial Race Theory. We have seen, however, that the idea that some peoples were more "warlike" than others is by no means a modern or even an early modern invention. Such sentiments were felt by ancient writers as much as modern, and the Romans were particularly active in applying such theories into recruitment. We have seen in ancient sources from Livy to Vegetius that certain communities such as Gallic, Germanic, and Spanish peoples were considered "warlike" and therefore valuable. Roman recruitment tactics almost certainly would have been based on such thinking.

The British were no different, classifying groups such as Sikhs, Punjabi Muslims, and Gurkhas as "martial" in nature and consequently recruited heavily from these communities in the years before and during the Great War. We have seen

examples of martial identities becoming internalized by ancient and modern peoples and how martial prowess was in some cases a part of their self-identities before imperial intervention.<sup>288</sup>

Both ancient and modern colonized groups had the capacity to see themselves as martial and possess the desire to attain some sense of honour-related prestige. This is critical to emphasize because it shows that these groups were not simply canvases on which imperial powers painted their own ideals and values, but had agency, their own values, and self-identities that merged and interacted with external perceptions of them and formed the basis of diverse military institutions.

We have seen that primary group cohesion and internalized notions of martial identity have been powerful motivators in antiquity and during the Great War, and that group cohesion is still emphasized in modern studies. However, while the power of intrinsic motivators cannot and should not be dismissed. Bruce Newsome (2003) and Rune Henriksen (2007) point that we must also consider extrinsic motivation ring true. We have also seen the extent to which the prospect of financial gain and in some cases political benefits can serve as more tangible motivators.

### *Extrinsic Motivators*

The extrinsic motivators present in the Roman auxiliaries and the Indian Expeditionary Force tend to reflect the adage that the more things change, the more they stay the same. This appears to be most true in the sense that a powerful, tangible, and very much extrinsic motivator was financial gain. We have seen that after Domitian (r. 81-96 CE) increased the pay of all soldiers, both citizen and auxiliary, auxiliaries could

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<sup>288</sup> Roymans, *Ethnic Identity and Imperial Power*, 221; Caesar *Gallic War* 1.1.

make as much as 5/6 the rate of full legionaries, and this would have been true under Trajan (r. 98-117 CE) during the Dacian Wars. The steady pay would have made up for the uncertainty of a profession such as farming or the inconsistency of mercenary work.

We have also seen the importance of economic incentives for those who enlisted in the Indian Army in the years leading up to the Great War. We saw that farming was becoming an increasingly risky proposition around 1914, with populations increasing, the amount of good farming land decreasing, and the price of goods being raised, the paycheck of a soldier became an attractive option alongside the prestige of military service in some communities.<sup>289</sup> We have also seen that increases in pay were welcomed enthusiastically by members of the IEF, and there is very little reason to think that the auxiliaries viewed increases to their pay any differently. Where the auxiliaries and members of the IEF begin to differ, however, are the political motivators they both experienced.

In the case of the auxiliaries, we can see that a powerful motivator would have been the prospect of Roman citizenship upon completion of their term of service. Roman citizenship came with a great deal of legal benefits including the right to own more property and a measure of legal protection. We have also seen on extant military diplomas that citizenship was also extended to soldiers' wives and children who are often named explicitly on the diplomas themselves.

On the other hand, the political climate of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was starkly different from that in antiquity with nationalism on the rise and the decreasing popularity of imperial powers. It is difficult to say what impact this would have had on the

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<sup>289</sup> Roy, 'Combat Motivation of the Sepoys and Sowars during the First World War,' 57.

motivations of Indian soldiers in the Great War as there is very little evidence of nationalist sentiments in our extant primary evidence. This makes it unclear whether members of the IEF were genuinely disinterested in breaking away from British rule or whether they dared not express nationalist sentiments in letters that they knew would be monitored by British censors.

### *Future Directions*

While this study has addressed a great many points and fields of literature in discussing combat motivation, there are some fascinating future directions for this line of research. As was just mentioned, one area that requires further study is the impact of nationalist movements on the motivations of colonial soldiers within imperial armies. More specifically, it would be intriguing to investigate the impact of Home Rule movements in India and Ireland on the motivations of soldiers from those two groups.

Another future direction is to investigate the impact of the mass granting of citizenship or political rights and freedoms on motivation to enlist in the military and go to war under imperial banners. One example is the Roman Emperor Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana* that granted citizenship to all free persons within the Roman Empire's borders. The goal of the legislation was likely to drive up tax revenue, but it would be interesting to investigate whether receiving citizenship without having to serve in the auxiliaries affected motivation to enlist. A modern example is the Statute of Westminster which gave increased political autonomy to some members of the British Empire, including the right to decide whether they wanted to go to war.

More research could also be done on the relationships between colonial and auxiliary troops and their imperial commanders. As previously mentioned, it was



difficult to obtain a clear picture of what was going on in the context of this study because of the nature of the available sources. A future study with more time and access to archival material and a wider breadth of primary sources would be able to address the topic more fully.

### *Conclusions*

There are some powerful conclusions that can be drawn from this study. We can see that, despite the vast differences in contexts and time periods between the ancient auxiliaries and the Indian Expeditionary Force, there are parallels among their motivations. Fighting for the person next to them was a powerful motivator not just for tactical reasons but because of genuine comradery. We have also seen that the communities represented within military institutions were driven by a desire to attain honour through combat because of internalized martial identities that in some cases were formed independently of imperial powers. These factors were also compounded by tangible economic and political benefits such as consistent pay and the prospect of a better situation for themselves and their families.

Colonial and auxiliary armies were multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious entities that represented the diversity of the empires of which they were a part. The soldiers' motivations and values were complex, nuanced, and the product of both their own distinct communities and the values of their imperial leaders. We have seen how these diverse communities were motivated by similar factors despite how far apart in time and space they were from one another. It appears that some aspects of combat motivation are somewhat universal, and that diverse groups are more than capable of working toward the same goal when those motivators are present. This study represents

a new direction in the study of combat motivation, and hopefully the discussion is only just beginning.

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