

*TROPAEA IN ORIENTE: ROMAN VICTORY MONUMENTS LOCATED WITHIN THE
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN*

by

JAMES ALLEN YAVENDITTI

(Under the Direction of James C. Anderson Jr.)

ABSTRACT

When the Romans defeated and subsequently governed areas of the Eastern Mediterranean, they were certainly influenced by the people whom they ruled. One unique feature of propagandistic art and architecture first created during the Classical and Hellenistic periods was a victory monument, or *tropaeum*, located at the site of a famous battle. This idea of building *tropaea* also permeated Roman culture, and several victory commemorations have been found in the former provinces of the Roman Empire. The intention of this thesis is to examine the Roman *tropaea* in the Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, since its recent study as an artistic and symbolic group is lacking. I also outline the differences and similarities both among the Roman victory monuments in the East collectively and among Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman *tropaea* within the Eastern Mediterranean.

INDEX WORDS: *Tropaeum, tropaea*, Victory monument(s), Delphi, Actium, Nicopolis, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Scythopolis, Aemilius Paullus, Octavian, Titus, Hadrian

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Propaganda of the Roman Republic and Empire was (and still is) seen throughout Rome, and it was a crucial component for the government to solidify and/or to retain power. Some of Rome's best-known ancient monuments, such as the arches of Titus, Septimius Severus, and Constantine, and the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, in fact celebrate important military victories by emperors and in general have been quite thoroughly studied.¹ There are also several victory monuments built by Roman leaders that are located within Rome's provinces, some of which are found on the ancient battle sites themselves and occasionally have corresponding monuments within Rome. While the provincial monuments are no less important than those found in the capital city, study of these structures has been less frequent and less thorough.

These Roman military victory monuments, or *tropaea*, followed and, to some extent, were patterned after Greek and Hellenistic commemorative memorials. When the Romans conquered the Eastern Mediterranean, they unquestionably saw the earlier *tropaea* in their travels. The Classical and Hellenistic victory commemorations built previously inspired the Romans to establish their own *tropaea* within the Greek-speaking East, in order both to show the Romans' acquisition of the territory and to acknowledge a new artistic method for spreading Roman propaganda.

¹ For general treatments of these structures, see Nancy H. and Andrew Ramage, *Roman Art*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc, 2001); J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); L. Richardson Jr., *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

Gilbert Charles Picard's fascinating 1957 study of Roman trophies laid the groundwork for this current examination.² This thesis builds upon Picard's research in several ways. Picard's book is now outdated, since much research has been done on all the monuments individually after his publication. These new findings for the Roman *tropaea* in the Eastern Mediterranean must be compiled and examined, both as an artistic and symbolic group. Secondly, there is no collective work on Roman *tropaea* in English. This study should fill that lacuna in the English scholarship on Roman *tropaea* in the Eastern provinces.

The intention of this study is to examine the military victory monuments, or *tropaea*, in Rome's Eastern provinces. The investigation will address questions such as: where was each monument built; when was it built (if possible); why was it built on that particular location; what was the appearance of the monument in ancient times, and how does it look today; were there any monuments within Rome that celebrated the same event, and, if so, how did the monuments relate to one another; what were the importance and symbolism of each structure; and do the Roman *tropaea* correspond in any way to earlier Greek victory monuments? Because many of the victory memorials cannot be securely dated, this examination cannot provide a strictly chronological treatment of the provincial *tropaea*; the commemorative monuments will be grouped by region rather than by time period.

The first chapter will describe the *tropaea* constructed during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, in order to establish the foundation and/or precedent for creating victory monuments in the Eastern Mediterranean. Chapter Two investigates the Roman *tropaea* within Greece, and Chapter Three discusses the Roman victory memorials within Egypt and Judaea.

² Gilbert Charles Picard, *Les trophées romains* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1957).

Noticeably absent from this thesis are Roman *tropaea* in the other Eastern provinces, including Asia Minor and Syria, because no Roman *tropaea* have been found in those areas to date.

The commemorations cataloged in this thesis demonstrate well the Romans' desire for lasting glory on the battlefield. The *tropaea* in Greece, Egypt, and Judaea bring together the idea of Roman military power and the splendor and majesty of Roman art. While there is much scholarship on both the Roman army and Roman art, readers of this thesis will be able to see how the two were united in order to form powerful displays of Roman strength in the Eastern provinces.

CHAPTER 2

CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC *TROPAEA*

Long before the Romans set up their *tropaea* in the Eastern Mediterranean, other earlier victory monuments were built during the Classical and Hellenistic periods. During their contacts with (and subsequent takeover of) the Greek-speaking world, the Romans must have seen the Hellenic and Hellenistic victory monuments built centuries earlier. These commemorations clearly interested and influenced the Romans when they were establishing their own *tropaea* in the Eastern Roman Empire.

Historical Framework for Victory Monuments during the Classical Period

The Romans became aware of several precedents for Classical Greek *tropaea* when they conquered Greece in the second century B.C. Most often these Greek victory monuments purposefully were temporary memorials only. Three permanent *tropaea* are best known by literary and/or archaeological evidence: those at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea. The symbolism and style of these Greek *tropaea* must have influenced Rome in their own, later commemorations within the region.

An early Greek *tropaeum* was ordinarily an array of the enemy's armor placed upon a tree stump. We have evidence of the impermanent trophies in both ancient art and literature. There are four *tropaea* shown on fragments from the balustrade of the Athena Nike temple on the Athenian Acropolis; one of the fragments shows a victory monument decorated with Persian

spoils (fig. 2.1).³ In addition, there are some Greek vases that depict the “tree trophies;” perhaps the most notable representation is that on a red-figured *pelike* dating to ca. 450-440 B.C. (fig. 2.2).⁴ Two 5th-century B.C. Greek authors also describe “tree trophies” in their writings: the historian Thucydides mentions a trophy of the same style that the Spartans created after their victory at Mantinea in 418 B.C., and the playwright Euripides also describes an impermanent monument in his *Heraclidae*.⁵

Some ancient writers provide reasons why most Greek *tropaea* were simply an opponent’s armor placed on trees. Diodorus Siculus best sums up the early Greek notion of *tropaea* in Nikolaos’ speech to the Syracusans urging compassion towards the Athenians captured during the Sicilian expedition:⁶

τίνος γὰρ χάριν οἱ πρόγονοι πάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐν ταῖς κατὰ
 πόλεμον νίκαις κατέδειξαν οὐ διὰ λίθων, διὰ δὲ τῶν τυχόντων ξύλων
 ἰστάναι τὰ τρόπαια; ἄρ’ οὐχ ὅπως ὀλίγον χρόνον διαμένοντα ταχέως
 ἀφανίζεται τὰ τῆς ἔχθρας ὑπομήματα.

For what reason did the ancestors of all the Greeks ordain that the trophies set up in celebrating victories in war should be made, not of stone, but of any wood at hand? Was it not in order that the memorials of the enmity, lasting as they would for a brief time, should quickly disappear?

³ Rhys Carpenter, *The Sculpture of the Nike Temple Parapet* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 15, 31, 69, 71, pls. III, XI, XXXI, XXXII. In his reconstruction, Carpenter proposes that there was a total of ten *tropaea* depicted on the parapet’s frieze (plan I).

⁴ J.D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, vol. II, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 857; Thomas H. Carpenter, *Beazley Addenda*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 298; J.D. Beazley, *Paralipomena*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 425; Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, ed., *Enciclopedia dell’arte antica, classica e orientale*, vol. VII (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1966), 998-99, fig. 1130; Pierre Ducrey, *Warfare in Ancient Greece*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 268-69, fig. 181; William C. West, III, “The Trophies of the Persian Wars,” *CPh* 64 (1969): 10, n. 17.

⁵ Thuc. 5.74.2; Eur. *Heracl.* 786-87. Vergil (*Aen.* 11.5-16) also says that Aeneas set up the arms of Mezentius as a *tropaeum*.

⁶ Diod. Sic. 13.24.5-6. Text and translation by C.H. Oldfather taken from *Diodorus of Sicily*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. V (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 188-91.

Cicero also mentions the reasoning behind temporary Greek *tropaea* when discussing the battle of Leuctra in 371 B.C. He notes:⁷

Cum Thebani Lacedaemonios bello superavissent et fere mos esset Graecis, cum inter se bellum gessissent, ut ii qui vicissent tropaeum aliquod in finibus statuerent victoriae modo in praesentiam declarandae causa, non ut in perpetuum belli memoria maneret, aeneum statuerunt tropaeum. Accusantur apud Amphictyonas [id est, apud commune Graeciae concilium].

When the Thebans conquered the Spartans in war, they set up a trophy in bronze. It was usually a custom with the Greeks, when they waged war among themselves, that those who won would set up some trophy in the area for the purpose of declaring victory merely for the present, not so that the memory of war remains forever. They [i.e., the Thebans] were brought to trial by the Amphictyons (that is, before the general council of Greece).

Cicero's statement tells us two very important things. First, the Thebans' prosecution for placing a permanent bronze trophy on the battle site shows that their untraditional post-battle practice was deemed unlawful to most Greeks. Second, and perhaps even more importantly, is that Cicero mentions that impermanent *tropaea* were created when the battles were among Greek states. Cicero therefore implies that it would have been acceptable to create a more permanent victory monument when a Greek *polis* (or a coalition of Greek city-states) defeated a foreign army.⁸ It cannot be coincidence that the three most famous battles between Greek armies and foreign opponents—at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea—were in fact honored with lasting *tropaea* made of stone.

The *tropaeum* at Marathon honors the defeat of the Persian forces in 490 B.C., and it seems that the Greeks initially set up a traditional “tree trophy” in order to commemorate the

⁷ Cic. *De inv.* 2.23.69. Text by G. Achard taken from *De l'invention* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994), 178. Translation of the text is my own.

⁸ West (“Trophies,” 11-12) shares this opinion of Cicero's insinuation.

momentous battle.⁹ Literary and archaeological evidence both indicate that the Greeks set up a more permanent victory monument a few decades after the battle. Aristophanes is the earliest Greek author to mention the Marathon victory monument, and he does so in three separate plays. The trophy at Marathon is mentioned in his *Lysistrata*, but the references to the *tropaeum* in the *Knights* and *Wasps* are more significant.¹⁰ In both of the latter plays, with almost the exact same wording, Aristophanes describes items as “worthy [of]...the trophy on Marathon’s plain.”¹¹ As West convincingly argues, the playwright’s words do seem to refer to the monument in praiseworthy terms, and almost as “an object worthy of emulation.”¹² Aristophanes’ glowing description of the *tropaeum* must have been referring to the permanent *tropaeum*, as the impermanent “tree trophy” would have been decaying for the 70 years between the famous battle in 490 B.C. and the production of the *Knights* and *Wasps*.¹³ It seems likely, therefore, that we can confidently establish a *terminus ante quem* date for the permanent victory monument at Marathon to the second or third quarter of the 5th century B.C. simply by Aristophanes’ statements concerning the *tropaeum* within his plays.

Archaeological evidence for the commemorative monument at Marathon supports the literary evidence described above, and can even more precisely date the completion of the permanent *tropaeum*. Eugene Vanderpool discovered 5th-century B.C. white marble fragments

⁹ West, “Trophies,” 8; Eugene Vanderpool, “A Monument to the Battle of Marathon,” *Hesperia* 35 (1966): 105-06.

¹⁰ Ar. *Lys.* 284-85, *Eq.* 1333-34, *Vesp.* 711-12

¹¹ Ar. *Eq.* 1333-34, *Vesp.* 711-12.

¹² West, “Trophies,” 12-13.

¹³ *Ibid.* The *Knights* and *Wasps* date to 424 B.C. and 422 B.C., respectively. For the dating of Aristophanes’ plays, see Kenneth James Dover, “Aristophanes (1),” in Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 163-65. Later ancient authors also describe the permanent *tropaeum* at Marathon. For a discussion of these later authors, see West, “Trophies,” 7-15; Vanderpool, “Monument to Marathon,” 101-03 (especially n. 18-22).

that were reused in a medieval tower and old well located on the plain of Marathon.¹⁴ These pieces included column drums, sculptural fragments showing “some broad folds of drapery,” and an Ionic capital whose style dates from ca. 475-450 B.C.¹⁵ Vanderpool argues that “[t]here can be no doubt that these three elements... are parts of a single monument, a free-standing column about ten meters tall supporting a statue,” and he labels this monument as the Marathon *tropaeum*.¹⁶ Because there is no available information that contradicts his claims, we may tentatively designate this white marble trophy dating between 475 and 450 B.C. as the permanent *tropaeum* also mentioned by Aristophanes and other ancient authors.

The victory monument at Salamis celebrates the Greeks’ naval victory over the Persians in 480 B.C. There is no visible evidence for the Salamis *tropaeum* today, but several 4th-century B.C. authors do attest to its existence. Plato, Xenophon, and Lycurgus all mention the victory monument, and by that time the *tropaeum* likely was a permanent commemoration.¹⁷ There are 2nd and 1st-century B.C. decrees which state that Athenian ephebes would sail to the trophy at Salamis and sacrifice to Zeus Tropaeus as part of their training.¹⁸ Writing in the mid-second century A.D., Pausanias also mentions seeing a stone monument celebrating the Greek victory at Salamis.¹⁹

By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fragments of the monument apparently were seen around Salamis by some travelers, including Stuart and Revett, Chandler, and Leake. These travelers describe a white marble column, and they suggest that this column was the *tropaeum* at

¹⁴ Vanderpool, “Monument to Marathon,” 93-106.

¹⁵ Ibid., 93-100.

¹⁶ Ibid., 100, 105-06.

¹⁷ Pl. *Menex.* 245A; Xen. *Anab.* 3.2.13; Lycurg. *Leocr.* 73. West (“Trophies,” 16, n. 45) suggests that the trireme “dedicated to Ajax on Salamis” (in Hdt. 8.121) may have been the original, impermanent *tropaeum* created there immediately after the naval battle.

¹⁸ *IG* II² 1006, 1008, 1028, 1030, 1032. For the dating of these decrees, see West, “Trophies,” 16, n. 48.

¹⁹ Paus. 1.36.1.

Salamis.²⁰ If these column fragments were in fact the victory monument at Salamis, then it seems to have resembled (at least in a general sense) the *tropaeum* column at Marathon. Because there is no visible evidence for the monument currently,²¹ it is impossible to give an exact date for the construction of a permanent *tropaeum* at Salamis. References to the memorial by the 4th-century B.C. authors Plato, Xenophon, and Lycurgus might suggest that a stone *tropaeum* had been set up by that time period.

The *tropaeum* at Plataea commemorated the defeat of Persian forces in 479 B.C. As at Salamis, only literary testimony can prove the existence of a *tropaeum* on the battle site; there is no archaeological evidence available for a victory monument at Plataea. Plutarch mentions that the Spartans and Athenians constructed separate *tropaea* on different areas of the battlefield; these two trophies must have been the impermanent monuments set up immediately after the battle.²² There surely was a permanent victory memorial by the 2nd century A.D., as Pausanias mentions a *tropaeum* that stood fifteen *stadia* from Plataea.²³

It is difficult to determine exactly when a permanent *tropaeum* was set up to commemorate the victory at Plataea. It is noteworthy that neither Thucydides nor Herodotus mentions a victory monument in their stories about Plataea and the graves within the area;

²⁰ J. Stuart and N. Revett, *The Antiquities of Athens*, vol. I (London: John Haberkorn, 1762), ix; Richard Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor and Greece*, vol. II (London: J. Booker and R. Priestley, 1817), 228-29; W.M. Leake, *The Demi of Attica*, 2nd ed. (London: A.J. Valpy, 1841), 171; West, "Trophies," 15-17, n. 41-43; Vanderpool, "Monument to Marathon," 102, n. 20.

²¹ Vanderpool ("Monument to Marathon," 102-03, n. 20) suggests that the remains of the monument that were seen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "may have disappeared completely by the late nineteenth century."

²² Plut. *Arist.* 20.3. Herodotus (9.28, 46, 60, 61) does mention that the Spartans and Athenians battled the Persians at different places at Plataea, and Thucydides (4.124.4; 5.3.4; 7.24.1; 7.45.1; 7.54.1) lists other occasions when two or more trophies were erected at battle sites.

²³ Paus. 9.2.6.

perhaps this indicates that no permanent *tropaeum* was created until after the 5th century B.C.²⁴ West contends that the victory monument at Plataea likely was created after the Peace of Antalcidas in 387 B.C. (and the restoration of the city) and before Plataea was destroyed for a second time by Thebes in ca. 373 B.C.²⁵ While the Plataeans were rebuilding their city (from the first razing of Plataea by Thebes in 427 B.C.), they likely also set up a *tropaeum* in order to celebrate the famous victory over a century earlier.²⁶ The fourth century B.C. writers Plato and Isocrates do mention the *tropaeum* in glowing terms, as if there were a more elaborate, stone monument there by their time.²⁷ Still, there is no discernible evidence proving that there was a commemoration set up by that time period. Perhaps further investigation in the area can reveal to us new information concerning the Plataea *tropaeum*.

Historical Framework for Victory Monuments during the Hellenistic Period

The Macedonians—through their fourth-century B.C. kings, Philip and Alexander—conquered the Eastern Mediterranean world, and they extended their influence and rule as far as India. Alexander’s successors in the East, most notably Ptolemy, Seleucus, and Antigonus, further promoted Macedonian customs and ideas. Although the Macedonians gained large areas of territory through conquest, they did not create any *tropaea* that were similar to the earlier Classical Greek models. Pausanias explains why the Macedonians did not set up their own trophies on battlefields:²⁸

²⁴ Herodotus (9.85) describes monuments at Plataea, but he gives no word of a trophy. Thucydides (3.58.4) tells of the Plataeans’ trial in Sparta and their honoring the Spartan graves annually; there was no mention of a *tropaeum*, which would have been mentioned had it been present there at the time.

²⁵ West, “Trophies,” 18. Diodorus (15.46.6) dates the second destruction of Plataea to 374/3 B.C., whereas Pausanias (9.1.8) dates it to 373/2 B.C.

²⁶ West, “Trophies,” 18.

²⁷ Pl. *Menex.* 245A; Isoc. *Plat.* [14] 59.

²⁸ Paus. 9.40.7-8. Text and translation by W.H.S. Jones taken from *Description of Greece*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. IV (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 358-59.

Φίλιππος δὲ οὐκ ἀνέθηκεν ὁ Ἀμύντου τρόπαιον οὔτε ἐνταῦθα οὔτε ὀπόσας μάχας ἄλλας βαρβάρους ἢ καὶ Ἕλληνας ἐνίκησεν· οὐ γάρ τι Μακεδόσιν ἰστάναι τρόπαια ἦν νενομισμένον.

But Philip, son of Amyntas, set up no trophy, neither here nor for any other success, whether won over Greeks or non-Greeks, as the Macedonian were not accustomed to raise trophies.

Although Philip, Alexander, and their Macedonian comrades did not raise any *tropaea* of their own, they did celebrate their victories in a way that their earlier Greek counterparts did not.

Tropaea of the Hellenistic period are not found as monuments at battle sites, but as the foundations of new cities that commemorate the military victories. There are three such cities known primarily through literary evidence: Alexander the Great founded Nicaea in India, and one of his successors, Seleucus I Nicator, founded both Nicephorium in Mesopotamia and Nicopolis in Lesser Armenia.

Plutarch claims that Alexander founded over 70 cities as he took over the lands stretching from Asia Minor to India.²⁹ Interestingly, though, only one of his cities was founded in order to celebrate a military victory. In Alexander's last push into India, the largest and most famous battle that occurred was against the Indian king Porus at the Hydaspes River in 326 B.C.³⁰ The historian Arrian best describes the foundation of Nicaea (and a second Alexandrian city nearby) after the battle:³¹

Ἵνα δὲ ἡ μάχη ξυνέβη καὶ ἐνθεν ὀρμηθεὶς ἐπέρασε τὸν Ὑδάσπην ποταμόν, πόλεις ἔκτισεν Ἀλέξανδρος. Καὶ τὴν μὲν Νίκαιαν τῆς νίκης τῆς κατ' Ἰνδῶν ἐπώνυμον ὠνόμασε· τὴν δὲ Βουκεφάλαν ἐς τοῦ ἵππου τοῦ Βουκεφάλου τὴν μνήμην ὅς ἀπέθανεν αὐτοῦ, οὐ βληθεὶς πρὸς οὐδενός, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ καμάτον τε καὶ ἡλικίας.

²⁹ Plut. *De Alex. fort.* 328.

³⁰ Diod. Sic. 17.87.1-17.89.3; Arr. *Anab.* 5.9-18; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 60; Curt. 8.14.

³¹ Arr. *Anab.* 5.19-4. Text and translation by E. Iliff Robson taken from *Arrian, The Loeb Classical Library*, vol. II (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 60-61.

In the plains where the battle was fought, and from which he set out to cross the Hydaspes, Alexander founded cities. The first he called Victoria [Nicaea], from the victory over the Indians; the other, Bucephala, in memory of his horse Bucephalas which died there, not wounded by anyone, but from exhaustion and old age.

Arrian's account of the cities' foundations parallels that of another Alexander historian, Curtius.³² Two other ancient writers, however, do not mention Nicaea specifically by name in their versions of the story. Diodorus Siculus also notes that Alexander founded two cities after his victory over Porus, but does not give the cities' names; Plutarch mentions the foundation of Bucephala when discussing the death of the horse, but never mentions Nicaea in conjunction.³³ Although Diodorus' account is more vague, he still mentions that Alexander did found two cities after his victory at the Hydaspes; these unnamed cities must be Nicaea and Bucephala. Plutarch's account of Alexander is more biographical than historical, and so the author used the foundation of Bucephala as an example of Alexander's loyalty to his animals; in the same passage, Plutarch notes that Alexander founded another city in honor of his dog, Peritas.³⁴ Given that most ancient sources credibly attest to the foundation of Nicaea, Plutarch's omission of the city in his biography is not problematic.

The foundation of Nicaea seems factual, but its placement on the Hydaspes River is more difficult to determine. Arrian does say that one city was founded on the battle site, which is on the east side of the Hydaspes, and the other was founded on the site where Alexander crossed the Hydaspes, on the west bank of the river. As A.B. Bosworth correctly notes, Arrian's statement does not give certainty to the placement of either city.³⁵

³² Curt. 9.3.23.

³³ Diod. Sic. 17.89.6; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 61.

³⁴ Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 61.

³⁵ A.B. Bosworth, *A Historical Commentary on Arrian's 'History of Alexander,'* vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 311-12.

The separation of the two clauses [*i.e.*, the placement of the cities and the cities' names] is annoying and makes it practically impossible to determine which city was founded on which side of the Hydaspes. The consensus of critical opinion . . . is that Arrian's τὴν μὲν means 'the former' and that consequently Nicaea was founded on the battle site. That is a possibility, but hardly certain. Arrian can use μὲν to refer to the second, not the first item of a pair . . . and τὴν μὲν could here mean 'the latter'. Quite possibly Arrian himself had no idea which site was which . . . His wording may be intended to be non-committal.

The ancient source that links either city to an actual site is Stephanus of Byzantium, who says that Alexander founded Bucephala where Bucephalas died after he had crossed the Hydaspes and fought in the battle against Porus.³⁶ This statement implies that Bucephala was founded at the actual battle site, on the east side of the river, and consequently Alexander must have founded Nicaea at his crossing point on the west bank of the Hydaspes. Most scholars, however, disregard the statement of Stephanus and use Arrian's account—as unclear as it is—in order to place Nicaea at the battle site on the east bank of the Hydaspes River (fig. 2.3).³⁷ Unfortunately, archaeological evidence cannot help us determine the location of either Nicaea or Bucephala, because neither city has been uncovered yet. Until either city is discovered and verified by factual evidence, we cannot place Nicaea on either side of the Hydaspes River with any certainty.

Arrian says that Alexander celebrated his victory over Porus with athletic and cavalry contests “on the bank of the Hydaspes where he first crossed with his army.”³⁸ As noted above, one cannot know if the games were held closer to Nicaea or to Bucephala. One of Alexander's friends, Craterus, was assigned to build both cities while Alexander continued to march through

³⁶ Steph. Byz. s.v. Βοῶς Κεφαλαί, taken from August Meineke, ed., *Stephani Byzantii Ethnorum quae supersunt*, vol. I (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1849), 175.

³⁷ J.R. Hamilton, “The Cavalry Battle at the Hydaspes,” *JHS* 76 (1956): 26-31; A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: the Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 129-30; Peter Green, *Alexander of Macedon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 111-12; P.M. Fraser, *Cities of Alexander the Great* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 69-70.

³⁸ Arr. *Anab.* 5.20.1, translated by E. Iliff Robson in *Arrian (supra*, n. 31), 63.

India.³⁹ After Alexander was forced to stop his advance in India due to a mutiny among his troops, he returned to Nicaea and Bucephala; there his army helped rebuild his cities, which had been damaged by the monsoon rains.⁴⁰

No information concerning Nicaea's later growth or decline survives in ancient literature, and so little else is known about Nicaea after its initial foundation and reconstruction soon thereafter. Even though we know very little about Nicaea, Alexander's establishment of the city is still very noteworthy. The Macedonian king must have thought that his victory over Porus was incredibly important, as he commemorates it in an even greater way than he did with the battles of Granicus, Issus, and Gaugamela,⁴¹ which were equally important (or arguably even more so) in his march through Persia to India. Hopefully future archaeological excavations along the ancient Hydaspes (modern Jhelum) River will help us learn more about Alexander's lone victory city.

During Alexander's conquest of territory one of his military generals was Seleucus, later called Seleucus I Nicator. When Alexander died at Babylon in 323 B.C., Seleucus was the commander of the Macedonian king's cavalry, and in the division of Alexander's empire he received the area of Babylonia.⁴² During his forty year rule Seleucus increased his territory to include areas from Asia Minor to Bactria and south to Persis (fig. 2.4). Like Alexander, Seleucus I Nicator founded a considerable number of cities, and so it is not surprising that Nicator himself

³⁹ Arr. *Anab.* 5.20.2.

⁴⁰ Arr. *Anab.* 5.25-29.

⁴¹ At Granicus Alexander sent Persian spoils of war back to the Parthenon in Athens, and he also commissioned at Dium a bronze statue group dedicated to the cavalymen who died in battle (Arr. *Anab.* 1.16.4; Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 16.16-18). Alexander did consecrate three altars (*arae*, not *tropaea*) to Jupiter, Hercules, and Minerva in the area around Issus where King Darius' treasure was found (Curt. 3.12.27), but these seem to be more religious in nature than commemorative of the actual victory. There is no evidence of Alexander establishing any memorials at Gaugamela.

⁴² Diod. Sic. 18.3.4; Justin 15.4.6; John D. Grainger, *A Seleukid Prosopography and Gazetteer*. Mnemosyne Supplement vol. 172 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 53, 58.

established two victory cities in his empire as his predecessor had done in India. After giving an extensive list of Seleucus' many foundations, Appian briefly describes the king's two victory cities:⁴³

καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς αὐτοῦ Σελεύκου νίκιας ἔστι Νικηφόριον τε ἐν τῇ
Μεσοποταμίᾳ καὶ Νικόπολις ἐν Ἄρμενίᾳ τῇ ἀγχοτάτῳ μάλιστα
Καππαδοκίας.

From the victories of Seleucus come the names of Nicephorium in Mesopotamia and of Nicopolis in Armenia very near Cappadocia.

These two cities likely were the only foundations that memorialized Seleucus' military victories, or else Appian would have included other cities in his commemorative list. Appian does not state when each city was established, but we can gather enough information to determine possible reasons behind the foundations of Nicephorium and Nicopolis and the approximate dates for both.

Seleucus I Nicator founded Nicephorium south of Ichnai, an Antigonid city, at the junction of the Balikh and the Euphrates Rivers in Mesopotamia (fig. 2.5).⁴⁴ While its foundation date is unclear, John Grainger's comprehensive research on the matter gives us two hypotheses for the city's establishment. Grainger argues that Seleucus founded Nicephorium either in 308/7 B.C., after his victory over Antigonus and Demetrius in Babylonia, or in 301/300 B.C., after his victory over the same king and prince at Ipsus in Asia Minor.⁴⁵

Just by looking at the locations of the victories, it would appear that Seleucus set up Nicephorium in order to commemorate his victory against Antigonus and Demetrius when they

⁴³ App. *Syr.* 57. Text and translation by Horace White taken from *Appian's Roman History*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. II (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 214-15.

⁴⁴ John D. Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator: Constructing a Hellenistic Kingdom* (London: Routledge, 1990), 98-99; Grainger, *Seleukid Prosopography*, 756; Richard J.A. Talbert, ed., *Atlas of Classical History* (London: Routledge, 1985), 74.

⁴⁵ Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, 99. For information on these campaigns, see Diod. Sic. 19.90-20.45; 20.108-111; Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 28-29; App. *Syr.* 55; Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, 76-94, 118-21.

invaded Babylonia, as the town is located in the general location of the 312-308 B.C. campaign by the Antigonids. Grainger convincingly argues, however, that Nicephorium likely was not established at that time. Even after his victory in Babylonia, Seleucus' power in the East was still very tenuous, whereas Antigonus, though defeated in Babylonia, still retained greater power within the Hellenistic world. If Seleucus had established Nicephorium around 308/7 B.C., its blatant symbolism of Seleucid victory over the Antigonid kingdom so close to one of Antigonus' own cities, Ichnai, would have caused the Antigonid king to attack Babylonia again, perhaps this time prevailing.⁴⁶ The general characteristics of Seleucus' cautiousness and prudence and Antigonus' belligerence could suggest the later foundation date.⁴⁷

By the time of his victory at Ipsus in 301 B.C., Seleucus' power among the Hellenistic kingdoms was very well established, and he had no reason to fear any foreign incursions into his kingdom. Seleucus also began to establish new cities within Syria, a newly-gained territory, after his success at Ipsus, and so perhaps his establishment of Nicephorium nearby in Babylonia is not implausible.⁴⁸ In addition to its commemorative foundation, Nicephorium also would have been built near the Antigonid town of Ichnai as a boundary marker, a proud proclamation of Seleucid borders. Perhaps Seleucus now felt more confident in establishing a city that commemorated an earlier victory without any chance of Antigonid retaliation. It seems most likely that Nicephorium did in fact celebrate Seleucus' victory in Babylonia in 308/7 B.C., and that the city was established seven years later once the Seleucid king's power over and protection against his foes had been strengthened.

⁴⁶ Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, 99-100.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.; John D. Grainger, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 31-87.

Nicephorium is mentioned only sporadically in ancient sources after its late fourth-century B.C. establishment. Cassius Dio briefly notes that Crassus won over the people of Nicephorium (and other Greek cities) in his Eastern campaign, but says nothing about the city's buildings, government, or history.⁴⁹ The emperor Leo I (A.D. 457-74) apparently constructed some buildings there when he renamed it Leontopolis, and, according to Procopius, the emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-65) built a fortress at Nicephorium.⁵⁰

While very little is known about Nicephorium except for minor details, the city was an important symbol of Seleucid resistance against Antigonid aggression. Seleucus followed his predecessor, Alexander, by creating a commemorative city after a military triumph—no matter how much later the city was established after the triumph—and in turn continued a precedent of victory cities that the Romans copied from him.

Located to the west of Zeugma and to the north of Antioch (fig. 2.5), Nicopolis is claimed to be both an Alexandrian and a Seleucid foundation. Stephanus of Byzantium says that Alexander founded the city in order to commemorate his victory at Issus.⁵¹ Stephanus' claim contradicts Appian's assertion that Seleucus founded the city, which seems more credible,⁵² but that is not reason enough to refute his account. There are several other reasons why Stephanus' statement cannot be true. First and foremost, Alexander never visited the area around Nicopolis in his march towards Syria and the East, and so his foundation of a city there is impossible.⁵³ Secondly, Nicopolis and Issus are too distant from each other, and if Alexander were to have

⁴⁹ Cass. Dio 40.12.2-40.13.1.

⁵⁰ Procop. *Aed.* 2.7; William Smith, ed., *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*, vol. II (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1857), 424; L. Michael Whitby, "Justinian (Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Iustinianus)," in *OCD*³, 802-03; L. Michael Whitby, "Leo (2) I," in *OCD*³, 843.

⁵¹ Steph. Byz. s.v. Νικόπολις, taken from Meineke, *Stephani Byzantii* I, 475.

⁵² *Supra*, n. 43.

⁵³ Grainger, *Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 35.

celebrated his Issus victory by creating a commemorative city, he likely would have done so much closer to the actual battlefield.⁵⁴

While there is no definite evidence concerning the foundation date of Nicopolis, an early third century B.C. date seems likely. Seleucus defeated Demetrius in 285 B.C. in the Amanus Mountains, and the mountain range overlooks the site in the plain below.⁵⁵ A foundation date soon after 285 B.C. therefore seems certain, in celebration of Seleucus' third great victory over the Antigonids.⁵⁶

Like the earlier Hellenistic foundation cities, we have little information about ancient Nicopolis. We do not know anything more about its history, and there is no evidence as to its size and population.⁵⁷ Nicopolis later became part of the Roman province of Cilicia, as we hear from Strabo, but the geographer erroneously places the city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea within its new province.⁵⁸ Grainger perhaps rightly believes that it was likely a small market center of the surrounding area, but it never became large enough to warrant any detailed information by the ancient sources.⁵⁹

The modern Turkish town of İslahiye sits upon ancient Nicopolis,⁶⁰ and so perhaps we can gain further information about the ancient commemorative town through extensive archaeological fieldwork and excavation there. Because Nicopolis was one of only two cities that

⁵⁴ Ibid., 35-36. Curtius does state that Alexander had set up three altars near Issus to commemorate the victory (*supra*, n. 41), but he never mentions that Nicopolis was the commemorative city of the battle of Issus.

⁵⁵ Plut. *Vit. Demetr.* 47-49; Grainger, *Seleukos Nikator*, 171-72; Grainger, *Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 52-53; Bezalel Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army: Organization and Tactics in the Great Campagins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 111-16.

⁵⁶ The other great victories are those in Babylonia (ca. 308 B.C.) and at Ipsus (301 B.C.), as mentioned earlier.

⁵⁷ Grainger, *Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 103.

⁵⁸ Strabo 16.4.19.

⁵⁹ Grainger, *Cities of Seleukid Syria*, 134, 196.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 80.

Seleucus established in honor of a military victory, it obviously held an important place in Seleucid history. The establishment of both Nicephorium and Nicopolis represents the first and last major victories that Seleucus gained over his strong Antigonid rivals, and so the cities make powerful symbols of the Hellenistic king's military glory.

Conclusions

Many Classical and Hellenistic *tropaea* were known to the Romans, and these monuments were evident in literature, were seen on the battlefields, or even arose as new cities from the victory sites. We have evidence of the Romans establishing *tropaea* of both the Classical (monument) and the Hellenistic (city) type in Greece, Egypt, and Judaea. The earlier *tropaea* of the Classical and Hellenistic age set a certain precedent for celebrating military victories, and they must have influenced the Romans when they set up their own commemorations in the Eastern Mediterranean.



Figure 2.1



Figure 2.2

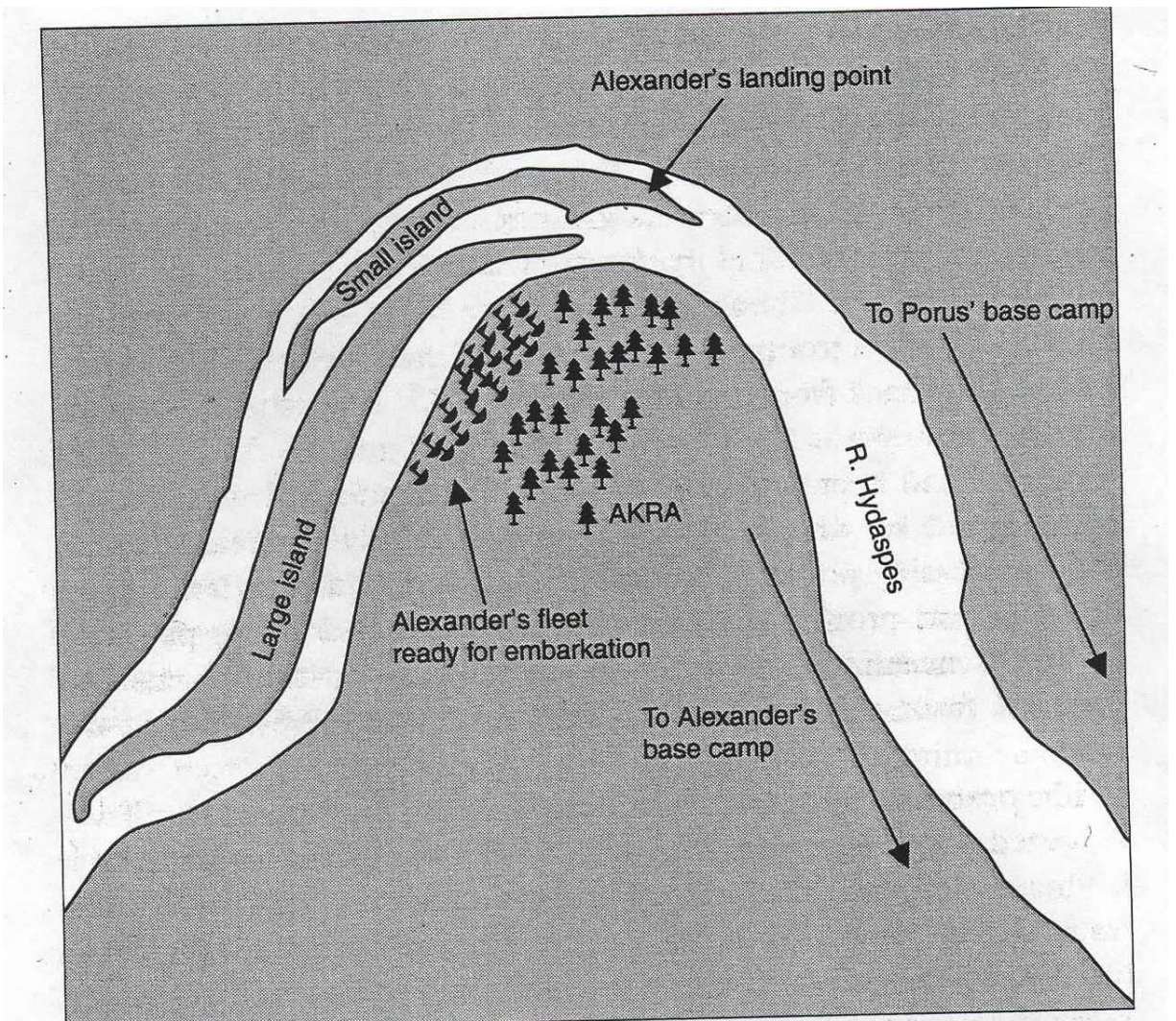


Figure 2.3

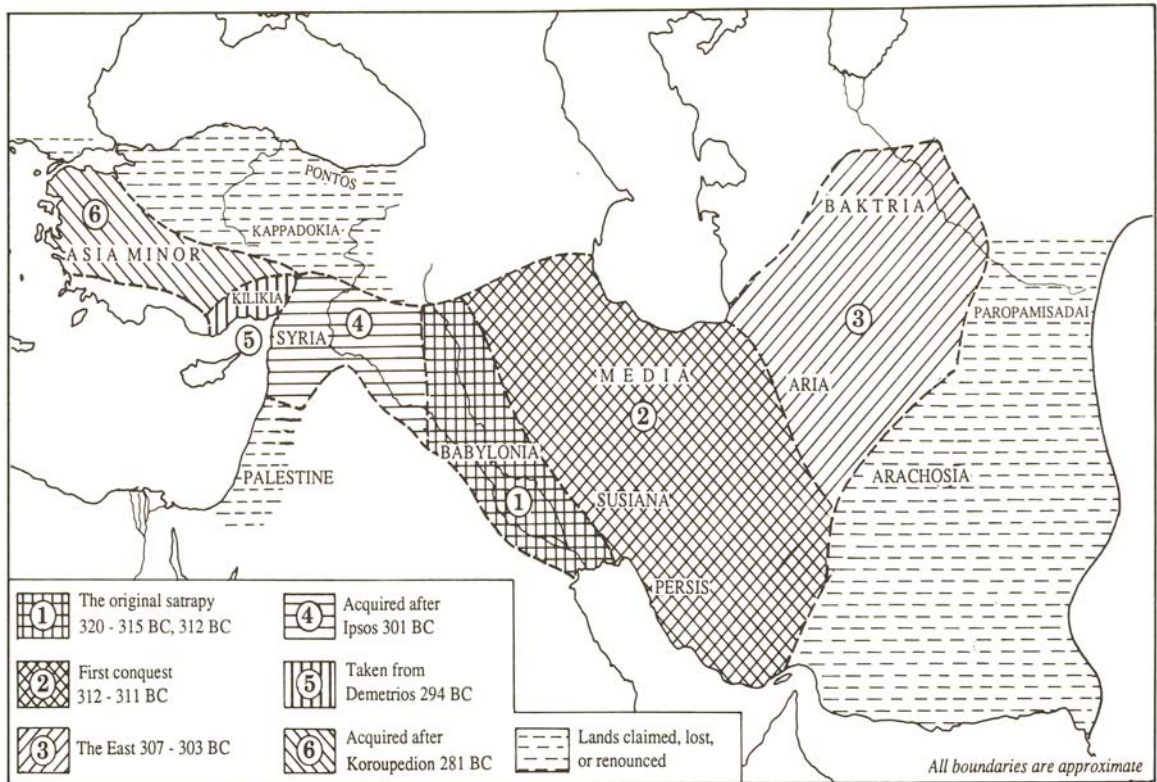


Figure 2.4

CHAPTER 3

ROMAN *TROPAEA* IN GREECE

Some of the best-known and best-preserved Roman victory memorials are found in Greece. The Aemilius Paullus monument at Delphi and Octavian's commemorations around Actium are the only two Roman *tropaea* within the region, but their importance in Roman history (and Roman art) is undeniable. Before discussing these two monuments, I will give an outline of Rome's direct involvement with Greece. This principally considers Rome's incursions into the area during the third and second centuries B.C.

Roman Expansion into and Authority within Greece

Rome's deep involvement in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean occurred almost 450 years after the foundation of Rome. Once Rome's associations with Greece became more tangled, though, Rome became the ruling administrator of the area in less than a century. Before discussing the Greek and Roman *tropaea* within Greece, one must understand how Rome began its interaction with Greece, and how the Republic eventually extended its authority and control over the region.

While Rome did have some general contact with Greece and the East in the 4th century B.C.,⁶¹ Rome's active participation in the area began in 229 B.C. with the First Illyrian War. After the Ardiaean queen, Teuta, attacked some cities on the Illyrian coast, Rome decided to

⁶¹ There is evidence that Rome made a dedication at the temple of Apollo at Delphi in 394 B.C. in celebration of a victory over Veii (Livy 4.28.1-5; Diod. Sic. 14.93.3-4), and that Rome had some contact with Rhodes ca. 305 B.C. For more on these connections with Greece, see R.E. Errington, "Rome and Greece to 205 B.C.," in A.E. Astin, F.W. Walbank, M.W. Frederiksen, and R.W. Ogilvie, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. VIII, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 81-85.

intervene. As Gruen explains, however, Rome's reason for her involvement was not at all for conquest.⁶²

Rome had nothing to fear from Illyria . . . The Romans sprang into action when Hellenic towns across the Ionian Gulf had succumbed or were about to succumb to the barbarian, and then other champions had failed to prevent the surrender. The route to south Italy via northwest Greece was crucial for the people of Magna Graecia—and they did have claims on Rome . . . Rome had acted to keep the shipping lanes open, and to maintain the loyalty of her allies in southern Italy. A limited war, only indirectly touching Roman interests, and one that could swiftly be disposed of.

Rome did not ask for any territory in the peace treaty with Queen Teuta, but simply required that no more than two unarmed Illyrian vessels could sail south of the town of Lissus.⁶³

After defeating Queen Teuta, the Romans returned to their own affairs back in the West for almost a decade. In 220 B.C., however, another Illyrian dynast, Demetrius of Pharos, aggravated Rome by breaching the treaty from the First Illyrian War and sailing south of Lissus.⁶⁴ Rome may have been warring against Istrian pirates, who were raiding Roman grain ships in the northern Adriatic, around 220 B.C. Gruen argues that Demetrius of Pharos, an Illyrian dynast, was collaborating with them, thus causing Rome's ire.⁶⁵ Rome began the Second Illyrian War by crossing the Adriatic Sea in 219 B.C. and attacking Demetrius' forces in Dimale and Pharos.⁶⁶ While his garrisons were in combat with the Roman troops, Demetrius himself escaped and fled to King Philip V of Macedonia, whom he knew very well.⁶⁷

⁶² Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, vol. II (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 366-67.

⁶³ Polyb. 2.12.3; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 366-67.

⁶⁴ App. *Ill.* 8; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 370.

⁶⁵ Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 370-72. Gruen admits that our ancient sources detailing this time period are fragmentary, especially with the loss of Livy's treatment of the account. He notes, however, that "the Livian tradition" suggests that Demetrius' collaboration with the Istrian pirates may have been Rome's reasoning behind the Second Illyrian War.

⁶⁶ Polyb. 3.16.7, 3.18-19; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 373.

⁶⁷ Polyb. 3.19.7-13; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 373.

Rome wanted to punish Demetrius for his foolhardy partnership with the Istrian pirates, but the second war with Carthage was a more urgent matter for the Roman government. Rome's attention was more focused on Hannibal in the West, but in 217 B.C. a Roman delegation traveled to King Philip and asked for his surrender of Demetrius.⁶⁸ Philip ignored the request, and then two years later he made an alliance with Hannibal against Rome in order to start a second front against Rome (called the First Macedonian War).⁶⁹ Although Philip's army in Illyria did aggravate the Romans to a certain extent, he never posed any major threat to her interests. In 212/11 B.C. Rome allied with the Aetolian League against Philip, with the Aetolians attacking Philip on land and the Romans only using its navy against the Macedonian king.⁷⁰ What is interesting here is that Rome still did not take the initiative to gain any territory in Greece; in fact, it seems that Aetolia participated more often in the First Macedonian War against Philip than did Rome.⁷¹ The Aetolian League finally came to terms with Philip in 206 B.C., and Rome followed suit with the peace of Phoenice in 205 B.C.⁷²

While Rome may have been a minor player in the First Macedonian War, she was the primary instigator of the Second Macedonian War (200-197/6 B.C.). The most plausible reasons for Rome's attacks on Macedonia are that Rome wanted now to punish Philip for his alliance with Hannibal and that the Roman government wanted to show their Greek allies that Rome cared about her allies' problems—the most notable problem being Macedonian aggression in

⁶⁸ Livy 22.33.3; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 374-75.

⁶⁹ Livy 23.38.7; Polyb. 7.9.13-14; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 375-76; Finley Hooper, *Roman Realities* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 131.

⁷⁰ Livy 25.24.11; *IG IX*, 1², 241; *SEG XIII*, 382; Hatto Herbert Schmitt, ed., *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums*, Bd. III (Munich: Beck, 1960), no. 536; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 377.

⁷¹ Gruen (*Hellenistic World II*, 378-79) shows that the Romans were only marginally involved in the war, and that in their treaty with the Aetolians they did not ask for any rights to any cities and/or land captured from King Philip. Gruen even says that “[t]he ill-named ‘First Macedonian War’ was primarily a Hellenic-Macedonian contest.”

⁷² Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 381-82.

Hellas.⁷³ Whatever Rome's true reasons for war against Philip,⁷⁴ she entered the war with fervor. After Titus Quinctius Flaminius' great victory over Philip at the Battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 B.C., Philip agreed to terms with the Romans.⁷⁵ Surprisingly, Rome left Philip on the Macedonian throne and did not ask for any land as tribute; as a major show of power, however, Rome did declare that universal freedom had been given to all Greeks after Philip's defeat by Rome.⁷⁶

Tensions between the Romans and Macedonians again came to a head in 171 B.C. By that time, Perseus was the new king of Macedonia, having succeeded Philip V in 179 B.C. Perseus was fairly deferential to the Romans during the beginning of his reign, even renewing his father's *amicitia* with Rome.⁷⁷ Within eight years, however, Perseus was aggressively harassing Roman allies in Greece, and in 172 B.C. the Pergamene king Eumenes, while in Rome, charged Perseus with trying to ally with Carthage and to invade Italy.⁷⁸ In the following year the Senate sent an army to Greece, and in 168 B.C. the Roman consul Lucius Aemilius Paullus defeated Perseus at the Battle of Pydna.⁷⁹ After Paullus' decisive victory, he and his army spent the next year looting and pillaging numerous towns in Macedonia. In 167 B.C. Paullus finally convened a meeting in Amphipolis with the ambassadors of all Macedonian cities, and there he

⁷³ R.M. Errington, "Rome Against Philip and Antiochus," in *CAH*² VIII, 262; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 398.

⁷⁴ There are many hypotheses—both ancient and modern—for Rome's decision(s) for war. For a fascinating, thorough examination concerning the causes of the Second Macedonian War, see Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 382-98.

⁷⁵ Polyb. 18.44.2-4; Livy 33.30.2-3; Michael Grant, *History of Rome* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1978), 135-36.

⁷⁶ Livy 33.34.3-4; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 399-402; Michael Grant, *History of Rome*, 136.

⁷⁷ Polyb. 25.3.1; Livy 40.58.8, 41.24.6, 45.9.3; Diod. Sic. 29.30; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 403.

⁷⁸ Livy 42.11-13; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 403-409.

⁷⁹ Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 18-24; Livy 44.36-42; N.G.L. Hammond and F.W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 547-57.

announced the division of Macedonia into four separate, free republics, each with its own set of magistrates.⁸⁰

While Rome was not interested in policy-making in Greece in previous conflicts with Illyria and Macedonia, this time she took a major role in the shaping of Eastern affairs. The Senate clearly was tired of dealing with Macedonia's recurring aggression, regression, and resurgence, and Rome decided to end the cyclical exchanges with Macedonia by separating the region into smaller, less powerful states. The Greek mainland still governed itself, for the most part, until the Achaean League angered Rome by mocking Roman envoys who were in Corinth to allow Sparta to withdraw from the confederacy.⁸¹ According to Gruen, after the Achaean League ridiculed the Roman envoys, it was determined that "Rome's *dignitas* would not be further compromised."⁸² Consequently, under the direction of consul Lucius Mummius, Rome's army swept through Greece and razed Corinth in 146 B.C. The Romans abolished the Achaean League, and its cities were incorporated into the new Roman province of Macedonia.⁸³ As Romans demolished Corinth, so too was eliminated the existence of separate, independent *poleis* on the Greek mainland: Greece finally came under the complete dominion of Rome.

The Aemilius Paullus Monument at Delphi

After a series of wars Rome finally defeated Macedonia in 167 B.C. and divided the area into four separate republics.⁸⁴ Rome's success in Greece primarily came from the defeat in 168 B.C. of the Macedonian king Perseus by the Roman consul Lucius Aemilius Paullus at the battle

⁸⁰ Livy, 45.17.1-4, 45.18.6-8, 45.29.1-10; Diod. Sic. 31.8.1, 31.8.6-9; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 424; Hammond and Walbank, *Macedonia III*, 558-69.

⁸¹ Polyb. 38.12.1-4; Paus. 7.15.1; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 521-22.

⁸² Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 522; Paus. 7.15.1, 7.16; Grant, *History of Rome*, 143; Erich S. Gruen, "The Origins of the Achaean War," *JHS* 96 (1976): 65-69.

⁸³ Grant, *History of Rome*, 143.

⁸⁴ *Supra*, n. 80.

of Pydna. Paullus signified his victory with an impressive memorial at the panhellenic sanctuary of Delphi. His monument is perhaps our earliest example of a Roman *tropaeum*, and its style and history bridge the gap between the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

In his biography of Aemilius Paullus, Plutarch describes Paullus' decision to create a *tropaeum* for his Pydna victory:⁸⁵

ἐν δὲ Δελφοῖς ἰδὼν κίονα μέγαν τετράγωνον ἐκ λίθων λευκῶν
συνηρμοσμένον, ἐφ' οὗ Περσέως ἔμελλε χρυσοῦς ἀνδριὰς τίθεσθαι,
προσέταξε τὸν αὐτοῦ τεθῆναι· τοὺς γὰρ ἠττημένους τοῖς νικῶσιν
ἐξίστασθαι χώρας προσήκειν.

At Delphi, he [Paullus] saw a tall square pillar composed of white marble stones, on which a golden statue of Perseus was intended to stand, and gave orders that his own statue should be set there, for it was meet that the conquered should make room for their conquerors.

Polybius mentions that Perseus was constructing many columns at Delphi, not just one, and that Aemilius Paullus placed statues of himself on all of them.⁸⁶ Archaeological evidence can prove the existence of only one *tropaeum* set up by Paullus, however. The known monument is one of three pillars standing in front of the famous temple to Apollo; the two others were dedicated to King Eumenes II of Pergamon and the Bithynian king Prusias (fig. 3.1).⁸⁷

The pillar was roughly 9.58 meters high. On top of it was a plinth measuring 1.25 meters by 2.45 meters, and an equestrian statue of Paullus was placed at the top of the *tropaeum* (fig. 3.2).⁸⁸ As Pollitt notes, “[t]he cuttings which mark the points where the statue was fastened to

⁸⁵ Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 28.2. Text and translation by Bernadotte Perrin taken from *Lives*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. VI (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 428-29.

⁸⁶ Polyb. 30.10.1-2.

⁸⁷ J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 156; Pierre de la Coste-Messelière, *Delphes* (Paris: Arts du Monde, 1959), 315. Interestingly, both Eumenes II and Prusias were allies of Rome against the Macedonians. For more information on these two monarchs, see Grant, *History of Rome*, 136-39.

⁸⁸ Pollitt, *Art in Hellenistic Age*, 156.

the plinth suggest that the horse was in an animated, rearing position.”⁸⁹ Paullus also set up an inscription near the base of the monument, which read:⁹⁰

L AIMILIUS · L · F · INPERATOR · DE · REGE · PERSE
MACEDONIBVSQVE · CEPET

General Lucius Aemilius, son of Lucius, seized [this] from King Perseus
and the Macedonians.

While it seems natural that a Roman general would write his inscription in Latin, this practice would have been unusual, almost unprecedented, in this heretofore purely Hellenic area. Using Latin on the inscription symbolized Rome's new authority over Greece. There also could be some witticism in Paullus' dedicatory inscription. Visitors to Delphi could not forget that Paullus seized the monument from Perseus and the Macedonians, and might then have drawn the parallel to Rome's seizure of both the panhellenic sanctuary of Delphi and Macedonia. The triple meaning of the dedication is certainly an interesting and unique element of this *tropaeum*.

A very important feature of the monument is its frieze, which was located below the statue and plinth (figs. 3.2-3.4). The frieze measured 0.31 meters high and 6.5 meters long and ran along all sides of the pillar on three separate blocks.⁹¹ It depicted Paullus' victory over Perseus at the battle of Pydna, as the relief scenes on the frieze correspond well to our ancient *testimonia* of the battle. As Pollitt rightfully notes, it seems that the reliefs on the four sides are self-contained scenes, and perhaps even show separate episodes in the actual battle.⁹² Before examining each side of the monument's frieze, however, we must review the differing ancient accounts of the battle of Pydna.

⁸⁹ Ibid. There are no remains of the statue itself.

⁹⁰ *ILLRP* 323; Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 156; A.J. Reinach, “La frise de monument de Paul-Émile à Delphes,” *BCH* 34 (1910): 434-35. Translation of the inscription is my own.

⁹¹ Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 157.

⁹² Ibid.

Our earliest extant source for the battle is Livy, who writes about 150 years after Paullus' victory. In his *Ab Urbe Condita*, he tells how the battle of Pydna began.⁹³

neutro imperatorum volente fortuna, quae plus consiliis humanis pollet, contraxit certamen. flumen erat haud magnum proprius hostium castris, ex quo et Macedones et Romani aquabantur praesidiis ex utraque ripa positis, ut id facere tuto possent . . . cum otium ad flumen esset neutris lacessentibus, hora circiter nona iumentum e manibus curantium elapsum in ulteriorem ripam effugit. quod cum per aquam ferme genus tenuis altam tres milites sequerentur, Threces duo id iumentum ex medio alveo in suam ripam trahentes [caperent hos persecuti illi] altero eorum occiso receptoque eo iumento ad stationem suorum se recipiebant. octingentorum Thracum praesidium in hostium ripa erat. ex his pauci primo, aegre passi popularem in suo conspectu caesum, ad persequendos inerfectores fluvium transgressi sunt, dein plures, postremo omnes . . .

With neither of the generals wishing it, Fortune, which is stronger than human planning, brought about the battle. There was a river (not at all of great size) closer to the enemies' camp, from which both the Macedonians and Romans were getting water with guards posted on either bank in order to do it safely . . . While there was quiet at the river, with neither side provoking the other, at about the ninth hour a pack animal ran away from the hands of its handlers, escaping to the other riverbank. While three soldiers chased it through the water, which was nearly up to the knees, two Thracians grabbed the animal, dragging it from mid-stream onto their own bank. The Romans pursued these men, killing one of them, recaptured the animal, and withdrew to their own camp. There was a garrison of eight hundred Thracians on the enemies' bank. At first a few of these, upset at the slaughter of their fellow-countrymen before their eyes, crossed the river to pursue the killers, then more, and finally all of them . . .

Perhaps most interesting about Livy's account is that he says the famous battle actually started by chance, not by either leader's initiative. Plutarch, who was writing almost three centuries after the battle and over a century after Livy, gives two different accounts of the battle. In his *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, he says:⁹⁴

Περὶ δὲ δειλὴν οἱ μὲν αὐτοῦ φασὶ τοῦ Αἰμιλίου τεχνάζοντος ἐκ τῶν πολεμίων γενέσθαι τὴν ἐπιχείρησιν, ἀχάλινον ἵππον ἐξελάσαντας ἐμβαλεῖν αὐτοῖς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους, καὶ τοῦτον ἀρχὴν μάχης διωκόμενον

⁹³ Livy 44.40.3-4, 44.40.7-10. Text by Wilhelm Weissenborn and Hermann Johannes Müller taken from *Ab urbe condita libri* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1962). Translation of the text is my own.

⁹⁴ Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 18.1-2. Text and translation by Bernadotte Perrin taken from *Lives* (*supra*, n. 85), 428-29.

παρασχεῖν· οἱ δὲ Ῥωμαϊκῶν ὑποζυγίων χορτάσματα παρακομιζόντων ἄπτεσθαι Θραῦκας, ὧν Ἄλέξανδρος ἠγεῖτο, πρὸς δὲ τούτους ἐκδρομὴν ὀξείαν ἐπτακοσίων Λιγύων γενέσθαι· παραβοηθούντων δὲ πλειόνων ἑκατέρους οὕτω συνάπτεσθαι τὴν μάχην ἀμφοτέρων.

Towards evening, Aemilius himself, as some say, devised a scheme for making the enemy begin the attack, and the Romans, pursuing a horse which they had driven forth without a bridle, came into collision with them, and the pursuit of this horse brought on a battle; others say that Thracians, under the command of Alexander, set upon Roman beasts of burden that were bringing in forage, and that against these a sharp sally was made by seven hundred Ligurians, whereupon reinforcements were sent to either party, and thus the engagement became general.

Plutarch's first version of the battle is closer to Livy's account, but it still differs in two major ways. First, Livy states that neither side deliberately initiated the fighting, whereas Plutarch claims that Paullus himself devised a plot to start the battle. Second, Livy mentions a Roman pack animal [*iumentum*] running to the Macedonian side, but Plutarch says that the animal was a horse [ἵππον]. Plutarch's second account describes Roman pack-animals [ὑποζυγίω] being attacked by Greeks, but not because they were escaping from their grooms as Livy relates. While the three versions by Livy and Plutarch are helpful to our understanding of the battle, one also must look to the sculptural reliefs on the Aemilius Paullus monument in order to get a better idea of the battle's events.

The north relief seems to show the beginning of the battle at Pydna (figs. 3.3-3.4). Perhaps most striking on this side is the presence of a riderless horse within the frieze [5].⁹⁵ Scholars have rightly noted that the horse is prominently displayed by its placement in the center of the frieze and by its sharply turned head and extended neck.⁹⁶ Might this horse be the one mentioned by Plutarch in his first account of the battle? We will never know if Plutarch's account came from earlier written records of the battle, or if he created his version after viewing

⁹⁵ Numbers in brackets hereafter refer to the numbers underneath each individual in fig. 3.3.

⁹⁶ Ramage and Ramage, *Roman Art*, 74.

the monument's frieze. Perhaps also, Livy's description of a pack-animal, while historically accurate, was not as easy (or elegant) to show on the north frieze, and so a horse was carved in place of a *iumentum*. All of these possibilities are strictly conjectures, of course, without any evidence to support the hypotheses.

Flanking the riderless horse on either side were several cavalymen and infantrymen (figs. 3.3-3.4). To the far left of the horse are two cavalymen—one with a spear [1] and another with a short sword [2]—attacking a foot soldier [3] and another cavalryman [4], whose horse is collapsing. The cavalymen to the far left [1-2] are Roman, because their armor is representative of the type of shirt mail (*lorica hamata*) used by Roman legionaries during the time period.⁹⁷ The infantryman and knight with a fallen horse [3-4] are Macedonians, as is evident by their armor and clothing.⁹⁸ Another battle takes place to the right of the riderless horse: two soldiers with long oval shields [6-7] fight two cavalymen [9-10] and one foot soldier [8], who holds a large circular shield and has fallen to one knee. The long oval shields are distinguishing attributes of Ligurian soldiers, who were allied to Rome in the battle.⁹⁹ These Ligurian-type shields are very similar to those found on the so-called Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, which dates to the second half of the first century B.C. (fig. 3.5).¹⁰⁰ The final three individuals on the north relief surely are allied to Perseus, since they are fighting the Ligurian infantrymen. While Hammond and Walbank conclude that the kneeling soldier is Thracian, “as his lack of a helmet

⁹⁷ H. Russell Robinson, *The Armour of Imperial Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), 164.

⁹⁸ Hammond and Walbank (*Macedonia* III, 613) note that the foot soldier is wearing a Macedonian helmet and his shield has characteristically Macedonian emblems in relief; the knight with the fallen horse wears a cuirass with lappets that are similar to those worn by Alexander the Great on the Alexander Mosaic from the House of the Faun at Pompeii (now in the Naples Archaeological Museum).

⁹⁹ Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 18.2; Hammond and Walbank, *Macedonia* III, 613.

¹⁰⁰ Robinson, *Armour of Imperial Rome*, 167, figs. 463-65. Ramage and Ramage (*Roman Art*, 74-75, fig. 2.28) state that the frieze likely came from the Temple of Neptune in Rome.

and short treads suggest,”¹⁰¹ I disagree with their hypothesis for two reasons. First, the foot soldier’s [8] round shield goes against Plutarch’s account which says that Thracians used oblong shields (θυρεῶν) in the battle.¹⁰² Secondly, the decoration on the fallen soldier’s shield is identical to the shield of another infantryman on the north relief [3] whom Hammond and Walbank correctly identified as Macedonian (figs. 3.6-3.7).¹⁰³ Hammond and Walbank also say that the two cavalymen also are Thracian, but their specific ethnicity cannot be determined with any certainty.¹⁰⁴

The shorter west side is very worn, and so convincing hypotheses on its figures are very problematic (figs. 3.3-3.4). It appears that two horsemen [11, 14] are engaged in battle with two infantryman with shields [13, 15] and another naked soldier who has fallen [12]. Identification of the individuals is debatable. A.J. Reinach argues that the foot soldiers are Samnites fighting Thracian horsemen, but he gives no explanation for his conjecture.¹⁰⁵ I agree with Hammond’s and Walbank’s suggestion that both cavalymen are Roman, as the tunic and short sword on one of the horsemen [14] are quite similar to those on the Roman cavalryman on the north relief [1].¹⁰⁶ Kähler believes—with Pollitt’s support—that the horseman with the short sword and turned head [14] could be Aemilius Paullus himself.¹⁰⁷ I disagree with their opinion, however, because Plutarch notes that Paullus “kept wielding his spear [δόρυ κρατῶν]” during the entire

¹⁰¹ Hammond and Walbank, *Macedonia III*, 613-14.

¹⁰² Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 18.3.

¹⁰³ *Supra*, n. 98; Heinz Kähler, *Der Fries vom Reiterdenkmal des Aemilius Paullus in Delphi* (Berlin: Mann, 1965), pls. 4, 7.

¹⁰⁴ The authors contend that the cavalymen are Thracian due to the “distinctive cross-rib” on the front of one’s [9] shield (*Macedonia III*, 613, 615), but they do not give any supporting evidence showing that the cross-rib on the shield is characteristically Thracian.

¹⁰⁵ Reinach, “La frise,” 463.

¹⁰⁶ Hammond and Walbank, *Macedonia III*, 615-16.

¹⁰⁷ Kähler, *Der Fries*, 18; Pollitt, *Art in Hellenistic Age*, 157.

battle, whereas the horseman in question uses only a short sword.¹⁰⁸ Even if the horseman's face were a portrait of Paullus, which seems doubtful, it would be unrecognizable to those viewing the monument from more than nine meters below the frieze's height.¹⁰⁹

Because the cavalymen appear to be Roman, the foot soldiers likely are on the Macedonian side. I offer—albeit with great hesitation—that the collapsed, naked infantryman possibly represents a Gallic warrior. Both Polybius and Livy say that Perseus did use Gauls in his army, and we have further literary and artistic evidence that Gauls sometimes fought in the nude.¹¹⁰ Because the figure is badly damaged, there is nothing else (aside from the nudity) that is characteristic of Gauls, and so its ethnic identification is still uncertain.¹¹¹

The south relief, which faces the entrance of the temple to Apollo, portrays a jumbled, confusing scene (figs. 3.3-3.4). On the left side of the relief are foot soldiers with bow and spear [16-17] and a (badly damaged) horseman [18], all about to attack a badly deteriorated infantryman [19]. To the right are two horsemen [22-23] who are fighting a foot soldier [20] and a cavalryman with a collapsing horse [21]. It is very difficult to determine which soldiers on the south relief are Macedonian and which fighters are Roman. The apparel of the falling horseman

¹⁰⁸ *Vit. Aem.* 19.3. Plutarch's words would also contradict Pollitt's hypothetical restoration of the equestrian statue on top of monument (fig. 3.2), where Paullus holds a short sword. Because there are no remains of the Paullus statue, it is impossible to determine how Paullus really appeared in the statue.

¹⁰⁹ Anne Jacquemin and Didier Laroche also dispute the claim that the horseman's face is a portrait of Aemilius Paullus. For their justifications, some of which are also debatable, see "Notes sur trois piliers Delphiques," *BCH* 106 (1982): 212.

¹¹⁰ Polyb. 2.28.8, 3.114.3-4; Livy 38.21.9, 38.26.7; Diod. Sic. 5.30.3. For ancient sculptures of nude Gauls, see the Ludovisi Gaul and Wife (now in the Terme Museum), the Capitoline Dying Gaul, the Gaul from Delos (now in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens), and the Dead Gaul from the 'Lesser Attalid Group' at Pergamon (now in the Venice Archaeological Museum). These sculptures are discussed in Pollitt, *Art in Hellenistic Age*, 85-94; R.R.R. Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 99-104, figs. 118, 119, 132; Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, "The Gauls in Sculpture," *Arch. News* 11:3/4 (1982): 87, 96-98, figs. 5, 22.

¹¹¹ Other distinguishing features of Gauls in ancient art include figures wearing the Gallic necklace (torque), heavy, matted, wild hair, wearing mustaches without beards, and, as Ridgway states, "prominent cheekbones that seem almost to pierce the skin" ("Gauls in Sculpture," 97).

[21] appears similar to that of a fallen cavalryman on the north relief [4]. Because we have identified the earlier cavalryman as a Macedonian, the collapsing horseman on the south side is also probably a Macedonian. The horseman at the far right of the relief [23] seems to be attacking the fallen cavalryman. His dress is comparable to the *lorica hamata* armor of the Roman knights mentioned earlier [1-2], and so this suggests that he also is Roman. Even though there is another cavalryman [22] in between the two fighting horsemen [21, 23], he seems to be in the background because the figure is carved in somewhat lower relief (figs. 3.3-3.4). The shield of this horseman is also behind the leg of the horse to its right [22-23], further emphasizing the soldier's placement behind the other figures. The central figure [20] carries a characteristic Ligurian shield, like his counterparts on the north relief [6-7], and therefore is on the Roman side. He is placed behind the falling cavalryman [21], since the horseman's spear is in front of the foot soldier. If the Ligurian infantryman [20] and middle horseman [22] are fighting each other on the same "plane" in the background, might that suggest that the cavalryman is on the Macedonian side? It is an intriguing idea that no scholar has suggested as of yet, but still the hypothesis would require a close examination of the relief blocks in person to be affirmed.

The last four figures on the south relief [16-19] face away from the other combatants, as if in their own small battle. Beside the Ligurian foot soldier is a damaged figure who is crouching and appears to be naked [19]. If he is fighting in the nude, this soldier could be on the Macedonian side, like the fallen soldier in the west relief [12]. A cavalryman [18] seems to be fighting the crouching infantryman, and so that horseman likely is Roman. The final two soldiers, a spearman and bowman [16-17], are very fragmentary and it is difficult to determine

whether they are attacking the Roman horseman [18] or the Gallic foot soldier [19].¹¹² I believe that the shape and inside hand grip of the spearman's shield is similar to that of the fallen warrior on the west relief [12], which was identified earlier to be on the Macedonian side (figs. 3.8-3.9). While this evidence is not entirely convincing, it could be enough to identify the spearman on the south side as a Macedonian ally. If so, then the kneeling bowman beside him probably also is on the Greek side.

The east relief (figs. 3.3-3.4) shows an infantryman at the very left of the relief [24] fighting a horseman [26]; below them on the ground is a dead soldier who is naked [25]. Like earlier possible nude figures on the west and south reliefs [12, 19], I would suggest that this fallen warrior fights for King Perseus. The infantryman [24] holds a Ligurian shield and wears the *lorica hamata*, like those of other figures on the monument [1, 2, 6, 7, 20, 23], and thus he must be fighting for the Romans. The horseman attacking him [26] has a helmet similar to those of the Macedonians [3, 22], and he has a shield like that of a Macedonian horseman on the north relief [9]. The fact that he is fighting the Roman infantryman is further proof that he must be Macedonian. In the center of the east relief is a foot soldier [27] whose Ligurian shield marks him as a Roman ally. He is facing a horseman holding a spear [28], whose tunic is similar to the Roman cavalymen on other sides of the frieze [1, 2, 14, 23]; for this reason the cavalryman is believed to be Roman as well. Below the knight's horse is a fallen (possibly naked) warrior whose body is mostly covered by a large shield [29]. Gallic figures are typically represented nude in ancient art, as mentioned above, but this soldier most likely is not a Gaul, because he

¹¹² Hammond and Walbank (*Macedonia III*, 616-17) do not venture a guess about the bowman's ethnicity. They do believe that the pleated tunic and circular shield of the spearman "are appropriate to a Macedonian," but give no evidence to substantiate their hypothesis. Later they say that all the Macedonians "are dead, collapsing, or about to be struck," but this spearman does not at all fit the authors' classification. While this does not prove that the figure cannot be a Macedonian, it somewhat weakens the authors' argument.

holds a typically Macedonian shield, like that we saw on the north relief [3]. Polybius also specifically states that the Gauls fight naked “with nothing but their arms [μετ’ αὐτῶν τῶν ὀπλῶν],” so the shield with this figure is contradictory to our ancient literary evidence.¹¹³

Although the specific ethnicity of this figure is debatable, he likely is on the Macedonian side and has been killed by one of the Roman soldiers near him.

I have labeled twelve Romans on the relief [1, 2, 6, 7, 11, 14, 18, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28] and sixteen soldiers on the Macedonian side [3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29]. When viewing each side the Romans seem to be winning each battle scene; this no doubt is exactly what Aemilius Paullus wanted to show on his *tropaeum*.¹¹⁴ The display of the riderless horse on the monument’s frieze gives a specific scene from the actual battle, which is completely different from what most Greek monumental reliefs showed. In general, Greeks did not give specific representations of battles on relief sculpture. For example, the metopes of the Parthenon in Athens, which symbolized the Athenians’ victory over the Persians, show mythical scenes from the Fall of Troy, a Gigantomachy, an Amazonomachy, and a Centauromachy.¹¹⁵ Pollitt best describes the importance of the Aemilius Paullus monument:¹¹⁶

The frieze of the Aemilius Paullus monument illustrates better than any other work the interdependency of the Greek and Roman artistic traditions in the later Hellenistic period. In style the frieze is Greek; in subject, intention, and function it is Roman. From the Greek point of view it was a fairly familiar type of

¹¹³ Polyb. 2.28.8.

¹¹⁴ In his interpretation of the frieze, Heinz Kähler (*Der Fries*, 35) labels figures 12-14 on the west relief as Roman, and 11 and 15 as Macedonian, and on the south side he labels figures 19-21 as Romans, surrounded by the Macedonian figures 16-18 and 22-23. If this were the case, then the Roman fighters would be portrayed as losing the battle on two of the pillar’s sides. I contend that Paullus never would have shown his own army struggle so mightily at the Battle of Pydna on the memorial commemorating Rome’s important victory.

¹¹⁵ For more on the Parthenon, see Robin Francis Rhodes, *Architecture and Meaning on the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), 65, 92-93; R.E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 115.

¹¹⁶ Pollitt, *Art in Hellenistic Age*, 157-58.

monument; from the Roman point of view it was a landmark, in that it was perhaps the first of the great tradition of historical reliefs in Roman art.

Paullus' decision to change Perseus' monument at Delphi into one of his own is also very telling. Not only does it show the Roman general's wry taste for irony, but it could also show that his decision to erect a *tropaeum* was an afterthought, since he did not decide immediately to set up a victory monument at the battle site of Pydna itself. Even if Paullus' idea to create a victory monument at Delphi was a matter of chance circumstance, it was an extremely intelligent decision. Many more people would see his *tropaeum* at Delphi than would have if it were placed at the more distant site of the battle. Many Greeks visited the panhellenic sanctuary of Apollo, and when they traveled up the Sacred Way they would have seen the victory monument of Aemilius Paullus, which symbolized and celebrated Rome's strength and conquest of Greece.

Octavian's Building Program around Actium

The battle of Actium was a decisive turning point in the history of the ancient Mediterranean. The events at Actium on September 2, 31 B.C. led to the downfall of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, the subjugation of Egypt to Rome, the rise of Octavian (later Augustus), and the eventual formation of the Roman principate.¹¹⁷ Octavian never forgot how important his victory at Actium was for his existence, much less his career, and thus he showed his appreciation by building extensively in the area. His primary undertakings around the Ambracian Gulf were the renovation and repair of the sanctuary to Apollo Actius near Actium, the foundation of his "victory city," Nicopolis, located across the gulf from Actium, and the construction of a monument north of Nicopolis that commemorated his naval victory (fig. 3.10).

¹¹⁷ For the dating of the battle of Actium, see Cass. Dio 51.1.1.

The temple to Apollo Actius was built long before Octavian and Antony fought in 31 B.C. and seems to have fallen into disrepair by the second half of the first century B.C.¹¹⁸ As Apollo was Octavian’s patron deity,¹¹⁹ and perhaps also because he wanted to ingratiate himself with the local Greek population,¹²⁰ it is not surprising that the *princeps* decided both to renovate and to expand the precinct. Cassius Dio says that Octavian built a larger temple to Apollo, and Strabo also describes a monument that Octavian added to the sanctuary:¹²¹

καὶ ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀκτίου Ἀπόλλωνος ἐνταῦθά ἐστι πλησίον τοῦ στόματος, λόφος τις, ἐφ’ ᾧ ὁ νεῶς, καὶ ὑπ’ αὐτῷ πεδίον ἄλσος ἔχον καὶ νεώρια, ἐν οἷς ἀνέθηκε Καίσαρ τὴν δεκαναῖαν ἀκροθίνιον, ἀπὸ μονοκρότου μέχρι δεκῆρους· ὑπο πυρὸς δ’ ἠφανίσθαι καὶ τὰ πλοῖα.

Here too, near the mouth [of the Ambracian Gulf], is the sacred precinct of the Actian Apollo—a hill on which the temple stands; and at the foot of the hill is a plan which contains a sacred grove and a naval station, the naval station where Caesar dedicated as the first fruits of his victory the squadron of ten ships—from vessels with single bank of oars to vessels with ten; however, not only the boats, it is said, but also the boat-houses have been wiped out by fire.

Octavian’s dedication was extensive, ranging from Antony’s smallest ships to his largest, those of ten banks of oars that many ancient authors have noted.¹²² If the *terminus ante quem* for

¹¹⁸ Suetonius describes the temple as *vetere Apollinis templo* (Aug. 28.2), even though he wrongly places the temple at Nicopolis, not Actium.

¹¹⁹ For Octavian’s relationship with Apollo, see Robert Alan Gurval, *Actium and Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 87-136.

¹²⁰ Konstantinos L. Zachos, “The *Tropaeum* of the Sea-battle of Actium at Nikopolis: interim report,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 16 (2003): 65. Zachos claims that the local population “was not particularly friendly to [Julius] Caesar’s heir,” but gives no support for his claim.

¹²¹ Cass. Dio 51.1.2; Strabo 7.7.6. Text and translation by Horace Leonard Jones taken from *Geography*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. III (London: William Heinemann, 1924), 300-03.

¹²² For Antony’s fleet and his unusually large ships, see Cass. Dio 50.23.2-3; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 61.1; Flor. 2.21.5-6; Vell. Pat. 2.84; Oros. 6.19.

Strabo's account is 7 B.C., as some scholars argue, it is interesting to note that Augustus did not decide to create a new building after the burning of his original memorial.¹²³

Because the monument was destroyed, there is no archaeological evidence that helps us reconstruct the dedicatory flotilla, and no numismatic evidence has been found that specifically shows the memorial. Nevertheless, it is obvious how Octavian used his monument to promote both his victory and his reign. He could not explicitly mention his true enemy in the monument, since Mark Antony was a Roman citizen himself. Therefore, Octavian ingeniously devised a way in which he could both refer to his adversary and still hold to the traditional custom of not referring to a Roman's victory over another Roman. Every visitor to the Apollo sanctuary would have known that the dedicated naval spoils were originally Antony's ships even without having Octavian mention his vanquished foe by name. Also, by displaying the various sizes and types of ships in his commemorative dedication, the *princeps* shows how he triumphed over an expansive, diverse navy; the greatness of Antony's ships would have further emphasized Octavian's renown in defeating such a formidable opponent.

Several ancient authors describe the establishment and organization of Nicopolis well enough to give modern scholars some ideas about the city and its importance in western Greece, but their accounts do vary. Octavian's primary goal in founding Nicopolis must have been to emphasize further his victory, but Strabo describes another reason behind the establishment of the town.¹²⁴

¹²³ For the dating of Strabo, see William M. Murray and Photios M. Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial for the Actian War*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 79:4 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1989), 5, n. 27.

¹²⁴ Strabo 7.7.6. Text and translation by Horace Leonard Jones taken from *Geography* (*supra*, n. 121), 302-03.

Μακεδόνες δ' ὕστερον καὶ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ ταύτην καὶ τὰς ἄλλας
κατεπόνησαν τοῖς συνεχέσι πολέμοις διὰ τὴν ἀπειθειαν, ὥστε τὸ
τελευταῖον ὁ Σεβαστὸς ὁρῶν ἐκλελειμμένας τελέως τὰς πόλεις εἰς μίαν
συνώκισε τὴν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ κληθεῖσαν Νικόπολιν ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τούτῳ.

In later times, however, the Macedonians and the Romans, by their continuous wars, so completely reduced both this [the city Ambracia] and the other Epeirote cities because of their disobedience that finally Augustus, seeing that the cities had utterly failed, settled what inhabitants were left in one city altogether—the city on this gulf which was called Nicopolis.

It seems that the region around Actium had been devastated by war for decades, so much so that many cities fell into financial ruin beyond repair. Cassius Dio and Pausanias support this idea, but also mention that Octavian laid waste to the area himself and then forced the dispossessed Greeks to live in Nicopolis.¹²⁵ Strabo, Cassius Dio, Pausanias, and Antipater of Salonica all list cities that were incorporated—willingly or unwillingly—into the *synoecism* of Nicopolis.¹²⁶ The number of towns varies among the authors, but their accounts suggest that the first inhabitants of Nicopolis were from western Greece and were not some of Octavian's discharged veteran soldiers as one might have expected.

Also interesting is that Octavian himself did not finance the establishment of the town. Josephus notes that King Herod of Judaea “helped construct the greater part” of the public buildings at Nicopolis, perhaps in order to gain the favor of the new Roman ruler.¹²⁷ Herod originally was an ally of Mark Antony, and only joined Octavian's side after Antony's defeat at

¹²⁵ Cass. Dio 51.1.3; Paus. 7.18.8-9.

¹²⁶ Strabo 10.2.2; Paus. 5.23.3, 10.38.4; Cass. Dio 51.1.3; Antipater of Salonica in *Anth. Pal.* 9.553, taken from Théodore Chr. Saricakis, “Nicopolis d'Épire était-elle une colonie romaine ou une ville grecque?” *Balkan Studies* 11 (1970): 91-92.

¹²⁷ Joseph. *AJ* 16.147.

Actium.¹²⁸ Josephus even goes as far as stating that Octavian believed that Antony was not defeated as long as Herod remained his ally.¹²⁹ As Peter Richardson rightly notes, “Herod must have felt it appropriate to give dramatic force to his decision, late in the day, to support Octavian.”¹³⁰ Although there is no clear archaeological or literary evidence which buildings in Nicopolis were Herodian projects, the Jewish king’s benevolent support of the area is very noteworthy.

Even though Nicopolis was founded by Rome’s most prominent individual, the city seems to have retained a very Greek appearance. As could be expected in this region, most of the inscriptions around Nicopolis were in Greek, not Latin, and the majority of people mentioned on the epitaphs had names of Greek or Hellenistic origin.¹³¹ In addition, the coinage of Nicopolis was in Greek, its magistrates were from neighboring Greek towns, and the town’s decrees were ratified by the *boule* and/or *demos*.¹³²

Octavian did consider Nicopolis more important than most Greek towns, as Pliny the Elder notes that the *princeps* granted it *civitas libera* status, like Athens and Sparta.¹³³ The city also was enrolled into the Delphic amphictiony, which oversaw the maintenance of the Pythian Games and sanctuary of Apollo. It is evident that Nicopolis has great power within the

¹²⁸ Joseph. *AJ* 15.183, *BJ* 1.387; Michael Grant, *Herod the Great* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), 90, 94-95; Duane W. Roller, *The Building Program of Herod the Great* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 2.

¹²⁹ Joseph. *BJ* 1.386; Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 169.

¹³⁰ Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 177.

¹³¹ Saricakis, “Nicopolis,” 92-93.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 91-92.

¹³³ Plin. *HN* 4.1.5; Murray and Petsas, *Octavian’s Campsite Memorial*, 4. Tacitus (*Ann.* 5.10) erroneously calls Nicopolis a Roman colony.

organization: the city had six votes on the council, instead of the normal one, and could vote annually on amphictionic matters, rather than in alternate years like the other members.¹³⁴

Perhaps most importantly, Nicopolis was home of the *Actia*, or quadrennial games in honor of Apollo Actius. Because the entire Ambracian Gulf was devastated during Macedonian and Roman rule before 31 B.C., the festival—previously held near the Apollo Actius sanctuary—was rarely held during the first century B.C.¹³⁵ Octavian reestablished the games in 27 B.C. on the anniversary of his victory four years earlier, and thereafter the *Actia* was arranged by the Lacedaemonians.¹³⁶ It is unknown why the Spartans, not the local Nicopolitans, were given supervision over the games; Gurval suggests that Octavian conferred the honor upon the Spartan ruler, Eurycles, because he was “one of the few Greek mainlanders to support Octavian before Actium.”¹³⁷

The *Actia* became one of the most important panhellenic games in Greece soon after its reestablishment at Nicopolis. Strabo reports that Octavian granted the games “isolympian status,” meaning that they were equal in both stature and semblance to the famous games at Olympia.¹³⁸ The Actian games soon rivaled (though never surpassed) the importance of the games at Olympia and Delphi, and perhaps were even added the traditional *periodos*, or circuit, of panhellenic games at Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia, and Corinth.¹³⁹ Nicopolis grew dramatically and quickly, and many Eastern cities, such as Antioch, Tyre, Jerusalem, and Damascus,

¹³⁴ Paus. 10.8.3-5; Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 4, n. 24.

¹³⁵ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 76.

¹³⁶ Strabo 7.7.6; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 75-77; B. Tidman, “On the Foundation of the Actian Games,” *CQ* 44 (1950): 123-25.

¹³⁷ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 77, n. 146. For more information on Eurycles, see G.M. Bowerstock, “Eurycles of Sparta,” *JRS* 51 (1961): 112-18.

¹³⁸ Strabo 7.7.6.

¹³⁹ *IGRR* 4.197, 4.1064 show the Actian games' order of importance after the Olympian and Pythian games and before the Nemeian, Isthmian, and Heraion (at Argos) games. For the *Actia* being included within the *periodos*, see N.M. Kennell, “ΝΕΡΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΔΟΝΙΚΗΣ,” *AJP* 109 (1988): 239-51.

established their own Actian games in emulation of the great festival at Nicopolis.¹⁴⁰ Because most of the other *Actia* were established in the second and third centuries A.D., it seems that the towns celebrated their games not so much to commemorate Octavian's victory as to hold prestigious athletic and musical contests.

Nicopolis seems to have begun its slow decline roughly three hundred years after its establishment. Inscriptions show that the *Actia* at Nicopolis were ranked below all imperial games during the third century A.D., and the increasing popularity of Christianity in the fourth century A.D. led to the end of pagan festivals throughout many Greek cities.¹⁴¹ The emperor Julian (A.D. 360-363) reinstated the Actian games, but soon after his reign the *Actia* again fell into obscurity.¹⁴² Nicopolis itself had been attacked and/or occupied three times by the mid-sixth century A.D.: by Alaric in 397, Geiseric in 475, and Totilia in 551.¹⁴³

Octavian's new city, and his refoundation of the Actian games, may not have lasted as long as the *princeps* had hoped, but his renown definitely increased due to Nicopolis and the *Actia*. Octavian supported—even emphasized—traditional Greek practices at Nicopolis in several ways, such as city administration, the reestablishment of the *Actia*, and the town's involvement in the Delphic amphictiony. His introduction of earlier Hellenic and Hellenistic customs into an area now controlled by Rome showed that Octavian wanted to incorporate the Greek East into the Latin world, not to subjugate them under Rome's domination. Nicopolis itself was the ultimate dedication: there is no greater victory monument than a city itself.

¹⁴⁰ Strabo 7.7.6; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 78; Grant, *Herod the Great*, 103-05.

¹⁴¹ *IG II²* 3169, 3170.

¹⁴² Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 81, n. 161; Chris Scarre, *Chronicle of the Roman Emperors* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1995), 224-26. Mamertinus *Gratiarum Actio Iuliano* 9.2-3, taken from Samuel N.C. Lieu, ed., *The Emperor Julian: Panegyric and Polemic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1986), 2-43.

¹⁴³ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 153.

Octavian's "victory city" revived the Ambracian region that had been so devastated for so long, and established the *princeps* himself as a defender, restorer, and patron of western Greece.

The most thoroughly studied project that Octavian sponsored around Actium is his elaborate *tropaeum* located north of Nicopolis. Placed on a large hill overlooking Nicopolis, the Apollo Actius temple, and the waters where Octavian celebrated his greatest naval victory, the monument undoubtedly served as the central focus of Octavian's overall victory program. The primary sources also seem to support this idea of Octavian's emphasis on the Nicopolis memorial, as the memorial is mentioned more often than any other building in the region. Unfortunately, the ancient documentation is disparate in some ways, and one must carefully study both the archaeological and literary evidence in order to draw any conclusions about the specific form and function of the monument.

Even though the literary *testimonia* do not agree exactly, a careful (albeit painstaking) analysis of these observations still must be done first in order to understand the intended impact of Octavian's memorial. Six ancient writers mention the monument: Suetonius, Cassius Dio, Strabo, Plutarch, and Philippus. The Roman biographer Suetonius gives perhaps the most accurate account of the Nicopolis monument:¹⁴⁴

apud Actium descendenti in aciem asellus cum asinario occurrit: homini Eutyclus, bestiae Nicon erat nomen; utriusque simulacrum aeneum uictor posuit in templo, in quod castrorum suorum locum uertit . . . locum castrorum, quibus fuerat usus, exornatum naualibus spoliis Neptuno ac Marti consecrauit.

At Actium an ass with its ass-driver met him [Octavian] going down toward the battlefield; the man's name was Eutyclus and the beast's was Nicon. As the victor, Octavian put bronze images of the two in the sanctuary into which he

¹⁴⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 96.2, 18.2. Text by Maximilian Ihm taken from *Opera*, vol. I (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1958), 105-05 (first passage listed), 56 (second passage listed). Translation of the text is my own.

turned his own campsite . . . to Neptune and to Mars he consecrated the place of his campsite, which he had used [before the battle], adorned with naval spoils.

Suetonius' report gives several important details about the memorial: it was built upon the site of Octavian's camp during the battle of Actium; bronze statues and dedications surrounded the monument; and the precinct was dedicated to Neptune and Mars. Also noteworthy are the names of the donkey and man that Octavian met; the man's name, Eutychus, means "Lucky" or "Fortunate" in Greek, and Nicon means "Victory." These names foreshadowed Octavian's later naval triumph over Antony and Cleopatra, and Octavian's bronze dedications showed his gratitude to the two ominous figures. Cassius Dio both agrees with and contradicts Suetonius' account, saying:¹⁴⁵

τό τε χωρίον ἐν ᾧ ἐσκήνησε, λίθοις τε τετραπέδοις ἐκρηπίδωσε καὶ τοῖς ἀλοῦσιν ἐμβόλοις ἐκόσμησεν, ἔδος τι ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ὑπαίθριον ἰδρυσάμενος.

On the spot where he [Octavian] had pitched his tent he laid a foundation of square stones, adorned it with the captured ship's rams, and established on it a kind of open-air space, sacred to Apollo.

Cassius Dio and Suetonius both relate that the monument was built on Octavian's earlier battle headquarters, but assign the memorial to different dedicatees. Strabo also gives his opinion about the commemoration, saying that the area was "sacred to Apollo."¹⁴⁶

Plutarch does not venture a guess concerning the god(s) of the precinct. His account, like Suetonius', discusses Octavian's meeting with Eutychus and Nicon and the emperor's later

¹⁴⁵ Cass. Dio 51.1.3. Text and translation by Earnest Cary taken from *Dio's Roman History*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. VI (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 4-5.

¹⁴⁶ Strabo 7.7.6.

bronze representations of the figures within his monument.¹⁴⁷ Lastly, the Neronian epigrammatist Philippus gives a version of the monument's foundation:¹⁴⁸

ἤμβολα χαλκογένεια, φιλίποα τεύχεα νηῶν,
Ἄκτιακοῦ πολέμου κείμεθα μαρτύρια·
ἦνίδε, σιμβλεύει κηρότροφα δῶρα μελισσῶν
ἔσμῳ βομβητῆι κυκλόσε βριθόμενα.
Καίσαρος εὐνομίῃσ χρηστὴ χάρις· ὄπλα γὰρ ἐχθρῶν
καρποῦσ εἰρήνησ ἀντεδίδαξε τρέφειν.

Bronze jaw-beaks, ships' voyage-loving armor, we lie here as witnesses to the Actian War. Behold, the bees' wax-fed gifts are hived in us, weighted all round by a humming swarm. So good is the grace of Caesar's law and order; he has taught the enemy's weapons to bear fruits of peace instead.

Philippus' fanciful account parallels Suetonius' and Cassius Dio's versions concerning the use of naval spoils within the dedication.

Although the ancient literary evidence does give some information concerning the commemorative monument, other facts must be added to the archaeological evidence. For instance, the ancient sources disagree about the god(s) to whom the memorial was consecrated, and no author describes the precinct clearly or extensively enough to allow us to understand the overall plan of the site. Excavations of the area show that there were two main areas within the precinct: a huge front façade decorated with ships' prows and a dedicatory inscription, behind which was a podium with a large altar surrounded by a stoa and two side wings (fig. 3.11).

¹⁴⁷ Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 65.3.

¹⁴⁸ Philippus in *Anth. Pal.* 6.236. Text and translation taken from A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page, eds., *The Greek Anthology. The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 298-99.

As Philippus, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio say, the Nicopolis memorial was adorned with prows, or *rostra*, taken from the ships of Antony's fleet. This area of the monument seems to correspond to the southernmost part of the precinct, where a large retaining wall has been found (fig. 3.12). The wall has a concrete core and is flanked by rectangular gray stones; this type of construction is similar to that seen in the Mausoleum of Augustus, *Rostra Augusti*, and the podium for the temple of Divus Julius in Rome.¹⁴⁹ Although part of the wall has been destroyed, its original length measured approximately 63 meters, and its height was roughly four to five courses.¹⁵⁰ There were several sockets carved into the wall, decreasing in size from west to east; the restored monument would have had 36 niches.¹⁵¹ By comparing the shape of a ship's prow discovered off the Israeli coast (fig. 3.13) and the shape of the memorial's sockets (fig. 3.14), one can determine that the fittings held the *rostra* of Antony's captured ships mentioned by the ancient sources.¹⁵²

The different socket sizes indicate that the memorial's *rostra* came from the variously sized ships of Antony's fleet that many ancient sources describe. It seems that the monument held rams from Antony's largest ships, which had five to ten banks of oars. The naval spoils were a dedication to the gods, possibly a tithe from the number of all ships captured in Octavian's campaigns against Antony, not just at the battle of Actium itself.¹⁵³ Octavian's use of

¹⁴⁹ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 29; L. Richardson Jr., *Topographical Dictionary*, 213-14, 247-49, 335-36; Marion Elizabeth Blake, *Ancient Roman Construction in Italy from the Prehistoric Period to Augustus*. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1947), 163-64, 171-74, 334, 336.

¹⁵⁰ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 29; Zachos, "The *Tropaeum*," 72.

¹⁵¹ Zachos, "The *Tropaeum*," 65.

¹⁵² Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 34-61, 85-86; Zachos, "The *Tropaeum*," 74; Lionel Casson and J. Richard Steffy, eds., *The Athlit Ram* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991), 6-17, 72-75.

¹⁵³ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 133-41. For information on the heated debate concerning the true number of ships in Antony's and Octavian's fleets, see W.W. Tarn, "The Battle of

the *rostra* from Antony's biggest ships would have created an impressive display, thus promoting Octavian's accomplishment as victor over a tremendous army and navy. Interestingly, Octavian also brought back to Rome some of the smaller rams from Antony's ships and decorated the *Rostra Aedis Divi Iulii* with them.¹⁵⁴ This connection between the two precincts' displays would have further glorified Octavian not only as the son of Julius Caesar (now a god) but also as a great general in his own right.

Placed above the naval spoils on the terrace wall was Octavian's commemorative inscription (fig. 3.15). The text was roughly one foot high and ran along the entire length of the wall, starting above the largest ship's prow on the west side; its actual position on the wall is hypothetical.¹⁵⁵ Twenty-five blocks survive today, from which the original dedicatory message can be determined quite reasonably. Using the archaeological reports of William M. Murray and Photios M. Petsas and of Konstantinos L. Zachos as guides, here is a sensible reconstruction and translation of the Latin inscription:¹⁵⁶

vacat Imp · Caesa]R · DIV[i · Iuli ·]F · VIC[toriam · consecutus · bell]O · QVOD ·
 PRO [· r]E [·] P[u]BLIC[a] · GES[si]T · IN · HAC · REGION[e · cons]UL
 [·QUINTUM · i]MPERAT[or · se]PTIMUM · PACE [·] PARTA · TERRA [·
 marique · Mar]TI · NEP[tunoque · c]ASTRA [· ex ·] QVIBV[s · ad · hostem ·
 in]SEQ[ue]ndum · egr]ESSU[s · est · navalibus · spoli] IS [· exorna]TA ·
 C[onsacravit *vacat*

Actium," *JRS* 21 (1931): 173-99; J. Kromayer, "Actium ein Epilog," *Hermes* 68 (1933): 361-83; G.W. Richardson, "Actium," *JRS* 27 (1937): 153-64; W.W. Tarn, "Actium: A Note," *JRS* 28 (1938): 165-68.

¹⁵⁴ Cass. Dio 51.19.2; Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 121-24, 127; Richardson Jr., *Topographical Dictionary*, 213-14; Neils Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1988), 58; Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. by Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 80-81.

¹⁵⁵ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 86.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76, 86; Zachos, "The *Tropaeum*," 76. Zachos' 2003 article includes some fragments that Murray and Petsas did not discover, and so the arrangement of some of the wording is in a slightly different order in the latter's. Translation of the reports' restored inscription is my own.

Imperator Caesar, son of the Divine Julius, following the victory in the war in which he waged on behalf of the Republic in this region, when he was consul for the fifth time and commander-in-chief for the seventh time, after peace had been secured on land and sea, consecrated to Mars and Neptune the camp from which he set forth to attack the enemy now ornamented with naval spoils.

One can learn several interesting points from the inscription. First, the monument was dedicated to Neptune and Mars, as Suetonius reports, not to Apollo, as Cassius Dio and Strabo relate.

Connecting this memorial with his restoration of the Apollo Actius temple, Octavian created his own Actian triad of divinities. Second, the words *in hac regione* show that Octavian included all skirmishes against Antony in the Ambracian Gulf in his monument, and did not commemorate only the final battle itself. In addition, the expression *ad hostem* was obviously meant to suggest Antony, but, like his dedication at the Apollo Actius temple, Octavian could not refer to his adversary by name. Lastly, the phrase *pace parta terra marique* corresponds to the Senatorial pronouncement that, because “peace had been secured on land and sea” by Octavian, the doors to the temple of Janus Geminus were to be closed on January 11, 29 B.C.¹⁵⁷ The similarity of the two declarations probably indicates that the memorial (or at least its inscription) was constructed fairly soon after the Senate’s decree. The absence of Augustus on the inscription also likely gives the inscription a *terminus ante quem* date of January 16, 27 B.C., when Octavian was given the title, and so therefore we can give a likely construction date of the memorial around 29-27 B.C.

The final area of the commemorative precinct is the stoa, which was located on top of the terrace (figs. 3.11-3.12). The building may not have been as impressive as the ram display; at all events, no ancient author gives a description of it. The stoa was a typically Greek II plan, which is a long colonnade flanked perpendicularly by two shorter wings on each side. The stoa at

¹⁵⁷ Livy 1.19.3; Murray and Petsas, *Octavian’s Campsite Memorial*, 127-28; Jean Gag , “Actiaca,” *M FR* 53 (1936): 70-82.

Actium was similar to both the upper stoa within the Asklepieion at Kos in Greece and, interestingly, the Republican forum at Minturnae in Italy.¹⁵⁸ The stoa opened up on its southwest side, towards the site where the battle of Actium took place (figs. 3.10-3.11). As Murray and Petsas rightfully note, the stoa “would have essentially wrapped around the sacred site of Octavian’s tent.”¹⁵⁹ There were no steps up into the portico, as the stylobate was covered with earth or clay and therefore was both appropriate for and reminiscent of the site of Octavian’s camp.¹⁶⁰

The building’s long side measures 40.3 meters; the east and west wings’ dimensions are unknown.¹⁶¹ Its columns were roughly 0.56 to 0.575 meters in diameter, and unfluted halfway down the shaft, like those in the Stoa of Attalus in Athens.¹⁶² Each column was roughly 5.9 meters high, and the interaxial spacing between columns was ca. 2.81 meters.¹⁶³ Because no stone architrave blocks have been found on the site, it is assumed that the roof and architrave were made of wood. Terracotta flower pots were found near the stoa’s stylobate, indicating that the open-air terrace was surrounded by flowers in a garden-like setting.¹⁶⁴ A terracotta water spout, roughly 0.087 meters high and 0.06 meters wide, has been found in the shape of a lion’s head, also similar to those on the Stoa of Attalus.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian’s Campsite Memorial*, 86, 124; J.J. Coulton, *The Architectural Development of the Greek Stoa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 97-99, 246-48, 261-62, figs. 74, 87.

¹⁵⁹ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian’s Campsite Memorial*, 84.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 84, 86; Zachos, “The *Tropaeum*,” 77

¹⁶² Murray and Petsas, *Octavian’s Campsite Memorial*, 78; John M. Camp, *The Athenian Agora* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1992), 172.

¹⁶³ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian’s Campsite Memorial*, 84.

¹⁶⁴ Zachos, “The *Tropaeum*,” 81. Zachos says that the flower pots are similar to those found both in the garden of the Hephaesteum in Athens and in several gardens in Pompeii.

¹⁶⁵ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian’s Campsite Memorial*, 80; Camp, *Athenian Agora*, 172.

Excavations also uncovered several terracotta simas from the stoa, and the sculptural decoration on the simas falls into two categories. One group of simas is decorated with swimming dolphins, alluding to both Octavian's naval victory at Actium and the emperor's gratitude to Neptune, to whom the *tropaeum* was partly dedicated.¹⁶⁶ The second category of simas depict Romulus and Remus being suckled by the She-Wolf; this scene both could symbolize Octavian's connection to Romulus, the founder of Rome, and remind viewers that the supposed father of Romulus and Remus was Mars, who was the second dedicatee of the memorial.¹⁶⁷

Numerous statues must have surrounded the complex, though only one piece of a life-sized female marble statue has been found; unfortunately the statue is not recognizable as a particular human or deity.¹⁶⁸ As the ancient sources say, there were also statues of Eutyclus and Nicon, most likely made from the bronze rams of Antony's captured ships; their placement within the memorial is unknown. Since the memorial was dedicated to Neptune and Mars, the precinct also may have had statues and/or altars to the two gods. Cuttings in the stylobate suggest that *stelai* were placed in the courtyard, and there is also evidence that a cistern was present on the site.¹⁶⁹

One large semicircular marble base was found, roughly 0.71 meters high and 0.99 meters in diameter.¹⁷⁰ This marble base has a frieze depicting ten Greek gods and heroes, including Apollo, Artemis, Leto, Hermes, the Three Graces, Hebe (or Hera), Hercules, and Athena.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Zachos, "The *Tropaeum*," 79.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 80, 84; H. Jucker, "Apollo Palatinus und Apollo Actius auf augusteischen Mützen," *MH* 39 (1982): 98, pl. 16.

¹⁶⁹ Murray and Petsas, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial*, 85.

¹⁷⁰ Zachos, "The *Tropaeum*," 89.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Noticeably absent from the base are specifically Roman deities, such as Roma, who likely was depicted elsewhere in the memorial precinct. Another important marble relief has been found, likely coming from the altar located in the middle of the stoa's open-air precinct.¹⁷² The relief shows two men whose dress portrays them as barbarians, followed by a chariot in which are a man and two children, and at the end is a procession of toga-clad Romans.¹⁷³ Konstantinos L. Zachos convincingly argues that the frieze depicts Octavian's 29 B.C. triple triumph in Rome, specifically the second day of the triumph which celebrated the Actian triumph.¹⁷⁴ Zachos says that the figure in the chariot is Octavian, recognizable by his profile of a "thin neck with visible, though slight, rendering of an Adam's apple; strong cheekbones; sharply protruding nose; and penetrating glance."¹⁷⁵ He hypothesizes that the two children in the chariot with Octavian are two of the three children of Antony and Cleopatra, the twins Alexandros Helios and Cleopatra Selene, who rode in the triumph behind an effigy of their mother.¹⁷⁶ If Zachos' premise is correct, then the frieze on the altar would have showed to the local Greek population the majestic parade in Rome that celebrated Octavian's victory at Actium.

The *tropaeum* north of Nicopolis was the focal point of Octavian's entire program around Actium. Konstantinos L. Zachos gives a stirring description on what visitors might sense when they visited the monument:¹⁷⁷

The monument's design may have been intended to provide graduated references, arranged almost hierarchically, for the approaching visitor. The lower terrace with rams glittering in the sun was dedicated to the gods of violence and domination, Mars and Neptune, while the upper terrace, the site of Octavian's tent, was

¹⁷² Ibid., 90-92.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 90. Zachos says that the front men "wear the characteristic barbarian trousers," though he does not actually list the specific characteristics of barbarian trousers.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 90-92.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 91.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 91-92; Cass. Dio 51.21.8.

¹⁷⁷ Zachos, "The *Tropaeum*," 83.

dedicated to Apollo, the saviour [*sic*] and pacifier. As the centrepiece [*sic*] of the monument, the altar is connected to the local cult of Apollo and the events of the naval battle. The central axis of the altar directs one's gaze to the site of the sea battle off Actium and to the Akarnanian shore with its sanctuary of Apollo Actius. On a clear day the mountains of Leukas, where Apollo's cult was also strong (he has a temple on the prominent Cape Ducato-Leukas on the island's southwest peninsula) were visible on the horizon.

The stoa surrounded the area where he set up his headquarters before the battle, and the dedicatory inscription told of his triumph over his enemies. The enormous and impressive display of captured ships' rams presented a tremendous votive offering to Neptune and Mars after his victory. When looking south from the stoa, viewers would see not only Nicopolis, Octavian's newly formed "victory city" with its celebrated games, but also the actual site of the battle on the horizon. The monument displayed both Roman and Greek qualities, and therefore suggested famous buildings in both Rome and the Greek East. As the memorial joined the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, so too did Octavian with his victory of 31 B.C.

Octavian's establishments around Actium are not surprising, since his subsequent political career depended entirely upon his defeat of Mark Antony on the western coast of Greece. His renovation of the Apollo Actius temple and elaborate naval dedication there portrayed him as both a restorer of old Greek traditions and a great victor over a formidable opponent. Octavian's foundation of Nicopolis also emphasized his philanthropy to an area long devastated by incessant fighting; now the Ambracian Gulf had a tremendous city with renowned games of which everyone could be proud. Because the city was also Octavian's own dedication to the gods for his victory, Nicopolis played both an economical and propagandistic role for the Roman ruler. The jewel of Octavian's Actian crown was the monument north of Nicopolis, which overlooked the entire gulf and served as both the ultimate dedication to the gods for his

great fortune and the foremost display of peace through strength. Octavian's three projects both solidified his control over western Greece and celebrated the most famous victory of his career.

There seems to have been a corresponding arch in Rome that related to Octavian's Actian victory. Its location, display, and even construction are widely debated, however. Cassius Dio is the only ancient source who mentions the Actian arch, which is interesting considering the peculiarity of a commemorative arch in the capital during this time period.¹⁷⁸ Dio himself only discusses the arch rather briefly, saying:¹⁷⁹

Ἐν δὲ τούτῳ καὶ ἔτι πρότερον συχνὰ μὲν καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς ναυμαχίας νίκη οἱ ἐν οἴκῳ Ῥωμαῖοι ἐψηφίσαντο. τὰ τε γὰρ νικητήρια αὐτῷ, ὡς καὶ τῆς Κλεοπάτρας, καὶ ἀψίδα τροπαιοφόρον ἐν τε τῷ Βρεντεσίῳ καὶ ἑτέραν ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίᾳ ἀγορᾷ ἔδωκαν.

During this time and still earlier the Romans at home had passed many resolutions in honour of Caesar's naval victory [at Actium]. Thus they granted him a triumph, as over Cleopatra, an arch adorned with trophies at Brundisium and another in the Roman Forum.

Dio's words are quite noteworthy for several reasons. First, and perhaps most importantly, Dio only says that the Senate (whom Dio labels as οἱ ἐν οἴκῳ Ῥωμαῖοι, "the Romans at home") decreed that an arch be erected; he never says that an arch was actually constructed. Secondly, Dio does not mention where the arch was located in Rome. Some of these questions about the Actian arch, including its location and decoration, possibly can be answered through some (albeit still questionable) numismatic and archaeological evidence.

¹⁷⁸ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 40. Pliny the Elder (*HN* 34.27) calls triumphal arches a *novicium inventum* even in his own day, almost a century after Actium. For a more complete history of triumphal arches in Rome before Octavian, see Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 37-40; Fred S. Kleiner, *The Arch of Nero in Rome* (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1985), 11-19.

¹⁷⁹ Cass. Dio 51.19.1 Text and translation by Earnest Cary taken from *Dio's Roman History* (*supra*, n. 145), 50-51.

Excavations near the temple to the Divine Julius Caesar in the Roman Forum have uncovered foundations of possibly two separate arches, one a single-bay arch and another triple-bayed (fig. 3.16).¹⁸⁰ Most scholars agree that the triple-fornix arch celebrates the return of the standards of Crassus captured at Carrhae by the Persians; the arch is said to have stood next to the *Divus Iulius* temple.¹⁸¹ The earlier, single-bay arch is generally believed to be the Actian arch, but the evidence is minimal.¹⁸² Some claim that an inscription that was found is in fact part of the arch's official dedication.¹⁸³ Unfortunately, there are at least three reasons for doubt. First, the original inscription has been lost since the sixteenth century, and our text is a Renaissance transcription of the dedication.¹⁸⁴ Second, and perhaps most importantly, Renaissance scholars disagreed on the inscription's exact place of discovery, so it cannot be established that the inscription was even found in the Roman Forum, much less anywhere near the arch foundations. Lastly, the transcribed dedication is so general that it could have been placed on many different Augustan buildings constructed during this general time period.¹⁸⁵ Without further proof that the single-bay arch is in fact that which celebrates Octavian's victory at Actium, questions will always remain about the location of the Actian arch in Rome.

¹⁸⁰ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 43-47; Filippo Coarelli, *Il foro romano: Periodo repubblicano e augusteo* (Rome: Quasar, 1985), 260-69; Ernest Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, vol. I (London: A. Zwemmer Ltd., 1961), 92, fig. 94.

¹⁸¹ Schol. Veron. *ad Verg. Aen.* 7.606, taken from Coarelli, *Il foro romano*, 269; Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary* I, 92; L. Richardson Jr., *Topographical Dictionary*, 23; Leicester B. Holland, "The Triple Arch of Augustus," *AJA* 50 (1946): 52-59; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 43-47; Kleiner, *Arch of Nero*, 25-28; Leicester Bodine Holland, "The Foundations of the Arch of Augustus," *AJA* 57 (1953): 1-4. Coarelli (*Il foro romano*, 260-87, fig. 68) believes that the Parthian arch was located to the north of the temple of the Divine Julius Caesar, and a triple-bay Actian arch was placed to the south of the temple.

¹⁸² Kleiner, *Arch of Nero*, 23-25; Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary* I, 92; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 46; Holland, "Triple Arch," 56.

¹⁸³ *CIL* IV, 873.

¹⁸⁴ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 41-42.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 42. For a list of the Augustan buildings constructed during this time period, see F.W. Shipley, "Chronology of the Building Operations in Rome from the Death of Caesar to the Death of Augustus," *MAAR* 9 (1931): 49.

Information about the Actian arch's decoration is also scarce. Since most scholars steadfastly believe that the single-bay arch in the Roman Forum is the Actian arch, they link it to a *denarius* issue minted at some point between 36 and 27 B.C. (fig. 3.17).¹⁸⁶ The coin's reverse shows a single-bay arch, with IMP CAES in the arch's attic and a *quadriga* statue group on top. It is possible that the *denarius* shows the Actian arch, but it is not certain by any means. Given such a wide-ranging possibility for the coin's date of issue, there is no way we can say with confidence that the *denarius* unquestionably celebrates the Actian victory. As Robert Gurval rightly notes, "[t]he depictions of a victory in military garb, naval trophies, and newly completed buildings in Rome (the Curia Julia or Temple of Divus Julius) on the reverse types of these issues cannot limit this large body of coinage to only the period after the success at Actium."¹⁸⁷

There is also another possibility for the identification of the arch on the coin. Cassius Dio mentions that "an arch surmounted by trophies" was decreed by the Senate in honor of Octavian's defeat of Sextus Pompey at the battle of Naulochus in 38 B.C.¹⁸⁸ Ironically, Cassius Dio is also the only ancient source for this Naulochus arch, as he is for the Actian arch, and no archaeological evidence for the Naulochus arch has been found in Rome. In fact, the foundations normally designated as the Actian arch could just as easily be those of an arch celebrating Octavian's victory at Naulochus, and the *denarius* could have been minted soon after his victory over Sextus Pompey. There is no certainty either way.¹⁸⁹

As seen above, the identification of the Actian arch in Rome is extremely problematical. Because of the uncertainty of the arch's location and decoration it is impossible to make any

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 40, pl. 4 (*RIC*² 267); Holland, "Triple Arch," 54, fig. 2a; Kleiner, *Arch of Nero*, 23-24, pl. III.I; Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*, 59.

¹⁸⁷ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 41.

¹⁸⁸ Cass. Dio 49.15.1; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 40-41.

¹⁸⁹ Zanker (*Power of Images*, 81) also speculates that the so-called Actian Arch near the Temple of Divus Julius could instead be the one celebrating Octavian's victory at Naulochus.

noteworthy comparisons between the arch in Rome and the monuments in Greece. Some general comparisons among the Rome and Actium-Nicopolis *tropaea* can still be made, however. The construction of the Actian arch would have been fairly unique in the city. The innovative design would have paralleled the unusual architectural plans of the Roman monuments around Actium, most notably the Greek-style stoa at Octavian's campsite and the naval dedication near the Apollo Actius temple. In addition, the differing designs for *tropaea* in Rome and Actium perhaps symbolized the architectural and cultural variances between the East and West. Triumphal arches were a new concept in Rome at the time, but they still were distinctly a Roman form. The stoa memorial is clearly derived from a Greek architectural type, the Apollo Actius temple was restored following its earlier Greek design, and Nicopolis itself was founded as a colony with specifically Greek qualities. These cultural and architectural differences among the *tropaea* may show Octavian's skill at symbolizing his victory at Actium in ways that both Romans and Greeks would understand and would appreciate. The battle of Actium without question was Octavian's most important victory of his career, and his constructions around the Ambracian Gulf, and possibly in Rome, reflect his genuine appreciation—both to Rome and to his gods—for his triumph over Antony and Cleopatra.

The Arch of Galerius at Thessalonica and Conclusions

The victory monuments at Delphi and around Actium surprisingly were the only *tropaea* that the Romans set up within Greece. Only one other Roman monument within Greece celebrates a Roman victory over a foreign army: the Arch of Galerius in ancient Thessalonica (modern Thessaloniki), which dates to the 4th century A.D.¹⁹⁰ The arch, which was built on the

¹⁹⁰ Ramage and Ramage, *Roman Art*, 302-04; Hannestad, *Roman Art and Imperial Policy*, 313; Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture*, 449-50; Cornelius C. Vermeule, *Roman Imperial Art in Greece*

Via Egnatia near the Palace, Mausoleum, and Hippodrome of Galerius, celebrates the tetrarch's campaigns against the Sassanians from A.D. 296-299 (figs. 18-19).¹⁹¹ The monument is a quadrifons arch which, Vermeule notes, "is a Roman triumphal monument in the fullest sense, but certain details keep it firmly in the imperial tradition of the Greek East."¹⁹²

While the Arch of Galerius is in fact a victory monument within Greece, it does not fit the requirements of this thesis in two primary ways. First and foremost, the arch was constructed within Galerius' administrative capital of his tetrarchic control, Thessalonica, as if the monument were in Rome itself.¹⁹³ This thesis gives an analysis only of victory monuments that were located in the East, outside of both Rome and the Empire's other administrative centers. Secondly, the Arch of Galerius, although located within Greece, commemorates victories against foreign armies from a different area/province, Mesopotamia. All of the *tropaea* investigated here are found at least within the region that the battle took place, if not on the battle site itself.

The fact that just two *tropaea* commemorate Roman victories in Greece emphasizes the importance of the battles themselves. Why were only these two Roman victories honored with permanent commemorations? Their significance as *tropaea* indicates the significance of the events that the monuments glorify.

and Asia Minor (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 336-50; Karl Frederik Kinch, *L'arc de triomphe de Salonique* (Paris: Librairie Nilsson, 1890); Hans Peter Laubscher, *Der Reliefschmuck des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki* (Berlin: Mann, 1975); Margret S. Pond Rothman, "The Thematic Organization of the Panel Reliefs on the Arch of Galerius," *AJA* 81 (1977): 427-54.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.; John Boardman, ed., *The Oxford History of Classical Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 334.

¹⁹² Vermeule, *Roman Imperial Art*, 349. Ramage and Ramage (*Roman Art*, 302) also mention that "the arch was quite different from its predecessors in Rome and elsewhere on the Italian peninsula," and Janet Huskinson (in Boardman, ed., *Oxford History of Classical Art*, 334) says that on the Arch of Galerius "we see motifs from a centralized imperial repertoire receiving a 'local' treatment from east Greek craftsmen."

¹⁹³ For more on the tetrarchy and Thessalonica, please see Grant, *History of Rome*, 395-401; Scarre, *Chronicle of Roman Emperors*, 196-202.

Aemilius Paullus' victory against King Perseus of Macedon was Rome's first major step into direct management of Greece. The Roman general's usurpation of the monument from Perseus at Delphi also further signifies Rome's subsequent conquest of the region. The establishment of Paullus' monument at Delphi both incorporates the Greek idea of *tropaea* into the Roman monumental repertory and signifies the involvement of Rome in Greek affairs.

Octavian's memorials around Actium likewise signify a major episode in Roman history. Without his victory over Antony and Cleopatra, Octavian's standing as the first Roman *princeps*—and Rome's subsequent principate—would have been implausible. Octavian knew that his naval victory at Actium changed his entire life, and his appreciation toward the gods for his triumph is evident in his extensive building program.

The Roman *tropaea* within Greece commemorate the most famous events of Roman history within the region; indeed, the victories of Aemilius Paullus and Octavian changed the course of Mediterranean history. It is therefore understandable that Rome established memorials at Delphi and around Actium honoring the momentous victories of their triumphant generals.

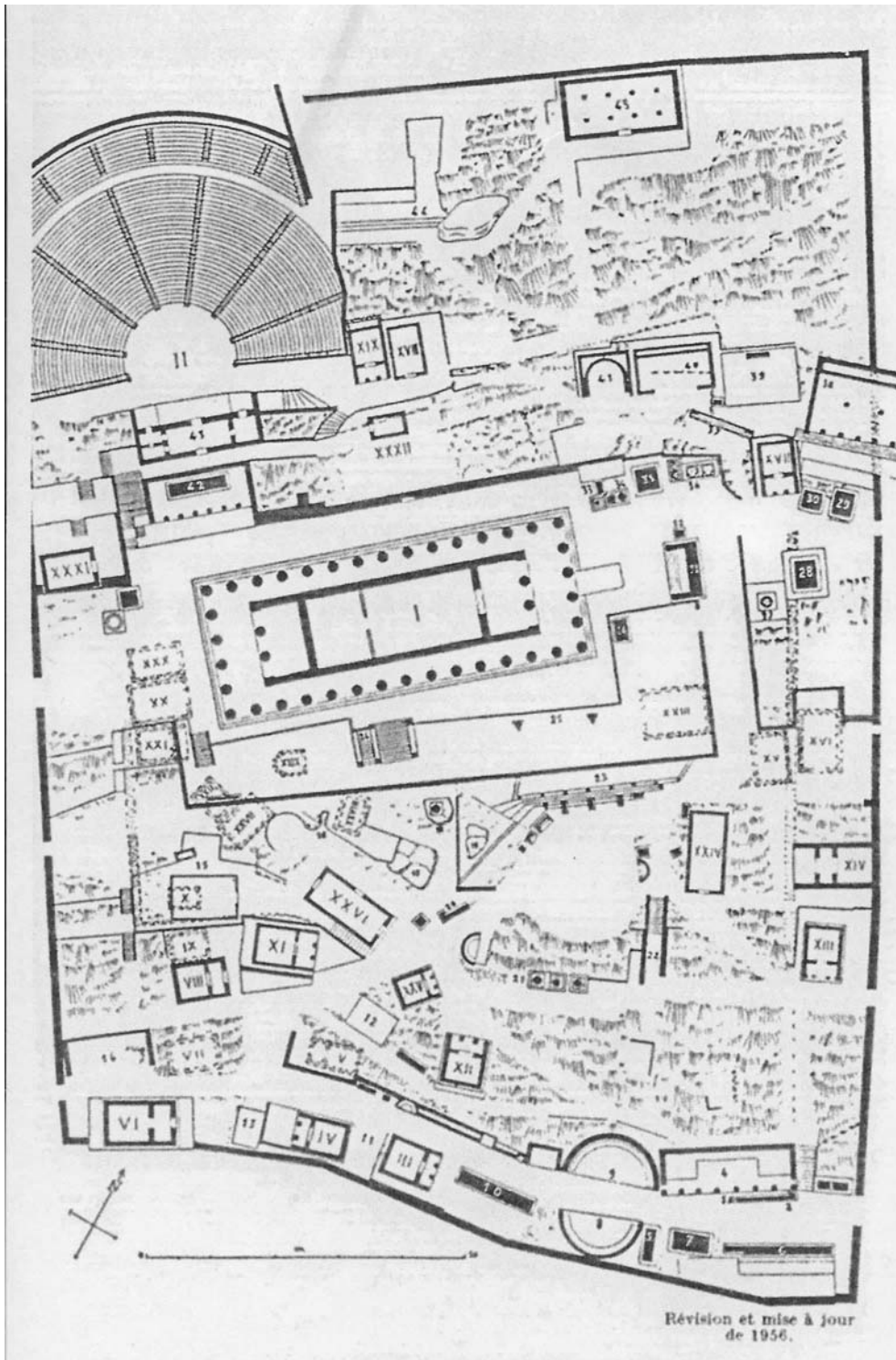


Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2

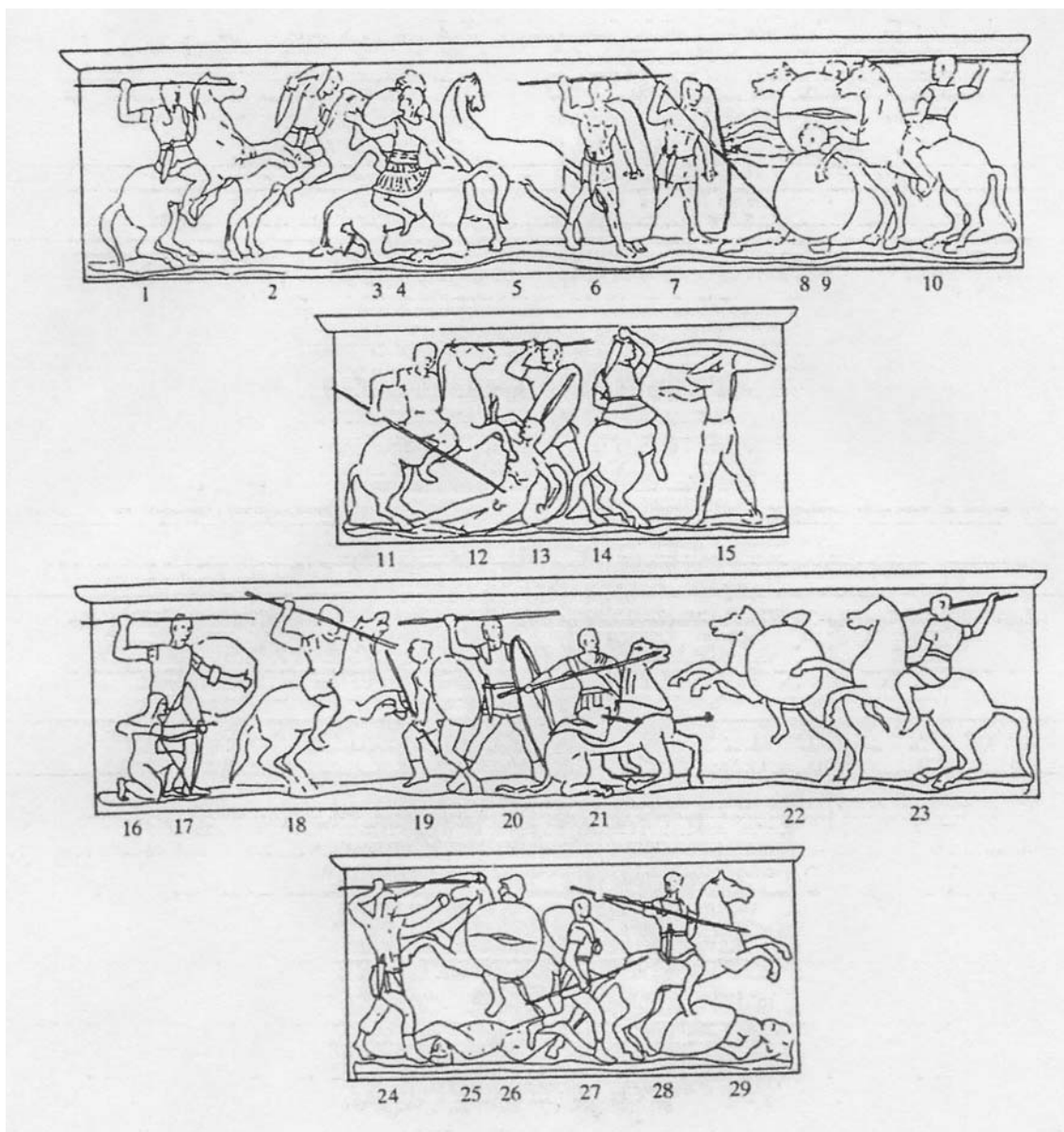


Figure 3.3

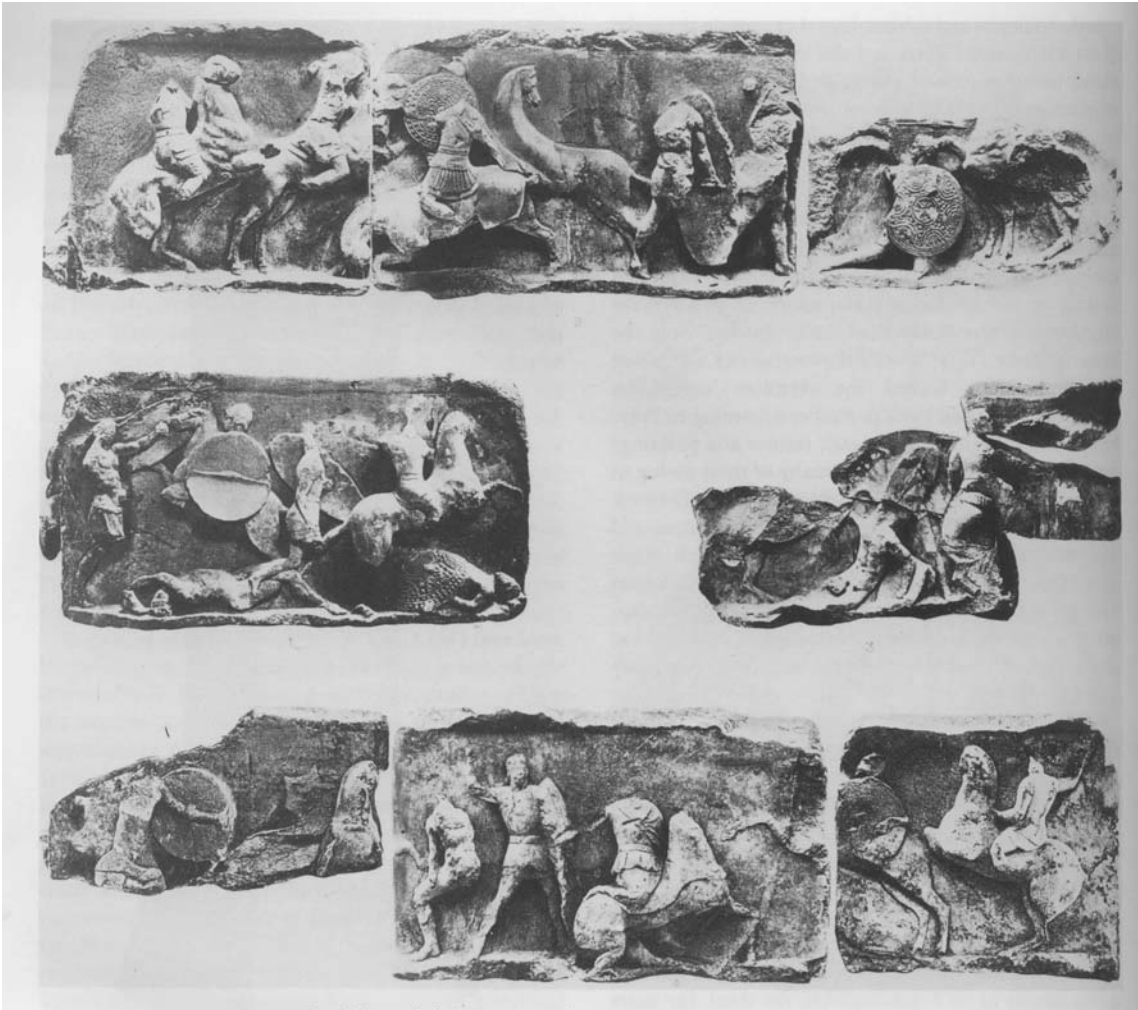


Figure 3.4

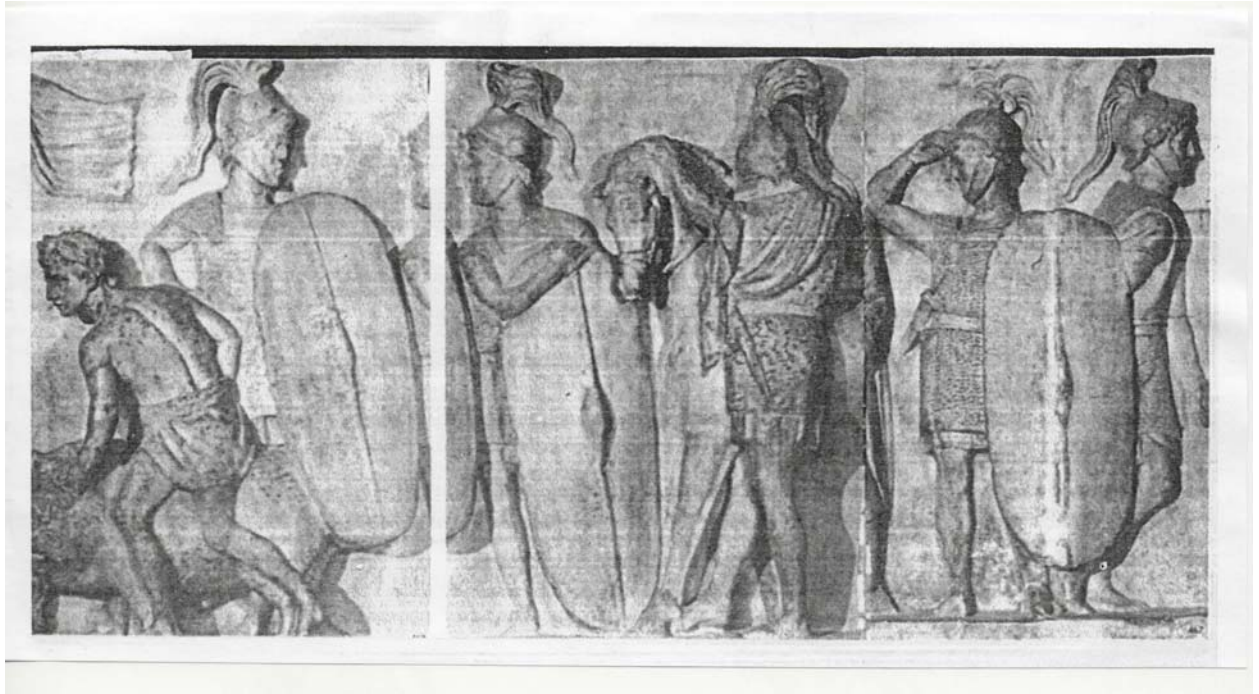


Figure 3.5

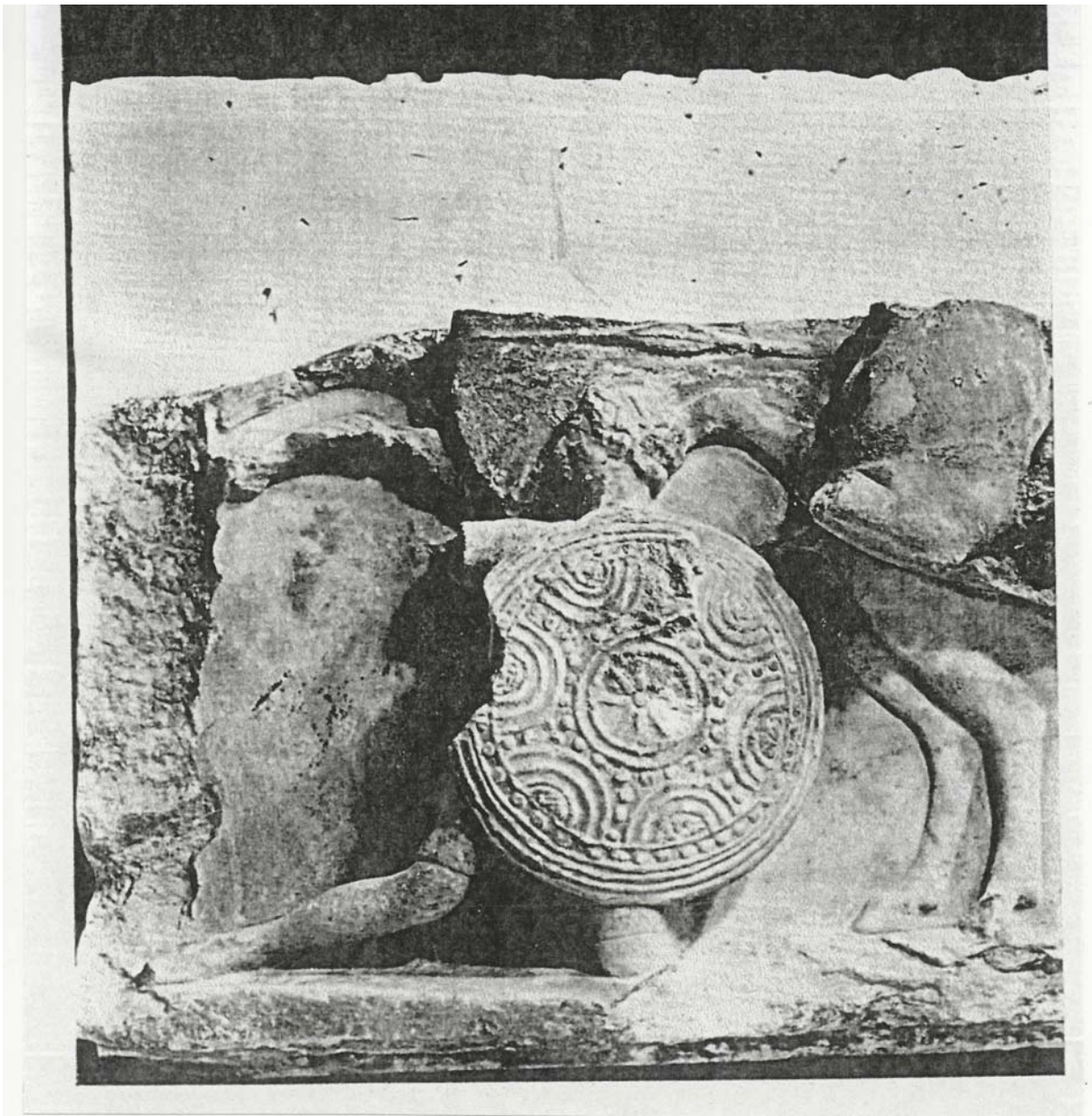


Figure 3.6



Figure 3.7

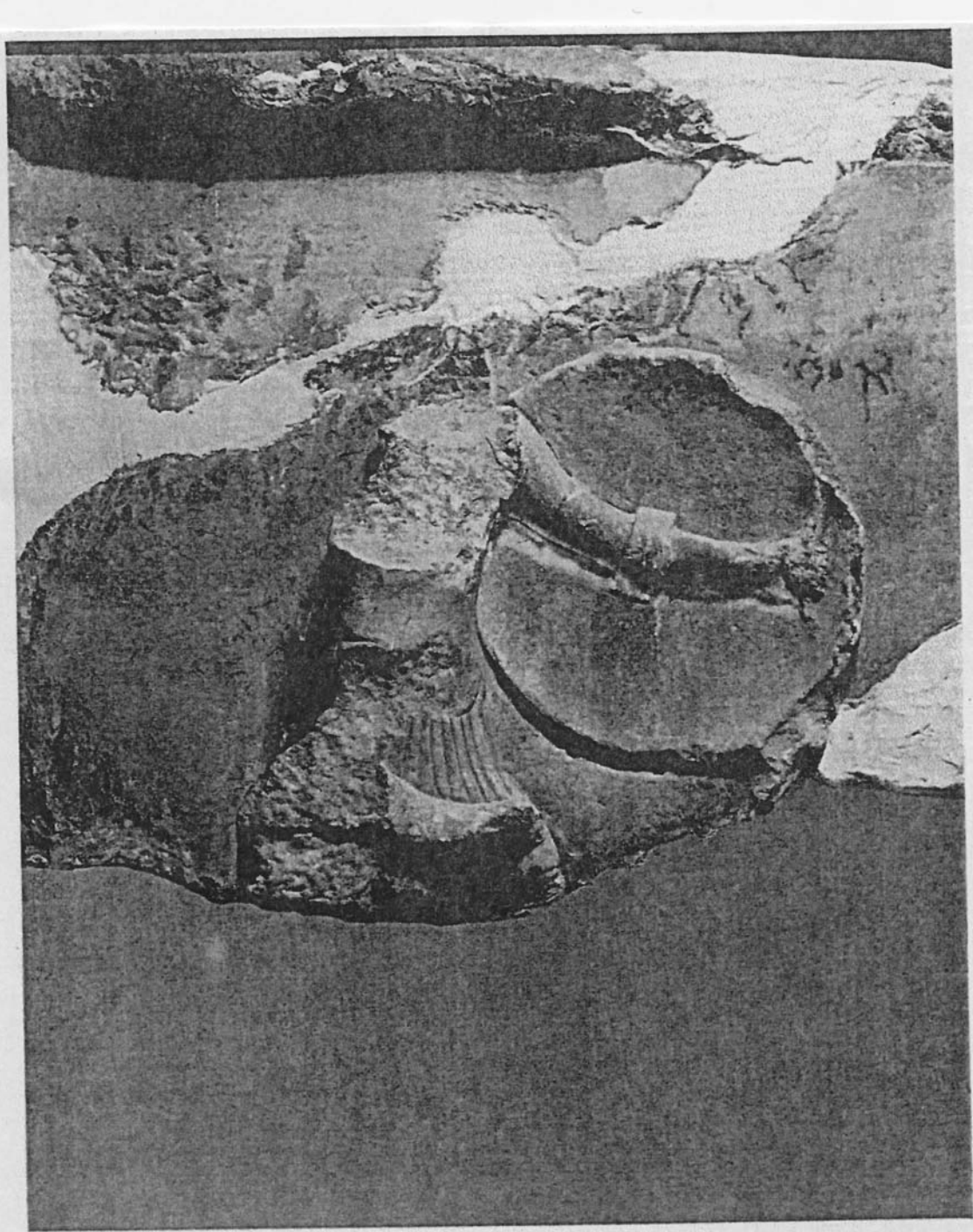


Figure 3.8

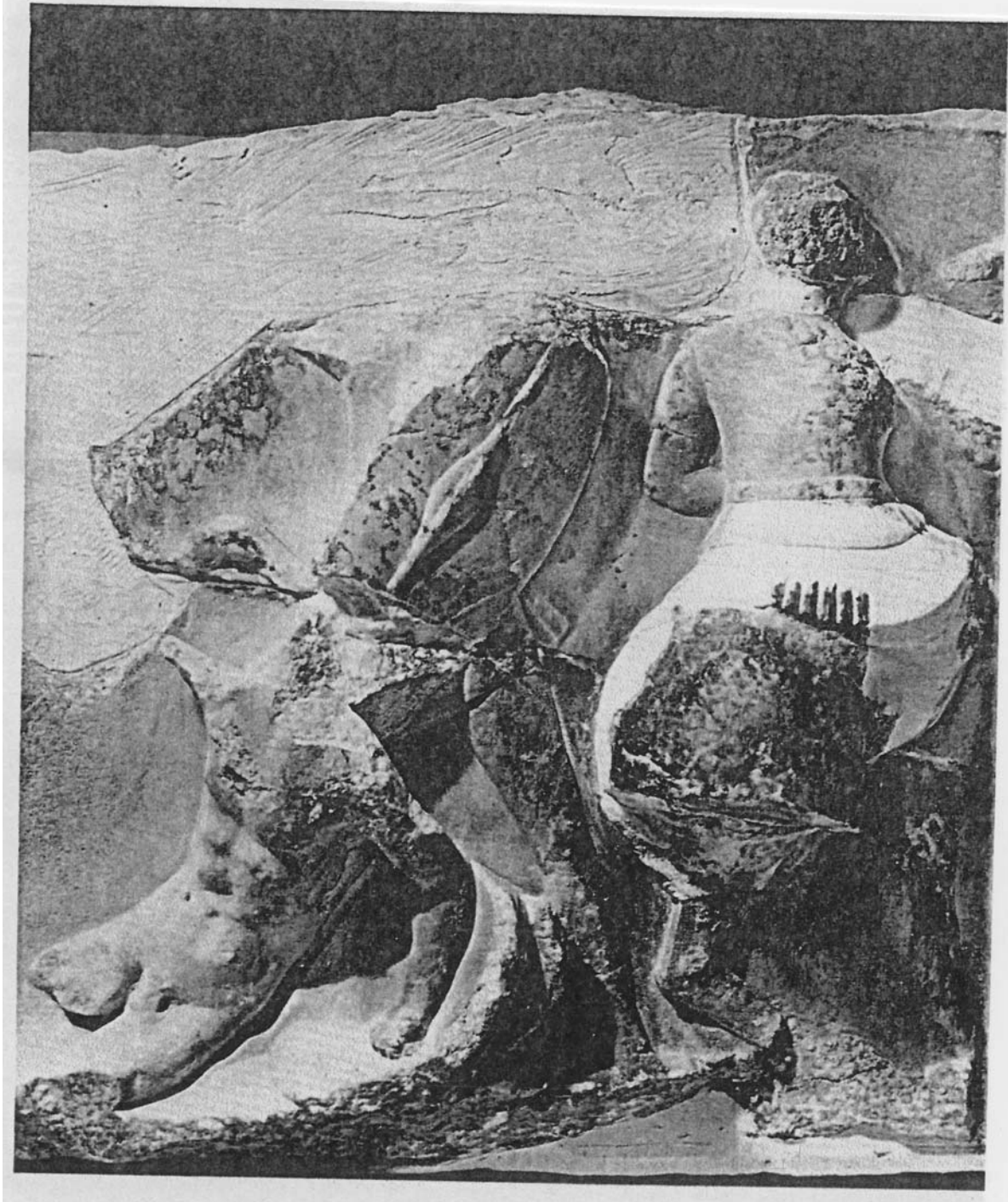


Figure 3.9

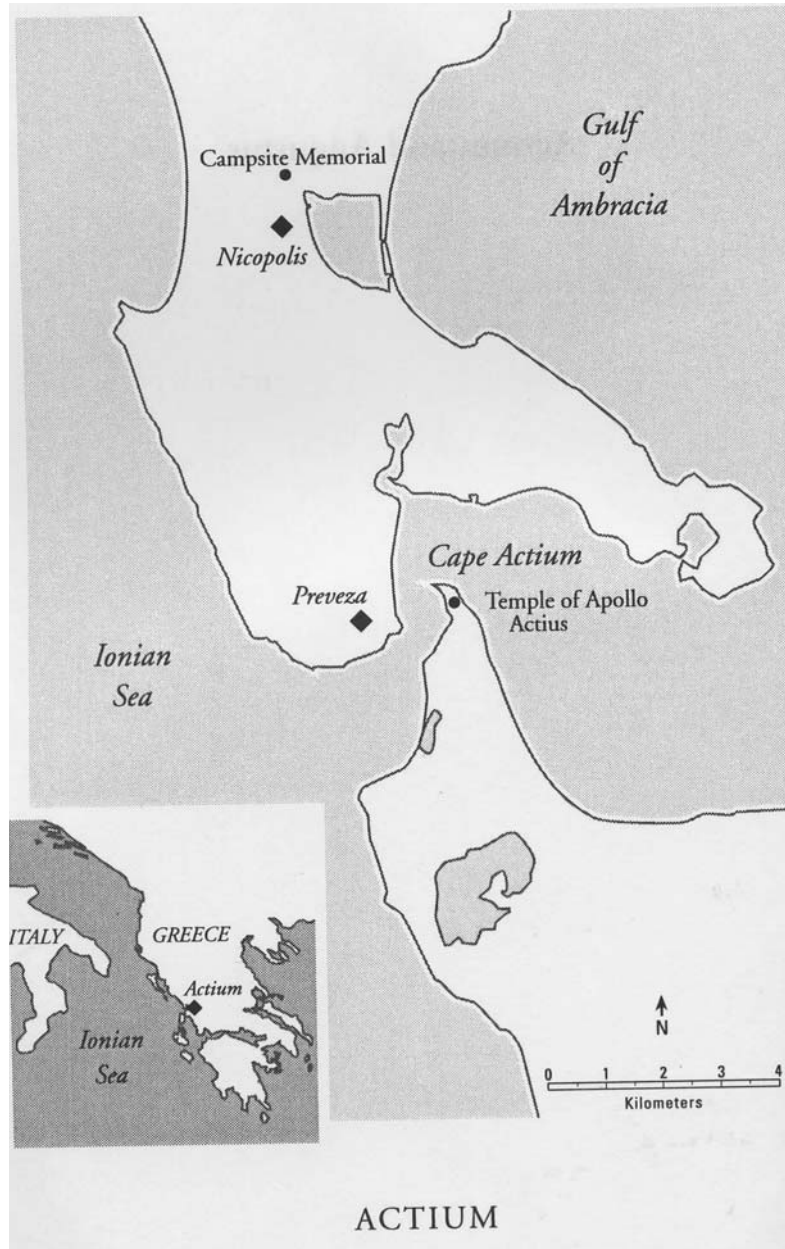


Figure 3.10

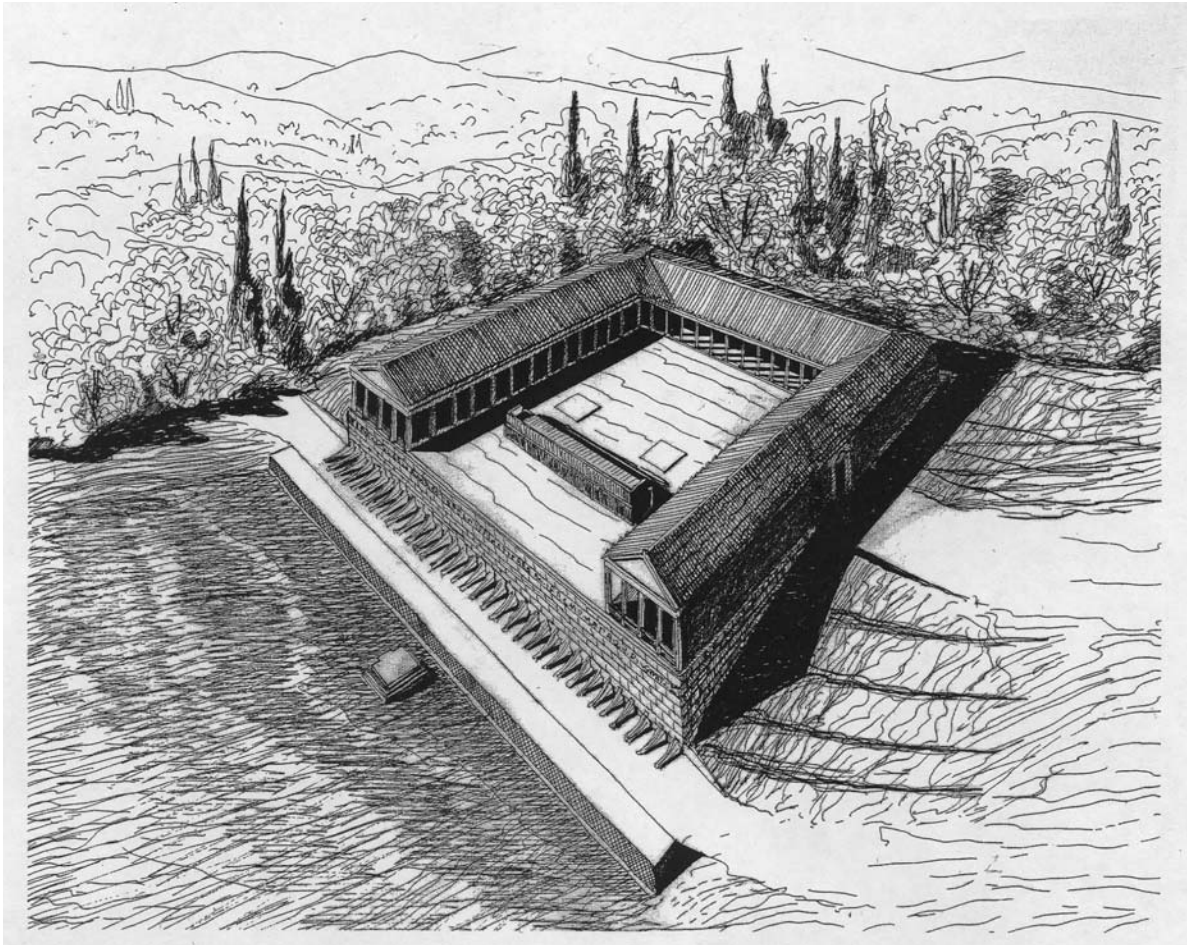


Figure 3.11

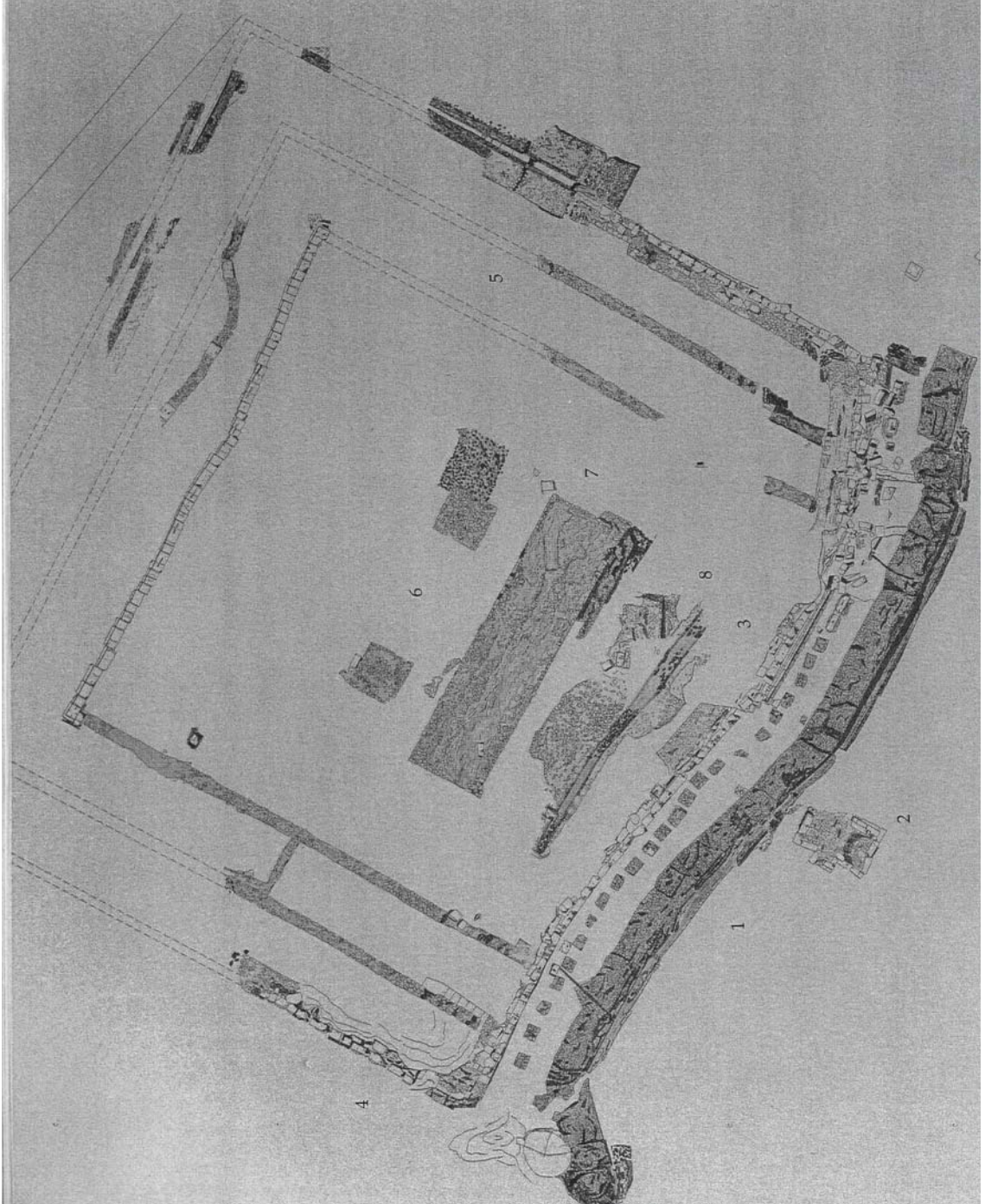


Figure 3.12

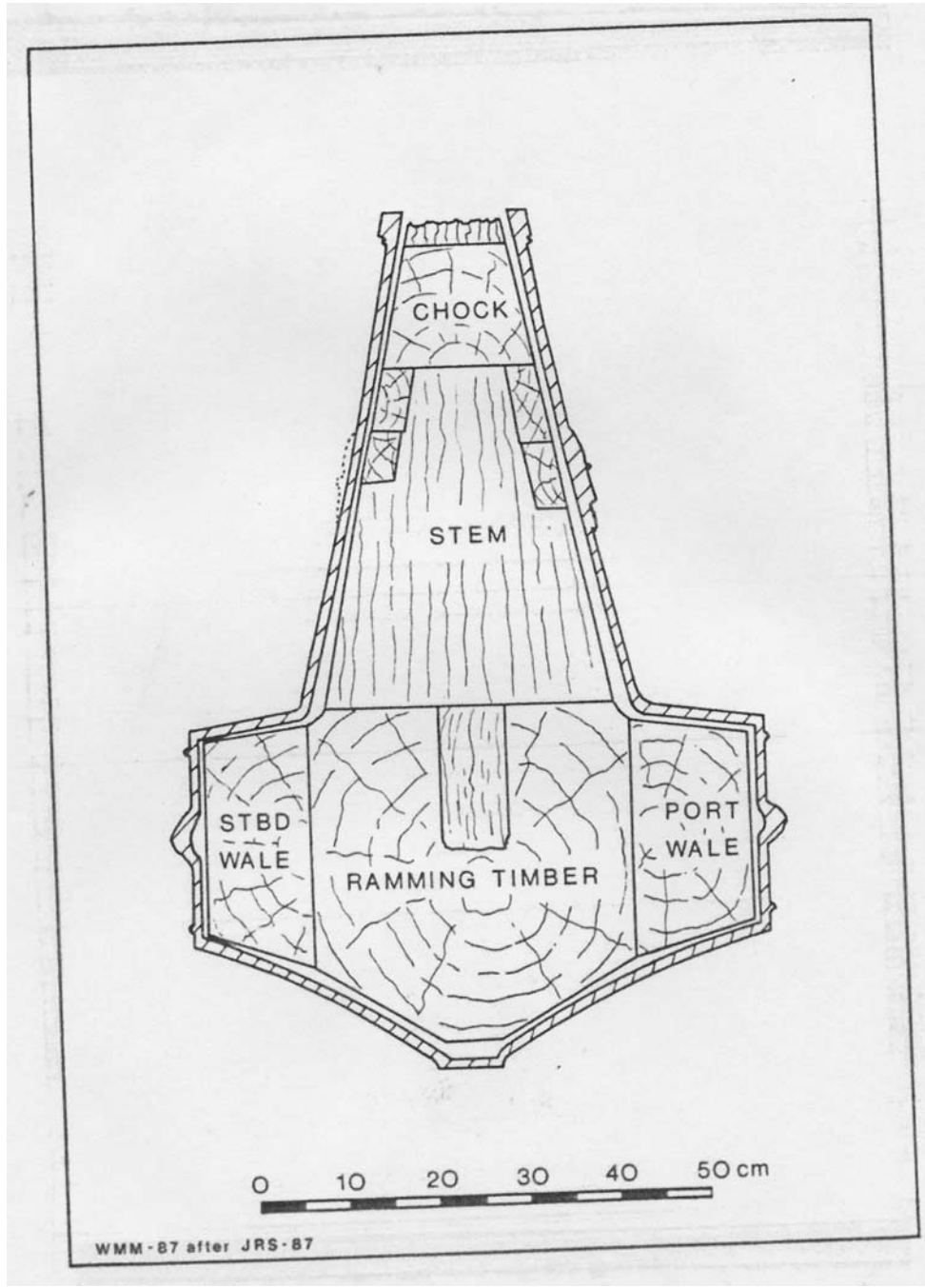


Figure 3.13

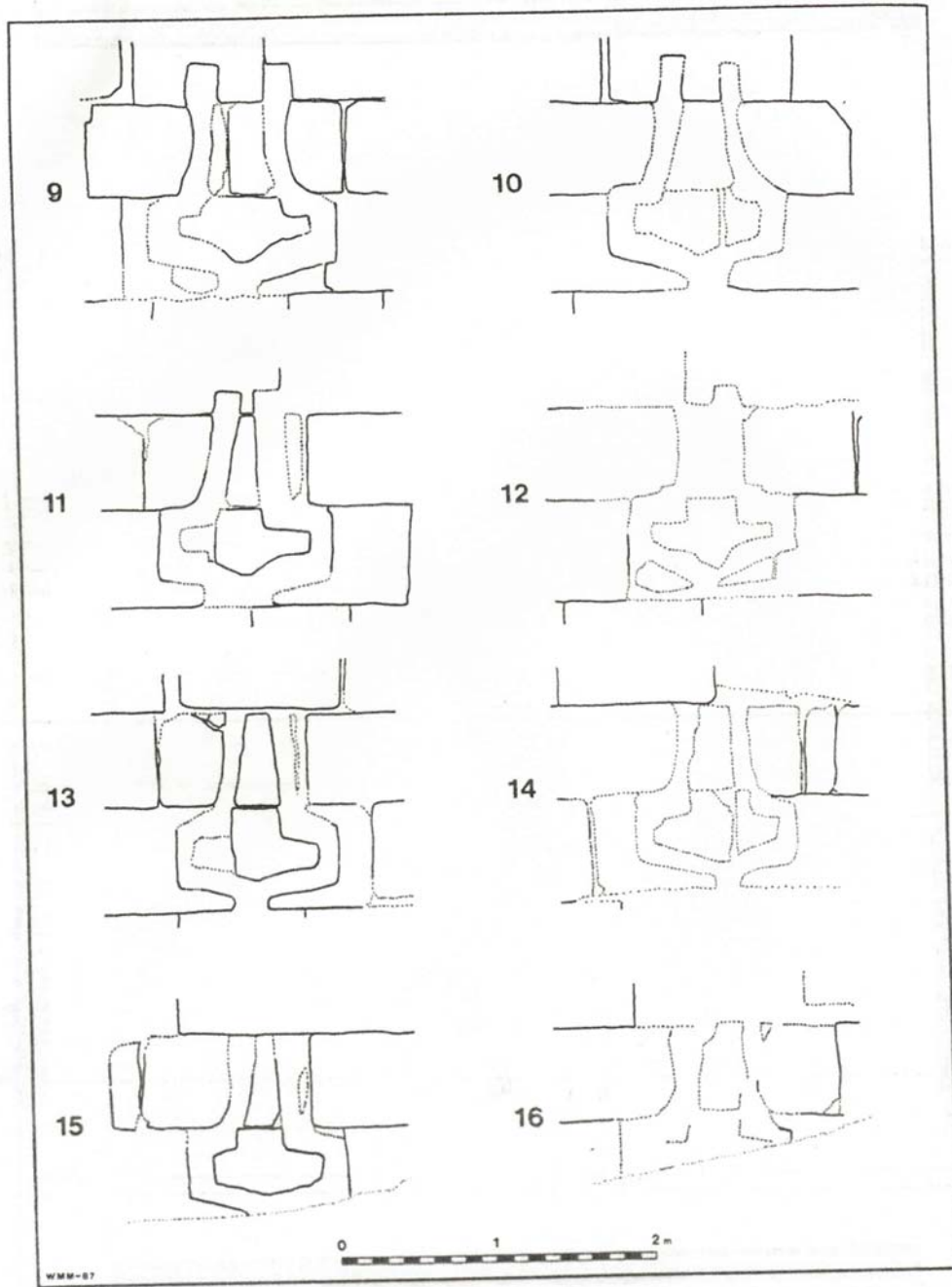


Figure 3.14

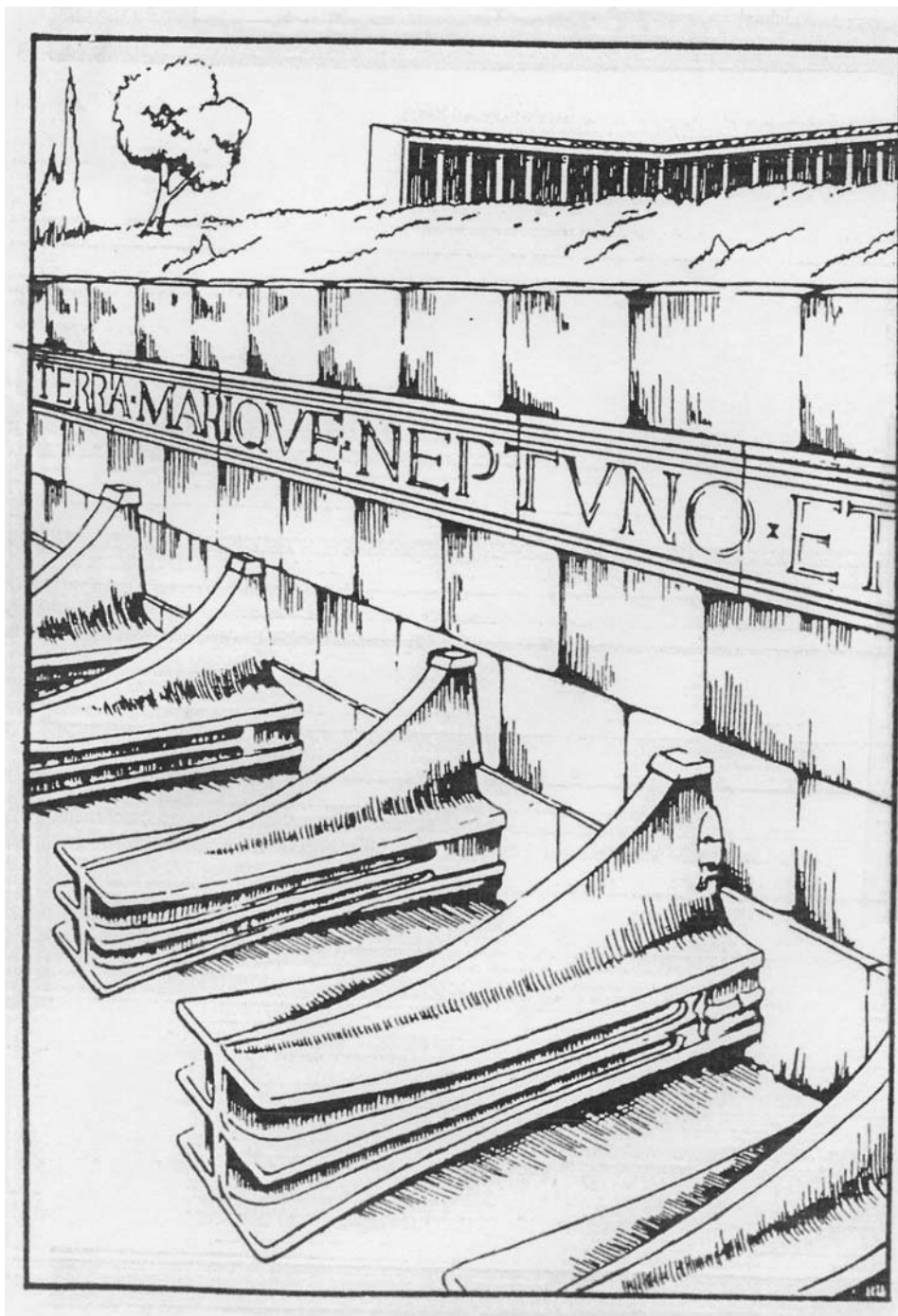


Figure 3.15

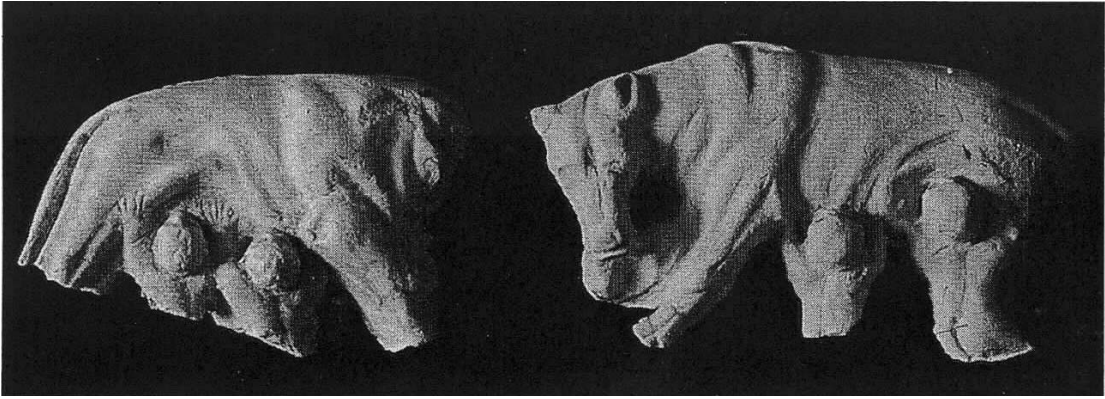


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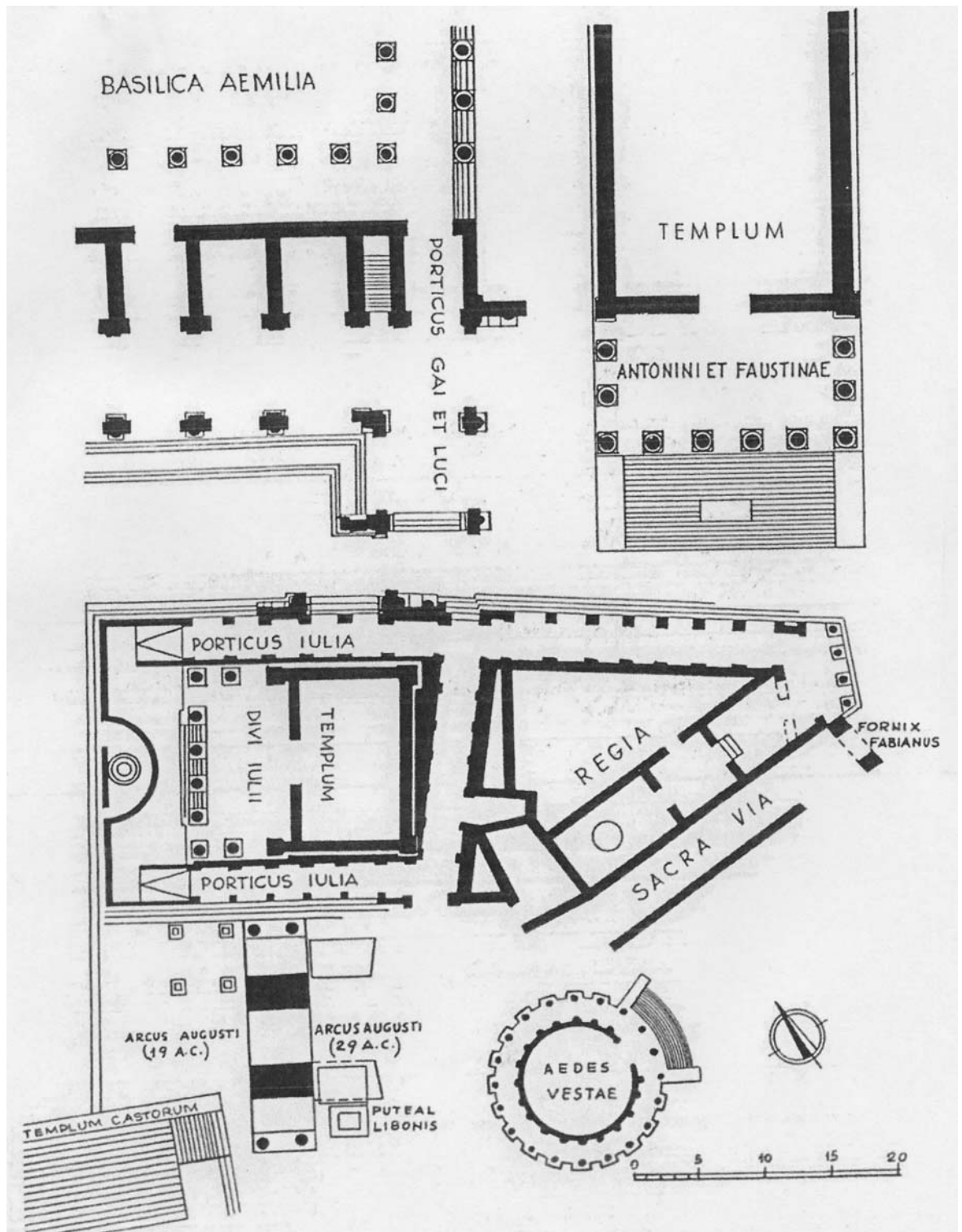


Figure 3.17

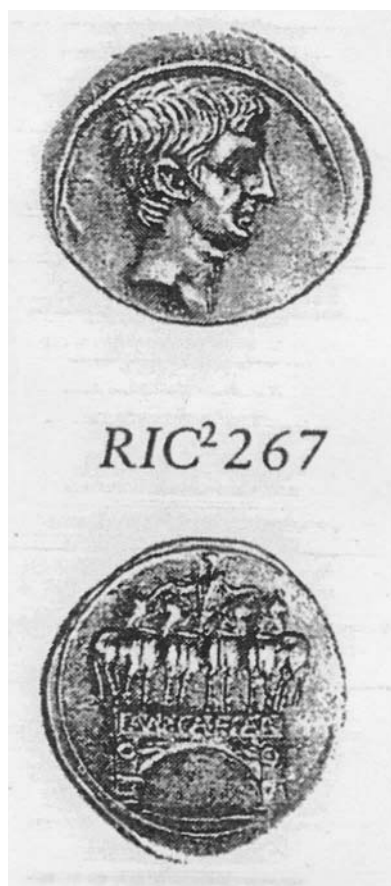


Figure 3.18

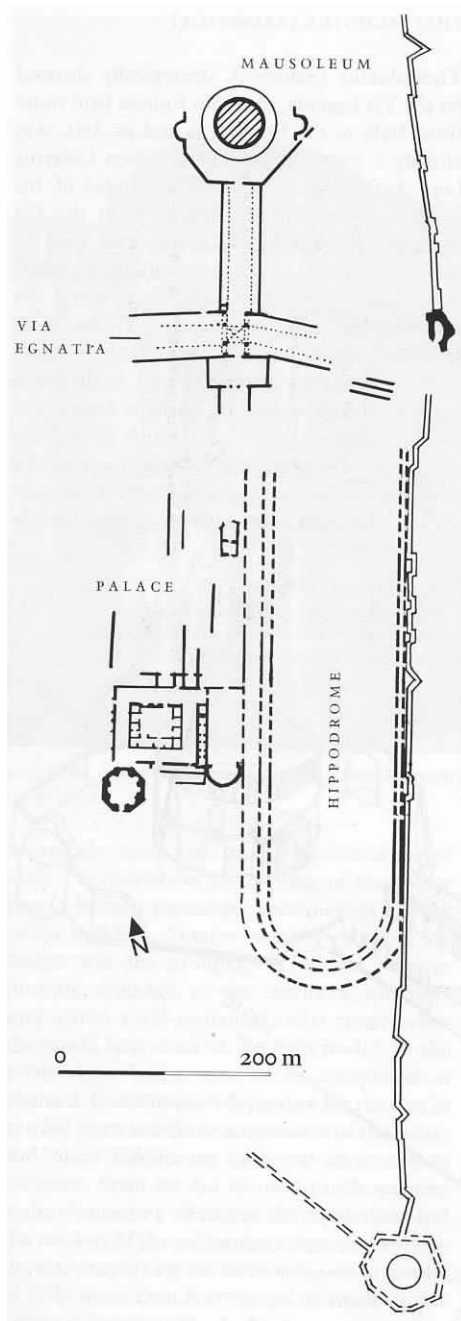


Figure 3.19

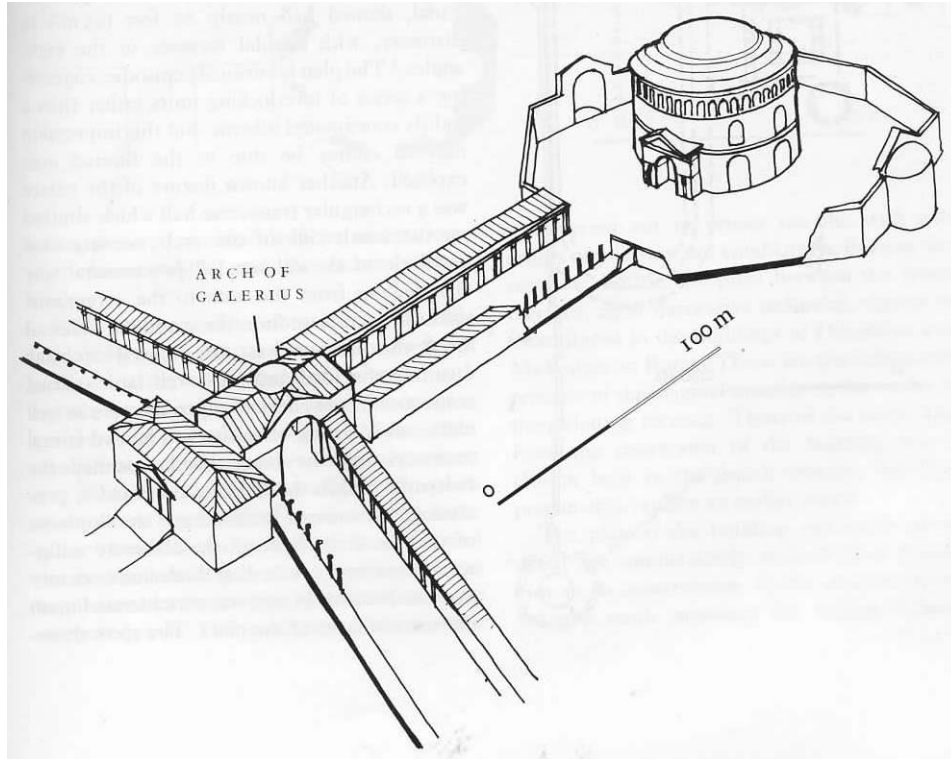


Figure 3.20

CHAPTER 4

ROMAN *TROPAEA* IN EGYPT AND JUDAEA

While there are few *tropaea* located within the regions of Roman Egypt and Judaea, the victory monuments built there are important. As he did in Greece, Augustus established a Nicopolis city, this time near the Ptolemaic capital of Alexandria. Within Judaea is a very untraditional *tropaeum*: a section of Jerusalem's walls and towers that remained standing after the First Jewish Revolt and the Roman siege of the city. North of Jerusalem also is found the remains of a victory monument: a triumphal arch of Hadrian near Scythopolis built after the Second Jewish Revolt. Discussions of these Egyptian and Judaeian *tropaea* will follow a recounting of Rome's direct participation in the matters of the regions in which the commemorations are found.

Roman Expansion into and Authority within Egypt

Rome became involved in Egyptian affairs during the early third century B.C., and within 250 years the region became a special and important province of the Roman Empire. The communication between Egypt and Rome was quite extensive during the time of Ptolemaic rule. First contact between the two Mediterranean powers occurred when Ptolemy II Philadelphus sent an embassy to Rome in 273 B.C., offering gifts and an alliance; the Romans then sent a return delegation to Ptolemy, solidifying the *amicitia* between Rome and Egypt.¹⁹⁴ It is difficult to determine why Rome wished to form the alliance with Egypt at this time, but Erich Gruen proposes a plausible explanation for Ptolemy's motivation behind the friendship. Using Cassius

¹⁹⁴ Cass. Dio fr. 41; Zonar. 8.6.11; Dion. Hal. 20.14.1-2; Val. Max. 4.3.9; Eutrop. 2.15; Livy *Per.* 14; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 673.

Dio as his source, Gruen argues that the Egyptian king wished to form an alliance because Rome had just recently defeated Pyrrhus of Epirus and was becoming more powerful within the Mediterranean world, and Ptolemy may have wanted a strong ally against his enemy, the Seleucid king Antiochus I.¹⁹⁵ After the initial diplomatic expeditions, however, there seems to have been little or no contact between Egypt and Rome during the remainder of the Ptolemaic king's reign, and little still during the reigns of his two successors, Ptolemy III Euergetes and Ptolemy IV Philopator.¹⁹⁶ The Ptolemaic rulers played a neutral role during the Punic Wars, since Egypt had friendly ties to both Rome and Carthage.¹⁹⁷ Overall, the Egyptian leaders only took part in the Punic Wars as negotiators between the warring nations at the end of the first two wars, working to create satisfactory peace terms for both Rome and Carthage.¹⁹⁸

Ptolemy V Epiphanes became the Egyptian king in the late third century B.C., and, fearing Seleucid and Macedonian invasions into Ptolemaic territories, sent an embassy to Rome to reinforce the two nations' friendship.¹⁹⁹ There seems to be no record that the Egyptian embassy ever arrived in Rome, and, regardless of whether it did or not, Rome did not help Egypt when Samos and parts of Thrace were seized by King Philip of Macedon, and King Antiochus III of Syria captured Phoenicia and Coele Syria soon thereafter.²⁰⁰ It is understandable why Rome did not aid Egypt in its territorial losses, as they were still fighting the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War and could not offer additional help to other nations, regardless of any previous ties of friendship.

¹⁹⁵ Cass. Dio fr. 41; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 674.

¹⁹⁶ Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 675-76. Gruen rightly notes that the ancient sources discussing this time period are sparse, and so we may have lost evidence of any contact during this time.

¹⁹⁷ App. *Sic.* 1.

¹⁹⁸ App. *Mac.* 1; Livy 27.30.4, 27.30.10, 27.30.12, 28.7.13-14; Polyb. 11.4.1.

¹⁹⁹ Polyb. 15.25.13-15; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 678.

²⁰⁰ Livy 33.19.8; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 615-16, 677-79.

A few years thereafter, in 196 B.C., a Roman embassy did give word to King Antiochus III that he withdraw from all cities that he had taken from Egypt, but Rome never forced the subject upon the Seleucid king by any show of force.²⁰¹ After a period of Rome's inaction on behalf of Egypt, Ptolemy V Epiphanes himself created his own alliance with Antiochus, in part by marrying the Seleucid king's daughter, Cleopatra.²⁰² This new partnership between Egypt and Syria strained the friendship of the Ptolemies and Rome for a few years, since Ptolemy V Epiphanes embarrassed the Roman negotiators by going around them in order to create his own union with the Seleucid Empire. When diplomatic relations between Egypt and Syria faltered just five years after the alliance was formed, and Rome's victories against Syria increased, Ptolemy V Epiphanes tried to gain Rome's favor again, but Roman leaders rejected the Ptolemaic king's entreaties.²⁰³ While Rome and Egypt officially still had a diplomatic friendship between them, their relationship certainly was uncomfortable during the early second century B.C.

The *amicitia* between Egypt and Rome continued to be dormant during the remainder of Epiphanes' rule, and it was only during the reign of his son, Ptolemy VI Philometor, that discussions between the two ruling states began again. A Roman delegation arrived in Alexandria in 173 B.C. in order to renew the alliance that Rome and Egypt shared; the same embassy, in fact, traveled throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, and also stopped in Syria in order to reconfirm the Romans' friendship with the Seleucid Empire.²⁰⁴ When the Seleucid King Antiochus IV Epiphanes attacked Egypt and even besieged Alexandria itself in 168 B.C., Rome

²⁰¹ Polyb. 18.47.1; Livy 33.34.3.

²⁰² Polyb. 18.51.10, 28.20.9; Livy 33.40.4, 35.13.4; App. *Syr.* 1; Diod. Sic. 28.12; Joseph. AJ 12.154; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 683-84.

²⁰³ Livy 34.57-59, 36.4.1-4, 37.3.9-11; Diod. Sic. 28.15; App. *Syr.* 6; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 684-85.

²⁰⁴ Livy 42.6.4-5; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 687.

intervened on Philometor's behalf, and, under the orders of the Roman senate, Gaius Popillius Laenas forced Antiochus to take his army out of Egypt and to clear his fleet from Cyprus.²⁰⁵ An Egyptian delegation set out to Rome immediately after Antiochus' retreat, where the Ptolemaic embassy publicly thanked the Romans for their role in preventing a Seleucid takeover of Alexandria.²⁰⁶

During the Sixth Syrian War came the joint rule of Egypt by the brothers Ptolemy VI Philometor and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (nicknamed Physcon), and Rome seemed to approve of the collaborative leadership.²⁰⁷ After international tensions between Egypt and Syria had subsided, internal conflict within the Ptolemaic dynasty flared up. The elder Philometor and younger Physcon began to contend for full control of the government, and Rome frequently had to intervene in order to reconcile the warring brother-kings.²⁰⁸

The elder Philometor was besting his brother throughout most of the struggle, even though Physcon periodically had the support of Rome. Philometor greatly strained the friendly relationship between Egypt and the Republic in the process because he went against Rome's wishes and rulings on several occasions during his battle for the Ptolemaic throne.²⁰⁹ When an embassy for Physcon again begged Rome for help against Philometor in 162/1 B.C., the Senate could not lose credibility in the Mediterranean world again to the arrogant elder Ptolemy. Rome severed its alliance with Philometor, and thereby essentially allowed Physcon to reclaim Cyprus

²⁰⁵ Polyb. 29.27.1-10; Livy 44.20.1, 44.29.1-5, 45.10.2-15, 45.12.1-8; Diod. 31.2; App. *Syr.* 1; Justin, *Apol.* 34.3.1-4; Cic. *Phil.* 8.23; Vell. *Pat.* 1.10.1; Plin. *HN* 34.24; Plut. *Mor.* 202F; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 658-59, 687-88, 691.

²⁰⁶ Polyb. 30.16.1-2; Livy 45.13.4-5; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 693-94.

²⁰⁷ Polyb. 29.27.9; Livy 45.12.7.

²⁰⁸ Diod. *Sic.* 31.2.9-14, 31.10.1-6-9, 31.18.1-16, 31.19.1-3; Livy *Per.* 46-47; Val. *Max.* 5.1.1f; Zonar. 9.25; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 694-700.

²⁰⁹ Diod. *Sic.* 31.18.1-3, Livy *Per.* 46-47; Polyb. 31.2.9-14, 31.10.1-6, 31.10.9, 31.19.1, 31.19.3; Val. *Max.* 5.1.1f; Zonar. 9.25; Gruen *Hellenistic World II*, 696-700.

by force.²¹⁰ Physcon's attempt to invade Cyprus failed, however, and Philometor retained control of the island; Rome's diplomatic measures yet again were bested by the Egyptian king.²¹¹

Rome became even more involved in Egypt's affairs in 155 B.C., when Physcon published his will, bequeathing his Ptolemaic territory (of Cyrene) to Rome if he should die without heirs and calling on Rome to rescue his territory if Cyrene should ever be attacked.²¹² Physcon's deliverance of his kingdom to Rome, however, was more dramatic than truthful, as the king was in his twenties when we wrote the testament, and it was very improbable that Physcon would die without heirs.²¹³ The statements of Physcon in his will more likely were devised to bring Rome over to his side against his brother, Philometor, when Physcon would try another invasion of Cyprus. As Erich Gruen rightly says, "[i]f Ptolemy [Physcon] would not enlist Roman forces on his behalf, he could at least give the impression that he was doing so."²¹⁴ The Roman Senate never believed Physcon's statements, and so the Egyptian king's wily idea to bring Rome to his side through his testament fell short.²¹⁵

After having his will unnoticed in Rome, Physcon planned another scheme to bring Rome to his side against Philometor. In 154 B.C. Physcon traveled to Rome, charging that Philometor had plotted to assassinate him, and showing his scars from the attempted murder to the Senators.²¹⁶ When Philometor's representatives in Rome tried to defend their king from the charges, the Senate dismissed them and ruled that a commission of five Romans would be

²¹⁰ Polyb. 31.20.1-4; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 700-01.

²¹¹ Polyb. 31.20.5-6, 33.11, 39.7.6; Diod. Sic. 31.33; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 701-02.

²¹² A stele found within Cyrene gives a general record of Physcon's will (*SEG IX*, 7), and the stele also says that copies of the will were sent both to Rome and to a shrine of Apollo in Cyrene (lines 5-6). For more on the stele and Physcon's will, see Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 702-05.

²¹³ Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 705.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Gruen (*ibid.*) notes that no ancient authors give any discussion to Physcon's will, thereby showing what little the Romans thought about it.

²¹⁶ Polyb. 33.11.1-3; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 705.

established to grant control of Cyprus to Physcon; the Senate further wrote to Roman allies in Greece and Asia, encouraging them to help Physcon be reinstated as the ruler of Cyprus.²¹⁷ Even though Rome supported Physcon in his recall to the throne of Cyprus, the Senate did not commit the Roman military to Physcon's aid; Rome had hoped that their strong statement of support would be enough to bring Physcon to power in Cyprus. The five-man delegation was a symbol of Rome's support of Physcon, but it also showed that the Senate would not commit their own military strength to the reappointment: Physcon would have to take control of Cyprus with his own troops.

Physcon's attempt to take Cyprus away from his brother failed for a third time. Philometor spared his brother from an embarrassing defeat, allowing him to retain control of Cyrene, and he even created an economic agreement with Physcon and promised his daughter in marriage to his younger, bellicose brother.²¹⁸ Even though Rome diplomatically supported Physcon's appointment to the Cypriot throne, the Senate did not send any military aid to help him. Philometor disrupted Rome's wishes again, but his reconciliation with Physcon apparently kept the Senate from intervening further.²¹⁹

For the next decade, there was little contact between Rome and Egypt. Philometor gained greater control of Ptolemaic territories, and Physcon's role in Egyptian politics became more limited. Philometor's increasing power within the Eastern Mediterranean seemed not to cause any concern for the Romans, as there are no reports of a Roman response to Philometor's

²¹⁷ Polyb., 33.11.4-7, Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 705-06.

²¹⁸ Polyb. 39.7.6; Diod. 31.33; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 706.

²¹⁹ Diodorus (31.33) claims that Philometor spared Physcon only because he feared Rome's reaction, but Gruen (*Hellenistic World II*, 707 n. 169) argues that Diodorus' statement may be too strong.

territorial gains in Coele Syria and Palestine.²²⁰ Josephus does note that Philometor declined the crown of Asia while in Antioch in order not to offend the Romans, but there is no evidence that the Senate forced the Egyptian king to do so, and so he may have done so in order to keep the Romans away from his machinations in the East.²²¹

Philometor's successes in Asia and Syria were incredibly brief, as he died from battle wounds two days after his conquest of Antioch in 145 B.C.²²² For the next two generations after Philometor's rule, Rome played little part in any of Egypt's affairs. Physcon finally became king of all of Egyptian territory after his brother's death, and Polybius notes that in 140/39 B.C. a Roman embassy visited the Egyptian king in Alexandria on a fact-finding mission.²²³ Perhaps the Senate dispatched this Roman delegation in order to see how Physcon was managing Egypt, as there were reports that he was a vengeful and maniacal regent,²²⁴ but there is no mention of the exact reason for the embassy.

Rome and Egypt maintained their alliance for the next forty years, and then in 96 B.C. the King Ptolemy Apion died and left the Ptolemaic territory of Cyrene to Rome in his will, as Physcon had tried to do (while still alive) sixty years earlier.²²⁵ Rome did not take the initiative to control the entire region, because they felt it was too isolated and unprofitable; instead, they

²²⁰ Polyb. 39.7.1; Diod. Sic. 32.9c; Joseph. *AJ* 13.113-115; *SEG* VI, 809 = XIII, 585; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 708-11.

²²¹ Joseph. *AJ* 13.114; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 711. Another ancient source (*1 Macc.* 11:13) says that Philometor in fact did accept a double diadem at Antioch, symbolizing his control over both Egypt and Asia. In either case, Rome's lack of involvement in Egypt's expansion is apparent.

²²² *1 Macc.* 11:14-19; Joseph. *AJ* 13.116-19; Livy *Per.* 52.

²²³ For Physcon's ascent to the Egyptian throne, Joseph. *Ap.* 2.49-53; Justin, *Apol.* 38.8.2-4; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 712. For the Roman embassy, Polyb. 34.14.1-5.

²²⁴ Diod. 33.6-6a, 33.12-13; Justin, *Apol.* 38.8.5-6, 38.8.11; Polyb. 34.14.6-7; Livy, *Per.* 59.; Gruen, *Hellenistic World II*, 712.

²²⁵ Livy *Epit.* 70; A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East, 168 B.C.-A.D. 1* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 263.

took over just the lucrative royal estates within Cyrene.²²⁶ Rome's interests were not simply in gaining territory, but in gaining productive territory.

It appears that the Roman general Sulla placed Ptolemy XI Alexander II on the Egyptian throne in 81 B.C., but there is no explanation for Rome's involvement in the matter.²²⁷ The nineteen year-old king was killed by the Alexandrian people within three weeks of his appointment, due in part because the citizens resented both Rome's involvement in Egyptian affairs and the inappropriate excesses of their new, young dynast.²²⁸ Ptolemy gave Cyprus, and even Egypt itself, to Rome in his will, but Rome still did not take over the kingdom completely.²²⁹ The Senate then selected Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysus, often called Ptolemy Auletes, as the next Egyptian king; he ruled as a subordinate to Rome, and his reign was marked by a struggle for control of Egypt in part because of his apparent vassalage to Rome.²³⁰ During Auletes' rule, Rome's frustration with Egypt became very apparent: in 65 B.C. the Roman censor Marcus Licinius Crassus argued that Rome should officially annex Egypt and Julius Caesar should administer the area, but Quintus Lutatius Catulus blocked the idea.²³¹ In 59 B.C. Auletes was officially called a friend and ally of the Roman people, but apparently he had to bribe Rome for the designation.²³² The Egyptians rebelled against Auletes soon thereafter, and the Ptolemaic king was expelled from Egypt in 58 B.C.²³³ Rome again intervened on Auletes' behalf, and the Syrian governor Aulus Gabinius restored Auletes to the Egyptian throne in 55

²²⁶ Livy *Epit.* 70; App. *B Civ.* 1.111; Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, 263.

²²⁷ App. *B Civ.* 1.102.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Plut. *Vit. Cat. Min.* 35.

²³⁰ Cass. Dio 39.12-16.

²³¹ Plut. *Vit. Crass.* 13.2; Suet. *Iul.* 11; Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, 265.

²³² Caes. *B Civ.* 3.107.2; Cass. Dio 39.12.1; Cic. *Rab. Post.* 6; Suet. *Iul.* 54.3; Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy*, 265.

²³³ Plut. *Vit. Cat. Min.* 35.2-3; Livy *Epit.* 104; Cass. Dio 39.12-16.

B.C.²³⁴ Auletes died four years later and named his young children, Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra VII, as joint monarchs in his will.²³⁵ Auletes interestingly named the Roman people as the witness to his will, and so a copy of the will was sent to Rome; the will also said that Rome had the ability to control Egypt's future, because Egypt's succession now took place under Roman authority.²³⁶

Rome's alliance with Egypt grew even closer during the reigns of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra VII. Caesar met the young queen in Alexandria in 48 B.C., and he was the arbitrator in the discussions in which Cleopatra was vying for power over her co-regent, Ptolemy XIII.²³⁷ Because Caesar was supporting the queen over her brother-king, the Alexandrians rose up in support of Ptolemy XIII, and Caesar was besieged in Alexandria and had to fight hard in order to control the uprising.²³⁸ In the end, Caesar's troops were victorious, Ptolemy XIII was killed in the fighting, and the Roman general established Cleopatra as both the sole ruler of Egypt and a client of the Roman Republic.²³⁹

In 46 B.C., Cleopatra arrived in Rome with her new son, Caesarion, in order to reunite with Caesar, the newly-chosen dictator.²⁴⁰ Some Romans, in particular those within the Senate, became irritated by Cleopatra's monarchial status, her influence on Caesar, and, perhaps worst of all, her golden statue within the Temple of Venus Genetrix in Rome's Forum Iulium.²⁴¹ Once Caesar had been killed, Cleopatra quickly fled Rome and returned to Egypt.

²³⁴ Livy *Epit.* 105; Cass. Dio 39.55-58.

²³⁵ Cic. *Fam.* 8.4.5.

²³⁶ Cic. *Fam.* 8.4.5.

²³⁷ Caes. *B Civ.* 106-09 Suet. *Iul.* 35.1; Grant, *History of Rome*, 232; Christian Meier, *Caesar*, trans. by David McLintock (New York: BasicBooks, 1982), 408-10.

²³⁸ Caes. *B Afr.*; Suet. *Iul.* 35.1; Grant, *History of Rome*, 232; Meier, *Caesar*, 410-12.

²³⁹ Caes. *B Afr.* 32-33; Suet. *Iul.* 35.1; Grant, *History of Rome*, 232; Meier, *Caesar*, 411-12.

²⁴⁰ Suet. *Iul.* 52.1; Grant, *History of Rome*, 236; Meier, *Caesar*, 428

²⁴¹ Cass. Dio 51.22.3; App. *B Civ.* 2.102; Grant, *History of Rome*, 235-36; Meier, *Caesar*, 445-46; L. Richardson Jr., *Topographical Dictionary*, 167.

Cleopatra continued her reign as the Egyptian queen, and she became involved in another relationship with another Roman leader, this time with Mark Antony. Cleopatra met with Antony at Tarsus in 41 B.C. in order to discuss Antony's upcoming campaign against the Parthians; the captivating queen quickly seduced the notoriously dim-witted Roman.²⁴² Their relationship was displeasing to most Romans, and so it helped the political position of Antony's rival, Octavian, in the two triumvirs' claim for the ultimate authority in Rome. Antony certainly did not help his cause when, in an elaborate ceremony, Antony illegally gave parts of several Roman provinces to both Cleopatra and their children.²⁴³ If Antony had not played such a subservient role in his affair with the powerful foreign queen, he perhaps could have had more support in his power struggle with Octavian. The Senate declared war on Cleopatra—thus giving Octavian a chance to fight against Antony, of course—and Octavian eventually was victorious both at Actium and in Alexandria.²⁴⁴ After Antony and Cleopatra had committed suicide, Octavian officially brought Egypt under the total control of Rome, and thereafter Romans directly administered the region as an official Roman province.²⁴⁵

Octavian's Foundation of Nicopolis near Alexandria

Soon after the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra in 30 B.C., Octavian founded a town called Nicopolis near Alexandria in order to symbolize his victory over the Egyptian queen and

²⁴² Cass. Dio 48.24.2; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 25-27; Hooper, *Roman Realities*, 302-03; Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 670; H.H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 1988), 165-66.

²⁴³ Strabo 14.5.3; Cass. Dio 50.4.1; Vell. Pat. 2.82.4; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 36, 54; Green, *Alexander to Actium*, 674; Hooper, *Roman Realities*, 306; Scullard, *Gracchi to Nero*, 168.

²⁴⁴ Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 55-76; Grant, *History of Rome*, 245.

²⁴⁵ Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 77-86; Suet. *Aug.* 17; Grant, *History of Rome*, 245.

her Roman consort. This “victory city” paralleled the symbolism of Octavian’s triumph that the Nicopolis near Actium in Greece also represented. While there is very little archaeological and historical evidence that remains concerning the Alexandrian Nicopolis, we still can gain some information on Octavian’s plans for the city.

Cassius Dio gives the most informative ancient account regarding Octavian’s foundation of Nicopolis. In his *Roman History*, he states:²⁴⁶

‘Ο δ’ οὖν Καίσαρ ὡς τά τε προειρημένα ἔπραξε, καὶ πόλιν καὶ ἐκεῖ ἐν τῷ τῆς μάχης χωρίῳ συνώκισε, καὶ τὸ ὄνομα καὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα αὐτῇ ὁμοίως τῇ προτέρᾳ δούς.

After accomplishing the things just related Caesar [i.e., Octavian] founded a city there on the very site of the battle and gave to it the same name and the same games as to the city he had founded previously.

The ‘previous city’ refers to the Nicopolis near Actium, which Dio describes earlier in his history.²⁴⁷ Because Dio reports that the town was established on the site of Octavian’s victory over Antony’s post-Actium forces, it is clear that Nicopolis was located to the east of ancient Alexandria. The town was about thirty *stadia* distant from the Ptolemaic capital; some scholars have even dubbed Nicopolis a suburb of Alexandria (fig. 4.1).²⁴⁸

As could be expected, Octavian made Nicopolis a rather ornate city in order to commemorate his great victory over Cleopatra and Antony. There was a stadium and an amphitheater within the town, and Strabo mentions that in his day, forty years after the foundation of Nicopolis, the grandiose constructions and sights within Nicopolis led to the

²⁴⁶ Cass. Dio 51.18.1. Text and translation by Earnest Cary taken from *Dio’s Roman History* (*supra*, n. 145) 48-49.

²⁴⁷ Cass. Dio. 51.1.3.

²⁴⁸ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus, 72-73*; John Marlowe, *The Golden Age of Alexandria* (London: Victory Gollancz Limited, 1971), 208; S. Shenouda, “Alexandria,” in Richard Stillwell, William L. MacDonald, and Marian Holland, eds., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 37.

neglect of the Serapium and other sacred buildings within Alexandria.²⁴⁹ Cassius Dio notes that the Nicopolis in Egypt hosted the same type of games that the Greek Nicopolis town did,²⁵⁰ this refers to the *Actia* in honor of Octavian's victory over Antony and Cleopatra. Octavian's extensive building projects within Alexandrian Nicopolis and his establishment of quinquennial games in the town testify to the Roman leader's desire to memorialize both his victory near Alexandria and his conquest of Egypt.

Some scholars have argued that Octavian wanted Nicopolis to rival or even to surpass Alexandria in importance and grandeur, making Nicopolis the new capital of the new Roman province of Egypt.²⁵¹ There are many arguments against these claims, however. First and foremost, Octavian upon capturing Egypt did not take any immediate steps to weaken Alexandria's power, nor did he ever limit Alexandria's political standing in the Mediterranean once he became *princeps*.²⁵² Secondly, Plutarch reports that Octavian highly regarded Alexandria due to its foundation by Alexander the Great and because of the city's beauty and spaciousness; Octavian also said that he had spared Alexandria simply as a favor to his Egyptian friend, Areius.²⁵³ Lastly, Strabo also mentions that Nicopolis was "no smaller than a city;" certainly if Octavian had desired for Nicopolis to become a huge metropolis, and had created it as such, Strabo's description of the town would not have been so uninspiring.²⁵⁴

Little else is known about Nicopolis during ancient times. Gurval argues, somewhat hesitatingly, that Nicopolis may have been used only as the sacred area for the Actian games and

²⁴⁹ Strabo 17.1.10; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 72-73; Marlowe, *Golden Age*, 208.

²⁵⁰ *Supra*, n. 246.

²⁵¹ Marlowe, *Golden Age*, 208; E.M. Forster, *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1968), 48.

²⁵² Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 73.

²⁵³ Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 79-80; *P Oxy.* 3022.

²⁵⁴ Strabo 17.1.10; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 73.

also as a place for cult worship of Octavian/Augustus.²⁵⁵ While his hypothesis is intriguing, unfortunately there is no evidence to support his claim. The city's name may have changed during the first century A.D., because Pliny the Elder mentions a city named Juliopolis in Egypt that seems to be in the same location as Nicopolis.²⁵⁶ If Pliny's Juliopolis is the same town as Octavian's Nicopolis, apparently the victory city in Egypt did not last for as long and as famously as its Greek counterpart. During its time of importance, however, Alexandrian Nicopolis was a powerful civic symbol of Octavian's masterful victory over his Egyptian and Roman adversaries.

Roman Expansion into and Authority within Judaea

Roman involvement in and communication with Judaea occurred later than that with Egypt. The Jewish historian Josephus notes that Judas, the new Hasmonean ruler of Judaea, allied himself with Rome in an attempt to defend his country from a re-invasion by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes.²⁵⁷ In 143 B.C., Jonathan, Judas' brother and successor, renewed the treaty with Rome soon after he became king; it was necessary for Jonathan to renew the alliance because the treaty expired with Judas' death.²⁵⁸

Little else is known about the communication between Judaea and Rome for roughly eighty years, until Pompey traveled through the East during his military campaigns of 66-63 B.C.²⁵⁹ While he was in Syria in 64 B.C., Pompey was asked by Jewish emissaries to decide the

²⁵⁵ Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 73.

²⁵⁶ Plin. *HN* 6.102; Gurval, *Actium and Augustus*, 73.

²⁵⁷ Joseph. *AJ* 7.417-18, *BJ* 1.38. Although Josephus says that Judas consolidated his treaty with Rome before the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, E. Mary Smallwood (in Josephus, *The Jewish War*, trans. by G.A. Williamson, London: Penguin Books, 1981, 410 n. 9) notes that the treaty between Rome and Judaea likely was in 161 B.C., after the Seleucid king's death. A.N. Sherwin-White (*Roman Foreign Policy, 70-74*) argues against the mid-2nd century B.C. dating of the alliance between Rome and Judaea.

²⁵⁸ Joseph. *BJ* 1.48; for the date of the renewed alliance, see Smallwood, *The Jewish War*, 410 n. 12.

²⁵⁹ For more on Pompey's campaigns in the East, see Grant, *History of Rome*, 195-97.

claims to the Judaeian throne between the rival brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus.²⁶⁰ Although Pompey initially favored Aristobulus, he told the two brothers to wait for his decision, which would come after Pompey confronted Aretas, the King of Nabatene.²⁶¹

When Pompey learned that Aristobulus had defied the Roman general's orders by mobilizing an army against his brother, he immediately entered Judaea in order to lead his troops against the disobedient Jewish prince.²⁶² After besieging Jerusalem and defeating Aristobulus in 63 B.C., Pompey imprisoned Aristobulus in Rome and established Hyrcanus as the high priest and ethnarch of Judaea.²⁶³ While Judaea was not considered a Roman province, it was an official client-kingdom under the general administration of Rome.

Soon after Pompey left Judaea, Aristobulus' son, Alexander, vengefully attacked Hyrcanus, and Pompey's legate in Syria, Gabinius, was sent in to defeat Alexander.²⁶⁴ Gabinius re-established Hyrcanus as the high priest, but he also revoked Hyrcanus' ethnarchy and divided Judaea into five separate administrative units.²⁶⁵ Judaea still was not classified as a Roman province at this time, but as Peter Richardson correctly notes, "Judea's [*sic*] future depended as much on what happened in Rome as on the events in Judea."²⁶⁶

Some of Rome's other influential politicians and leaders besides Pompey involved themselves in Judaeian affairs during the mid-first century B.C., as well. After becoming the governor of Syria in 54 B.C., Marcus Licinius Crassus stole all of the gold from the Great Temple in Jerusalem in order to finance his ensuing (and disastrous) campaign against the

²⁶⁰ Jos. *AJ* 14.37-46; E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 27.

²⁶¹ Joseph. *AJ* 14.46; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 98.

²⁶² Joseph. *BJ* 1.131-37; Smallwood, *The Jews*, 23.

²⁶³ Cass. Dio 37.16.2-4; Joseph. *AJ* 14.4.3; Strabo 16.2.40; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 98-100; Smallwood, *The Jews*, 27. Sherwin-White rightfully notes that Pompey did not give Hyrcanus the title of king, but rather ethnarch, in order to reduce Hyrcanus' status within Judaea.

²⁶⁴ Joseph. *BJ* 1.160-78; Smallwood, *The Jews*, 31.

²⁶⁵ Joseph. *BJ* 1.70; Smallwood, *The Jews*, 31; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 100-03.

²⁶⁶ Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 103.

Parthians.²⁶⁷ Antipater, a pro-Hyrceanus Idumaeen, aided Julius Caesar during the Roman general's military campaigns in Alexandria.²⁶⁸ In return for his help, Antipater received Roman citizenship and freedom from taxation, and he also became one of the leading confidants of the high priest Hyrcanus within the region.²⁶⁹

Two Idumaeen brothers, Phasael and Herod (later dubbed "the Great"), governed areas of Judaea while Caesar was dictator, and Herod proved himself a very strong leader by executing some Jewish bandits in the Galilee region.²⁷⁰ The official leader of Judaea, Hyrcanus, soon became so jealous of the young governor that he put Herod on trial for killing the Jewish bandits without a trial, as was required by Jewish law.²⁷¹ Even though Hyrcanus very much desired to prosecute Herod successfully, Sextus Julius Caesar, the governor of Syria and a relative of Julius Caesar, forced the ethnarch to acquit Herod.²⁷² Once again, Roman influence directly influenced Judaeen affairs without having to take over the complete administration of the region; in fact, at the time Julius Caesar even stressed that Judaea was a free state (*civitas libera*) rather than a subject state (*civitas stipendiaria*).²⁷³ The leaders of Judaea quickly switched their allegiances to Julius Caesar's assassins after the dictator was murdered in 44 B.C., and then later switched again to those who avenged Caesar's death.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁷ Joseph. *AJ* 14.105, *BJ* 1.179; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 104.

²⁶⁸ Joseph. *BJ* 1.187-92.

²⁶⁹ Joseph. *AJ* 14.127-39, *BJ* 1.187-93, 197-99; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 106-08.

²⁷⁰ Joseph. *BJ* 1.199-205; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 108-09.

²⁷¹ Joseph. *BJ* 1.210.

²⁷² Joseph. *BJ* 1.210-11; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 111; A. Gilboa, "The Intervention of Sextus Julius Caesar, Governor of Syria, in the Affair of Herod's Trial," *SCI* 5 (1979-80): 185-94. It is also possible that Hyrcanus curbed his vigorous prosecution of Herod because Antipater, Herod's father and Hyrcanus' adviser, also appealed for an acquittal.

²⁷³ Joseph. *AJ* 14.195; Smallwood, *The Jews*, 39; Gilboa, "Intervention," 189.

²⁷⁴ Joseph. *BJ* 1.218-22; Suet. *Div. Aug.* 9; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 114, 116; Grant, *History of Rome*, 242-43.

Mark Antony now controlled the Eastern Mediterranean, and the leaders in Judaea helped the Roman general greatly in his expeditions against Parthia. While Antony was in Antioch, an assembly of Jewish nobles came to him and accused Herod (and Herod's brother, Phasael) of unspecified crimes.²⁷⁵ Because Herod earlier had married into the ruling Hasmonean family, Hyrcanus supported his brothers-in-law against the charges, and Antony established Herod and Phasael as tetrarchs of Judaea and left Hyrcanus as the high priest of the region.²⁷⁶ Antony's strong support of Herod is most evident by a story related by Josephus: Antony imprisoned the delegates who came to Antioch to complain about Herod, and later killed another anti-Herod delegation that came to him when the Roman triumvir was in Tyre.²⁷⁷

After being established as the Judaeen leaders, Herod and Phasael were challenged by an invading Parthian army; the Parthians captured Hyrcanus and Phasael, and Herod fled to Rome to ask for help from Antony and Octavian.²⁷⁸ The Roman Senate and triumvirs, led chiefly by Mark Antony's influence, officially declared Herod as king of Judaea in 40 B.C. and helped Herod reclaim the territories of Judaea, Galilee, Peraea, and Idumaea from the Parthians.²⁷⁹

Because Herod was more an ally of Mark Antony than of Octavian, the Judaeen king swiftly had to switch allegiances to Octavian after the latter's victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C.²⁸⁰ Herod sailed to Rhodes to meet the victorious Roman general and pledged that he would be as faithful to Octavian as he was to Antony; Octavian responded by keeping him on the throne, and Octavian even added regions to Herod's kingdom.²⁸¹

²⁷⁵ Joseph. *BJ* 1.243; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 123-24.

²⁷⁶ Joseph. *BJ* 1.241, 244; Grant, *History of Rome*, 336; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 121-24.

²⁷⁷ Joseph. *BJ* 1.245-47; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 124.

²⁷⁸ Joseph. *BJ* 1.248-81; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 125-27.

²⁷⁹ Joseph. *BJ* 1.282-85; Strabo 16.2.46; Tac. *Hist.* 5.9; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 127-30.

²⁸⁰ Joseph. *AJ* 15.183, *BJ* 1.386-387; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 71.2.

²⁸¹ Joseph. *BJ* 1.387-400; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 171-72.

While Judaea still was not an official Roman province, Herod ruled Judaea only by the authority of Rome. Herod remained as both the King of Judaea and a staunch ally of Octavian/Augustus until the king died at Jericho in 4 B.C.²⁸² After Herod's death, Augustus divided Judaea among Herod's three sons and gave them each the title of either ethnarch or tetrarch.²⁸³ By A.D. 6 Archelaus, the ethnarch of Judaea, Samaria, and Idumaea and Herod's main heir, was governing so badly that Augustus learned of the ethnarch's misdeeds from a Jewish embassy; Augustus immediately banished Archelaus to Gaul and established an equestrian prefect to administer the region.²⁸⁴ Augustus was forced into making Judaea a Roman province only ten years after Herod's death.

Two major rebellions took place in Judaea after it became a Roman province, both large revolts by Jews against Roman rule. The First Jewish Revolt took place between A.D. 66 and 70, and primarily was caused by the mismanagement of Judaea by Nero's appointed procurator, Gessius Florus, and the governor's pilfering of gold from the Great Temple in Jerusalem.²⁸⁵ The Second Jewish Revolt occurred between A.D. 132 and 135, sometimes dubbed the "Bar-Kokhba Revolt" in reference to the insurgent Jews' supposed leader.²⁸⁶ This revolt was brought about by either one or a combination of the following reasons: Hadrian's idea to build a new Roman colony, Aelia Capitolina, on the site of Jerusalem; Hadrian's desire to construct a temple of

²⁸² Joseph. *AJ* 17.188-92, *BJ* 1.659-73; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 18.

²⁸³ Joseph. *BJ* 2.95-100; Peter Richardson, *Herod*, 20-23.

²⁸⁴ Cass. Dio 55.27.6; Joseph. *AJ* 17.342-44, 17.354-55, *BJ* 2.111-13, 2.117; Smallwood, *The Jews*, 117.

²⁸⁵ Joseph. *BJ* 2.280-96; Tac. *Hist.* 5.10.1; Barbara Levick, *Vespasian* (London: Routledge, 1999), 26-120; John Peddie, *The Roman War Machine* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1994), 139-47, 152.

²⁸⁶ For a discussion of Bar-Kokhba, see Yehoshafat Harkabi, *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome*, trans. by Max D. Ticktin and ed. by David Altshuler (Chappaqua, NY: Rossell Books, 1983), 39-45; Benjamin Isaac and Aharon Oppenheimer, "The Revolt of Bar-Kokhba: Ideology and Modern Scholarship," *JJS* 36:1 (1985): 57-58; Richard G. Marks, *The Image of Bar Kokhba in Traditional Jewish Literature* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Anthony R. Birley, *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor* (London: Routledge, 1997), 269-70.

Jupiter on the former location of the Great Temple; or the emperor's ban on circumcision.²⁸⁷ It is because of these major rebellions that the Romans decided to create two *tropaea* within Judaea.

The Walls and Towers of Jerusalem after the First Jewish Revolt

One of the final major engagements of the First Jewish Revolt was the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, the leading Roman general in Judaea and son of the emperor Vespasian. While Vespasian initially led the Romans in the First Jewish Revolt, after a lengthy (and bloody) power struggle following Nero's suicide Vespasian became emperor and he handed down the leadership of the Roman legions in Judaea to his eldest son.²⁸⁸ Barbara Levick best describes Titus' plans for the attack of the Judaeian capital (fig. 4.2).²⁸⁹

Titus had chosen the most vulnerable spots in the ramparts (the outermost of the three walls, that of [Marcus Julius] Agrippa I, had never been completed) and those that gave easier access to the Upper City, the Antonia fortress, and the Temple; the suburbs were scoured for material to make siege platforms.

Even though the Jews held out against the Roman bombardment for over five months, Titus and his legions eventually overtook Jerusalem and massacred the rebels inside the city.²⁹⁰

Once the Romans controlled Jerusalem, Titus inspected what was left of the city. The historian Josephus, who was present during the Roman siege of Jerusalem, relates the story of the victorious general's entrance into the city:²⁹¹

Παρελθὼν δὲ Τίτος εἶσω τὰ τε ἄλλα τῆς ὀχυρότητος τὴν πόλιν καὶ τῶν πύργων ἀπεθαύμασεν, οὓς οἱ τύραννοι κατὰ φρενοβλάβειαν ἀπέλιπον.

²⁸⁷ Cass. Dio 49.12-14; Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 4.6.1-4; Paus. 1.5.5; SHA *Hadr.* 14.2-3, 21.8; Smallwood, *The Jews*, 428-38; Birley, *Hadrian*, 268-78; Isaac and Oppenheimer, "Revolt," 44-49; Benjamin Isaac, "Roman Colonies in Judaea: The Foundation of Aelia Capitolina," *Talanta* 12-13 (1980-1981): 31-54.

²⁸⁸ Joseph. *BJ* 4.592-604, 4.656-58; Suet. *Tit.* 5.2, *Vesp.* 6.3; Tac. *Hist.* 2.79-82; Levick, *Vespasian*, 40-47, 79, 116; Peddie, *War Machine*, 139-47, 152.

²⁸⁹ Levick, *Vespasian*, 116-17; Smallwood, *Jewish War*, 488.

²⁹⁰ For the dating of the siege, see Joseph. *BJ* 5.567-68, 6.407-08, 6.435; Peddie, *War Machine*, 152; Levick, *Vespasian*, 41-42. While Levick and Peddie argue about the exact days on which the siege began and ended, they both agree that the Roman conquest of Jerusalem took more than five months.

²⁹¹ Joseph. *BJ* 6.409-13. Text and translation by H. St. J. Thackeray taken from *Josephus*, The Loeb Classical Library, vol. III (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928), 494-95.

κατιδὼν γοῦν τό τε ναστὸν αὐτῶν ὕψος καὶ τὸ μέγεθος ἐκάστης πέτρας τὴν τε ἀκρίβειαν τῆς ἀρμονίας, καὶ ὅσοι μὲν εὖρος ἡλίκοι δὲ ἦσαν τὴν ἀνάστασιν, “σὺν θεῷ γ’ ἐπολεμήσαμεν,” ἔφη, “καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ τῶνδε τῶν ἐρυμάτων Ἰουδαίους καθελῶν, ἐπεὶ χεῖρες ἀνθρώπων ἢ μηχαναὶ τί πρὸς τούτους τοὺς πύργους δύνανται;” τότε μὲν οὖν πολλὰ τοιαῦτα διελέχθη πρὸς τοὺς φίλους, τοὺς δὲ τῶν τυράννων δεσμώτας, ὅσοι κατελέφθησαν ἐν τοῖς φρουρίοις, ἀνήκεν. αὐτίς δὲ τὴν ἄλλην ἀφανίζων πόλιν καὶ τὰ τεῖχη κατασκάπτων τούτους τοὺς πύργους κατέλιπε μνημεῖον εἶναι τῆς αὐτοῦ τύχης, ἧ̄ συστρατιώτιδι χρῆσάμενος ἐκράτησε τῶν ἀλῶναι μὴ δυναμένων.

Titus, on entering the town, was amazed at its strength, but chiefly at the towers, which the tyrants, in their infatuation, had abandoned. Indeed, when he beheld their solid lofty mass, the magnitude of each block and the accuracy of the joinings, and marked how great was their breadth, how vast their height, “God indeed,” he exclaimed, “has been with us in the war. God it was who brought down the Jews from these strongholds; for what power have human hands or engines against these towers?” He made many similar observations to his friends at that time, when he also liberated all prisoners of the tyrants who were found in the forts. And when, at a later period, he demolished the rest of the city and razed the walls, he left these towers as a memorial of his attendant fortune, to whose co-operation he owed his conquest of defences which defied assault.

Josephus later states in his *Jewish Wars* that the walls and towers left standing were used not only as a symbol of Roman strength and power over the Jews but also as protection for the Roman garrison that was stationed there.²⁹² The latter reason is, of course, legitimate and understandable. The fact that Josephus gave Titus’ first (and primary) reason for leaving up parts of the city was to show the triumph of Rome over the Jews makes those walls and towers an untraditional but still undeniable *tropaeum*. Just as the earliest Greek *tropaea* were decorated with the armor and weapons of the vanquished foes, Titus’ victory monument was the symbolic display of the armor and weapons of the insurgent Jews. The height and strength of Jerusalem’s walls were quite awesome,²⁹³ and the destruction of every other part of the city’s walls represents how much stronger the Romans were than the seemingly unconquerable city. The

²⁹² Joseph. *BJ* 7.1-4.

²⁹³ E. Mary Smallwood (*Jewish War*, 454 n. 1) notes that one of the towers that Titus left standing, that of Phasael (and erroneously called ‘Tower of David’), rises to a height of sixty feet even in the present time.

tropaeum also was an unforgettable warning to the Jews who still lived within the region; if they ever revolted again, they would suffer the same punishment that those who lived within Jerusalem's walls had endured.

Hadrian's Triumphal Arch near Scythopolis

After three years of very difficult fighting, with the Jewish rebels reverting to rather furtive guerilla warfare tactics at times, Hadrian and his legions finally defeated the rebels during the Second Jewish Revolt in A.D. 135.²⁹⁴ Once the rebellion had been crushed, Hadrian punished the Jews by banning them from living around Jerusalem, and he even changed the Roman province name of Judaea to Syria-Palaestina.²⁹⁵ A triumphal arch also seems to have been built in honor of the emperor's victory over the Jews; it is the only 'traditional' Roman *tropaeum* that has been found thus far within the Judaea/Syria-Palaestina region.

There is very scanty evidence concerning the victory arch that celebrates the Roman success in the Second Jewish Revolt, but what evidence remains can lead us to some conclusions about the likelihood of a Hadrianic *tropaeum* in Judaea/Syria-Palaestina. Fragments of a large Roman inscription have been found on an Israeli kibbutz roughly 1.5 kilometers north of Tel Shalem and seven miles south of modern Beth Shean, ancient Scythopolis (fig. 4.3).²⁹⁶ These remnants were found near an old Roman legionary camp (modern Tel Shalem), which could

²⁹⁴ While some authors contend that the Second Jewish Revolt was not a major conflict (SHA *Hadr.* 21.8), other ancient sources claim that the war in fact killed many Roman soldiers (Fronto *de bell. Parth.* 2). Wilhelm Weber ("Hadrian," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. XI, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936, 314) convincingly argues that Hadrian's presence in Judaea during part of the revolt indicates the gravity of the situation. For the Jews' war strategy, see Isaac and Oppenheimer, "Revolt," 42-44; Birley, *Hadrian*, 268-69; A. Kloner, "The Subterranean Hideaways of the Judean Foothills and the Bar-Kokhba Revolt," trans. by Janet Amitai, *The Jerusalem Cathedral* 3 (1983): 114-35.

²⁹⁵ Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 4.6.3-4; Birley, *Hadrian*, 275-76. In the same passage, Eusebius notes that Hadrian's decision to rename Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina occurred after the war as a secondary punishment to the Jews. E. Mary Smallwood (*The Jews*, 429-30) argues that Hadrian's ban on circumcision also was a post-war punishment.

²⁹⁶ Werner Eck and Gideon Foerster, "Ein Triumphbogen für Hadrian im Tal von Beth Shean bei Tel Shalem," *JRA* 12 (1999): 294.

accommodate roughly half of a legion and perhaps was used by some of the soldiers from the *legio VI Ferrata* unit.²⁹⁷ While archaeologists have not discovered any foundation remains of an arch within the area, Werner Eck and Gideon Foerster convincingly argue that the inscriptions in fact do come from a Roman arch erected somewhere within the area.²⁹⁸

How do these two scholars form their conclusions with such conviction? The few letters that we have left from the inscription reveal many answers. First, most public inscriptions within the Scythopolis area—aside from those connected to Rome’s provincial government and/or army—were without exception written in Greek. The fact that the characters on the arch in question are in Latin suggests that the monument was constructed by some representative of Roman rule.²⁹⁹ Secondly, Eck and Foerster have given a sensible hypothesis for the reconstruction of the entire inscription, based on what elements of the inscription still remain; I have also included a fuller version of the inscription before the translation:³⁰⁰

I]MP · [C]AE[S · DIVI · T]RA[IANI · PAR
T]H[I]CI F · D[IVI · NERVAE · NEP · TR]AIANO [· HADRIANO · AUG]
PON[T]IF · MA[X · TRIB · POT · XX · IMP · I]I · COS · III · P · P · S · P · Q · R

*Imp(eratori) Caes(ari) divi Traiani Par
thici f(ilio) divi Nervae nep(oti) Traiano Hadriano Aug(usto)
pontif(ici) max(imo), trib(unicia) pot(estate) XX, imp(eratori) II, co(n)s(uli) III,
p(atri) p(atriciae) S(enatus) P(opulus)q(ue) R(omanus)*

To the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, son of the Divine Trajan Parthicus, grandson of the Divine Nerva, pontifex maximus, with tribunician

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 295 ft. 1, 297.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. Eck and Foerster hypothesize that the Hadrianic arch likely was built a few hundred meters north of the Roman legionary camp (Tel Shalem) outside of the camp’s walls, but their explanation for that specific location of the *tropaeum* is debatable.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 300 (and especially ft. 21).

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 300-03, 305-07, for their reasoning behind their reconstruction and final conclusions. Translation of the reconstructed inscription is my own.

power twenty times, imperator twice, consul three times, Father of the Country,
the Senate and People of Rome [dedicated this monument/arch.]

The extraordinary height and quality of the inscription's letters/characters suggest that it must have been placed on something important, for there are very few Roman monuments elsewhere in the Empire that are inscribed with larger letters.³⁰¹ The slabs on which the inscription was written, based on the letter heights and margins, also reveal that its total facade must have been over 11 meters wide and 2 meters tall.³⁰² The dimensions suggest that it could not have been placed on something small, like a statue; in addition, the proportions of a great width and relatively low height correspond very well to the placement of the inscription on the attic of an arch.³⁰³ Eck and Foerster argue that, given the inscription's great dimensions, the entire arch must have been reasonably large, as well; for comparison, they contend that the Hadrianic arch could not have been smaller than, and likely was larger than, the Arch of Titus located in Rome.³⁰⁴

The restored inscription also gives some clues about the date of the arch's construction. Hadrian's second acclamation of *imperator* likely did not occur until early A.D. 136, so the arch must a *terminus post quem* of that year.³⁰⁵ The dating of the arch is very important, because if the arch had been built any earlier, the monument could have simply celebrated Hadrian's travels

³⁰¹ Ibid., 297-300, 304-05.

³⁰² Ibid., 297-300, 303.

³⁰³ Ibid., 303, 305.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 305. In fact, Eck and Foerster (ibid., 305 ft. 50) report that the inscription on the Arch of Titus is much narrower (though marginally taller) than that of the Hadrianic arch. For the dimensions of the Arch of Titus in Rome, see L. Richardson Jr., *Topographical Dictionary*, 31.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 301-02, 309; Birley (*Hadrian*, 275, 353 n. 45) contends that Hadrian gained the second *imperator* title "in the second half of 135," but Eck and Foerster give more convincing evidence supporting their argument for A.D. 136.

through Judaea and the eastern provinces in A.D. 130-32.³⁰⁶ Due to its construction date, the *tropaeum* almost certainly celebrated Hadrian's recent victory over the Jews in the Second Jewish Revolt.

The final question about the Arch of Hadrian near Tel Shalem is perhaps the most difficult one to answer: why was the monument built at this particular location? After all, the arch was not built in any town or city, and the *tropaeum* could not be seen from any nearby community; rather, the monument was constructed in an uninhabited, somewhat inconspicuous location. Those facts thus suggest that the arch was built on this spot for some particular reason. If the arch did celebrate Hadrian's suppression of the Second Jewish Revolt, was this perhaps the site of an important victory over the Jewish rebels?³⁰⁷ Eck and Foerster also hypothesize that this area could have been the 'staging area' at which Hadrian or his generals directed the Roman forces in the revolt, since most of the fighting during the war took place in southern Judaea; there is certainly no evidence either to support or to deny their claim.³⁰⁸ In fact, if most of the battles—and the rebellious Jewish fighters—were in the south, the location of the arch may suggest that Hadrian did not want to place his *tropaeum* either within or close to the most volatile area of the province for fear of another revolt. At the very least, the arch's relative proximity to the *legio VI Ferrata* camp suggests that the builder(s) wanted the soldiers who were assigned nearby to see a representation of Roman power and glory within this heretofore unstable region.

³⁰⁶ SHA *Hadr.* 13.6-14.7; Eck and Foerster, "Triumphbogen," 309 (also with a listing of arches commemorating Hadrian's visit to other cities).

³⁰⁷ Although the Second Jewish Revolt is characterized primarily by guerilla warfare (see *supra*, n. 294), Cassius Dio (69.13.3) suggests that there were some larger battles during the war.

³⁰⁸ Eck and Foerster, "Triumphbogen," 311. Isaac and Oppenheimer ("The Revolt," 53) do contend that there was fighting in the Galilee region, but agree that most of the skirmishes took place south of Scythopolis.

Whatever reasons there might be for the location, the conclusion by Eck and Foerster for the motivation behind the arch's placement certainly appears correct.³⁰⁹

It was in any case so important for the overcoming of the rebellion and for Roman self-confidence, that it was marked—for contemporaries and posterity—by an imposing arch honoring Hadrian.

The *tropaeum* of Hadrian near ancient Scythopolis would have been a powerful representation of the emperor's victory over local rebels. The imposing size of the arch symbolizes the absolute control that Rome had over the province of Judaea—or rather, by this time, Syria Palaestina. The local people and Roman soldiers who viewed this victory monument would have gained a good understanding not only of Rome's authority within the region, but also of Hadrian's power as the emperor of Rome.

Conclusions

Unfortunately, what archaeological evidence remains of these Egyptian and Judaeian commemorations is much less than that which we have at Delphi and the area around Actium, and so our knowledge of the *tropaea* in Egypt and Judaea cannot be as comprehensive. Still, there are some very understandable reasons why the Roman victors chose to establish victory memorials near Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Scythopolis. Like the Roman *tropaea* found in Greece and Asia Minor, the Roman commemorations in Egypt and Judaea celebrate the most significant battles that Rome won within these regions.

Octavian's series of victories over Antony and Cleopatra started at Actium, but just as importantly ended in Egypt's capital, Alexandria. Whereas Rome had governed Greece for years before Actium, Egypt became a new Roman province after Octavian's victory at Alexandria, and

³⁰⁹ Eck and Foerster, "Triumphbogen," 311. Translated from the original German into English by Mr. Robert Cantrick.

so Octavian needed to display his authority to the Egyptian populace very quickly. Following the lead of the Egyptian capital's founder, Alexander the Great, Octavian founded a victory city near Alexandria in order to show his military conquest of the Ptolemaic Empire. While the town of Nicopolis never surpassed Alexandria in prominence within the Eastern Mediterranean, it was a symbol of both Octavian's victory over his foes and the Roman acquisition of Egypt.

The *tropaea* within Judaea do not represent Rome's initial control of Judaea, since Augustus' incorporation of Judaea as a Roman province was relatively peaceful and bloodless. This makes the victory commemorations noticeably different from the *tropaea* at Delphi and Nicopolis in Egypt. Titus' use of the city walls of Jerusalem likely made the *tropaeum* an even more profound statement to the Jews who saw it, because the walls now are a symbol of Roman strength over Jewish resistance. Hadrian's establishment of a victory arch near Scythopolis signifies Rome's victory in the Second Jewish Revolt, further emphasizing that the region was a subjugated territory of the Roman Empire.

The *tropaea* of Egypt and Judaea make a powerful statement to the people who lived within those Roman provinces. All three commemorations symbolized the authoritative control that Rome had over the two regions, and they served as grand displays of Roman strength.

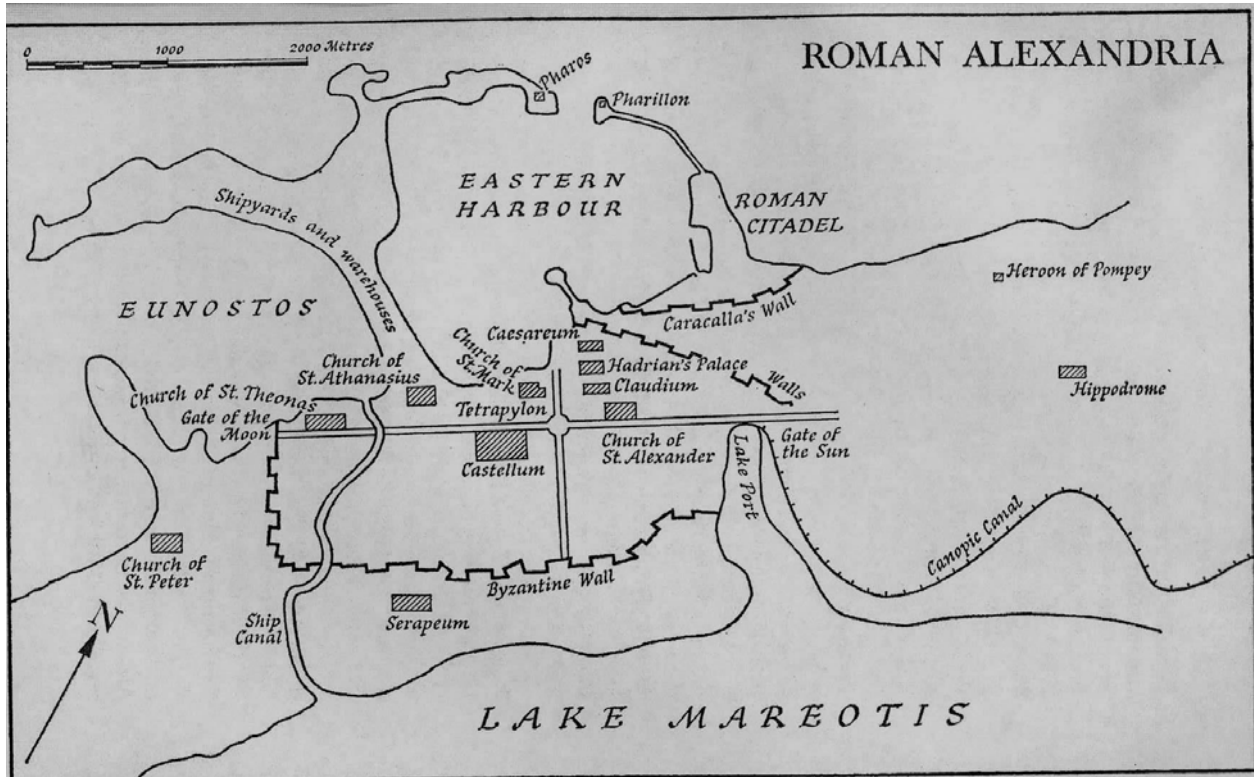


Figure 4.1

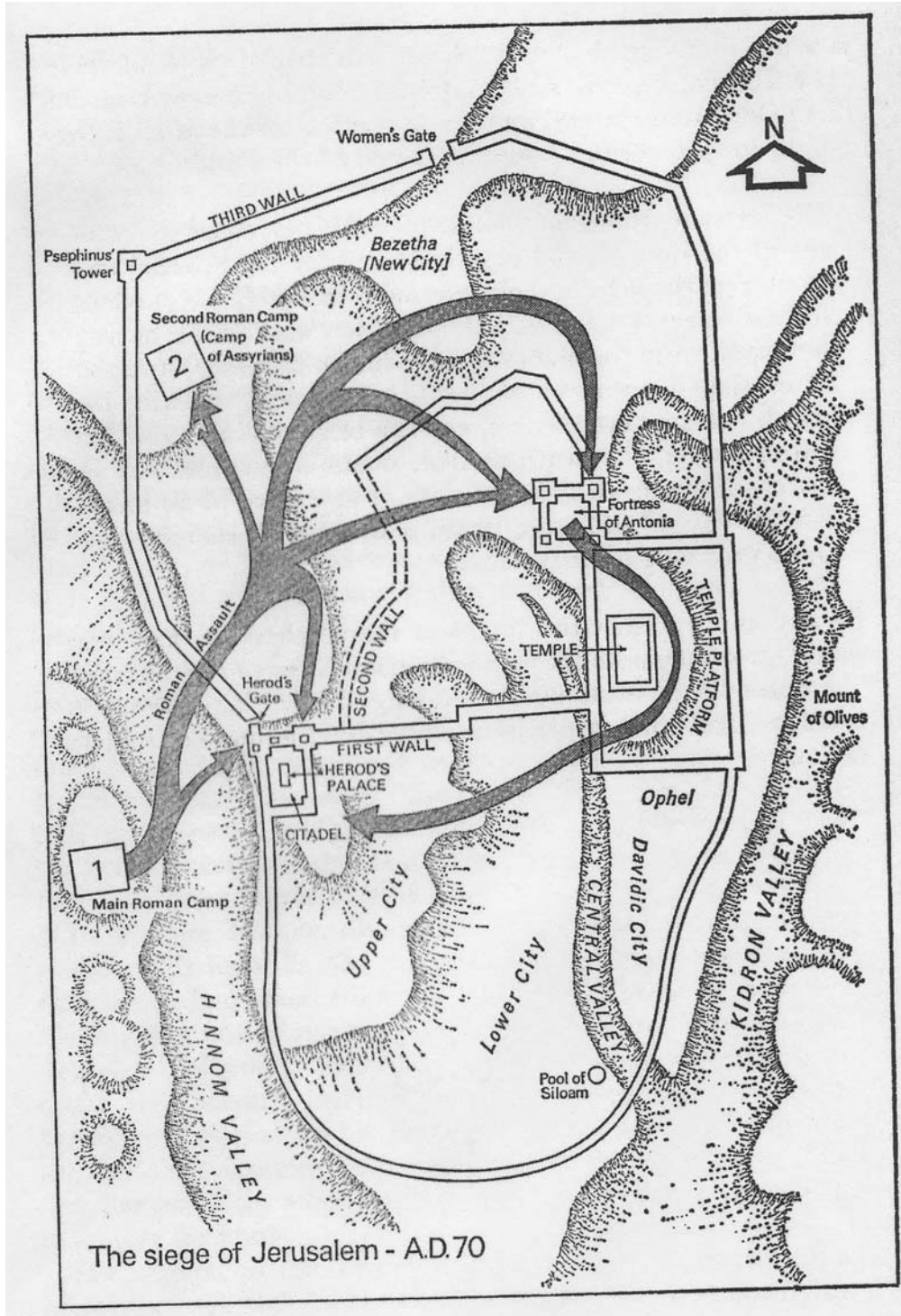


Figure 4.2

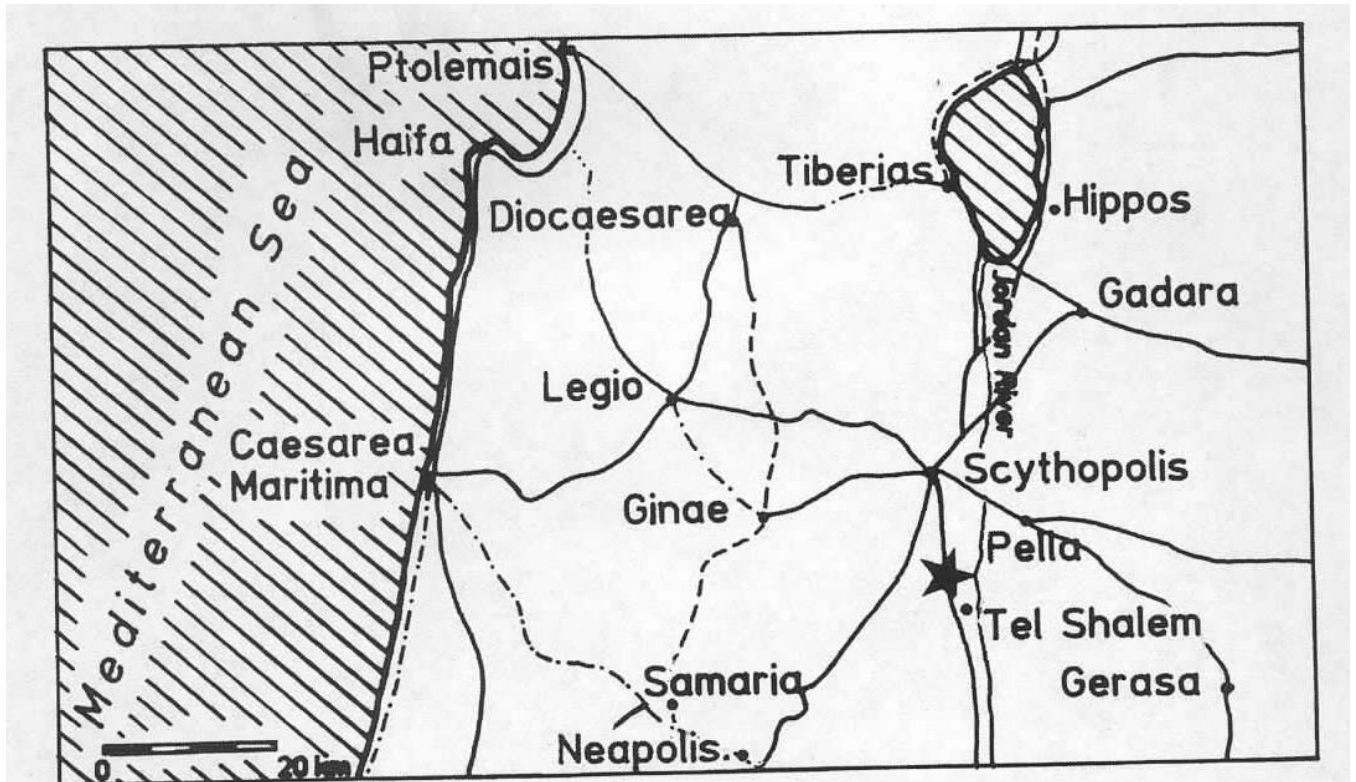


Figure 4.3

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

While they are not overly widespread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, all of the Roman *tropaea* in the Greek-speaking East commemorate important military victories won by specific Roman generals and emperors. How do these Roman commemorations relate to each other, and also to the earlier Classical and Hellenistic memorials found within the region? I maintain that the Roman *tropaea* indeed are similar in their basic function of glorifying a Roman victory, but the deeper, more meaningful symbolism of each monument relates directly to the way and/or time in which each victory took place. I also contend that the Romans certainly were influenced by the Greek and Hellenistic victory memorials, but the significance and symbolism of the Roman *tropaea* are very different from the earlier models.

The Roman *tropaea* that are located in the Eastern Mediterranean are similar in that they were all commemorations of important Roman victories in battle. The Aemilius Paullus monument at Delphi was chronologically the first Roman *tropaeum* in the East, and it celebrates the general's victory over King Perseus and Rome's subsequent takeover of Greece. The extensive building program and foundation of a victory city around Actium commemorates Octavian's naval triumph over his Roman adversary, Mark Antony, and Antony's Egyptian consort, Cleopatra. Octavian further celebrated his victory over Antony and Cleopatra near the couple's 'home base' with the foundation of Nicopolis near Alexandria. In Judaea, Titus celebrated the Roman capture of Jerusalem with a more unusual *tropaeum* by allowing a section of the city walls to remain standing. Later, Hadrian set up his own victory monument near

Scythopolis as a symbol of Roman suppression of another revolt in Judaea roughly sixty years after Titus's victory. All of these commemorations obviously celebrate the Roman suppression of insurgencies within each region, whether those revolts stem from Rome's initial takeover of a region or a subsequent containment of a renewed uprising.

The differences among the Roman *tropaea*, however, are more interesting and more significant. The Aemilius Paullus monument in Delphi, Octavian's foundation of Nicopolis near Alexandria, and Jerusalem's walls in Judaea are more overt symbols of Roman strength and power, and these *tropaea* were created purposefully for promoting Roman occupation of the three regions. The Aemilius Paullus monument in Delphi represents the Roman takeover of Greece in several ways: through its use of Latin on the inscription, Paullus' pilfering of the monument from King Perseus, and its location in the most important panhellenic center of Greece. Octavian's swift establishment of Nicopolis near Alexandria also symbolized the Roman acquisition of Egypt through its final victory over Antony and Cleopatra. Its placement near the capital city represented not only the place where Octavian defeated his rivals, but it also signified how, just as Nicopolis overlooked Alexandria, Rome now watched over the activities in Egypt. Titus' decision to leave up parts of Jerusalem's walls reminded the Jewish people of both how great their Roman conquerors were and how dramatically the Jewish revolt was crushed, and the *tropaeum* served as a portentous warning to those Jews who wanted to start another insurrection. These victory commemorations were constructed when Rome first began to manage the three regions, and so the symbolism of Roman conquest is much more deliberate and apparent on these *tropaea*.

Octavian's building program around Actium is symbolic in different ways. Because Rome already had controlled Greece before the naval battle in the Ambracian Gulf, Octavian did

not need to represent Roman authority over the Greeks in his memorials. Octavian was celebrating a victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra, two people who never even claimed to be from Greece. The intention of Octavian, therefore, was to enhance the region in which his victory took place through the renovation of an earlier temple to Apollo Actius, the foundation of Nicopolis, and the creation of his *tropaeum* north of his victory city. Although the building program around Actium certainly did honor Octavian's triumphs, the *princeps* used his commemorations to promote the revival of the region rather than Roman control of the area.

Hadrian's arch near Scythopolis is perhaps the most difficult Roman *tropaeum* in the Eastern Mediterranean to understand, due to the many questions that remain about it. The arch certainly commemorates the emperor's suppression of the Second Jewish Revolt, but its location in a more remote area could suggest that the majority of people who saw the arch were Roman soldiers in the camp of the *Legio VI Ferrata*. Did Hadrian want to construct a victory monument in an area where few Jews would see it? The emperor might have been worried that if the arch were constructed in a more prominent, inhabited place within this unstable province, the Jewish community would see it, become angered by the victory display, and subsequently organize another uprising. The arch most certainly would symbolize Rome's authority within the region, but the motive for its placement near Scythopolis is still too uncertain to make any definitive conclusions about the *tropaeum*.

The Classical and Hellenistic *tropaea* in the Greek-speaking East undoubtedly are the archetypes for the later Roman victory monuments, but the true reasons and meanings of the Roman memorials differ greatly. The differences among the Classical and Roman victory monuments are much more apparent. The three well-known Classical stone *tropaea* at Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea salute Greek victories over the Persians within Greece itself, and so the

main symbolism of the three monuments is that of victory and celebration, not of conquest over their foes and acquisition of their opponents' territory. Most (though not all) of the Roman *tropaea* within the Eastern Mediterranean, however, were explicit symbols of Roman might and power over the subjugated people living in the region. Even though all of the Classical and Roman *tropaea* symbolize victories over vanquished foes, the Roman *tropaea* were set up in the regions where the local inhabitants would see the representation both of victory for Rome and, consequently, of defeat for the indigenous populace. Roman *tropaea* were used in propagandistic ways different from the Greek victory commemorations, and thus their symbolism shifts away from the single Roman victory and towards the general concept of Roman supremacy throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Hellenistic practice of founding victory cities as commemorations passed down to Roman times, as we have seen with Octavian's two *Nicopoleis* in both Greece and Egypt. It is more difficult to determine if or how the Hellenistic cities varied from the Roman towns, since very little information is known about the Alexandrian and Seleucid foundations. The two *Nicopoleis* founded by Alexander and Seleucus unquestionably celebrated the generals' victories against opponents, but any greater symbolism beyond that is unknown due to our lack of knowledge about the towns. Seleucus' establishment of Nicephorium so close to the Antigonid city of Ichnai perhaps gave added meaning to the town's foundation, but all three Hellenistic commemorations seem to be a simpler, more straightforward representation of military victory and nothing else. While Octavian's two victory cities, however, certainly have the same connotations of military victory, they also seem to have more subtle symbolic meanings, as well. Octavian's Nicopolis near Actium promotes the Roman revival of Western Greece, and his Nicopolis near Alexandria signifies the Roman domination of Egypt.

It would be misguided to categorize all of the Roman victory monuments into one group with a single idea for their use and/or purpose. While all of the Roman *tropaea* in the Eastern Mediterranean commemorate specific Roman victories in the Greek East, their differences show the varying purposes for each monument. Naturally, the Roman generals who established these victory memorials set them up for the general purpose of celebrating a victory, but each of the *tropaea* also promoted Rome's strength and prominence in the Mediterranean world in their own, individual ways. Because we still are studying these commemorative monuments today, roughly two millennia after they were created, the Romans' desire for lasting glory seems fulfilled.

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