

ACTS 10: WERE TROOPS STATIONED IN CAESAREA
DURING AGRIPPA'S RULE?

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Some scholars doubt that Roman soldiers would have been stationed in Caesarea at the time Luke describes in Acts 10, hence are skeptical of Luke's reliability on this matter. The prestigious commentary of Ernst Haenchen, followed by some other scholars, suggests that no Roman soldiers would have lived there during Agrippa's rule (from 41 to 44 CE), and that the event Luke describes must have occurred in that period.¹ Roman legions certainly did not exist in Palestine during this period, but if he means that no Gentile auxiliaries were stationed there (under Agrippa's authority), his claim would be remarkable, for such a supposition flies in the face of explicit contrary evidence from Josephus, a military writer who was alive and present in the period described. Haenchen's argument against Luke's narrative here fails to anticipate several possible objections. We will address this question in four parts. First, does the Cornelius narrative occur during Agrippa's reign? (It may, but need not, have done so.) Secondly, what was the military presence in Caesarea at the time? Thirdly, might Cornelius have had local connections? And fourthly, might Cornelius have been retired in any case?

During Agrippa's Rule?

Agrippa's rule is mentioned in Acts 12.1-23, so it appears that Luke's

1. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), p. 360; cf. Hans Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 81. Perhaps Haenchen excludes only legionaries rather than auxiliaries, hence cohorts of Roman citizens rather than noncitizens; but it is difficult to see how such a claim would call Luke's narrative into question. Soldiers in Caesarea were likely auxiliaries even before and after Agrippa's rule.

story does not follow Agrippa's death. But this conclusion need not invariably follow (probable as it is); Luke could have moved a later story earlier in his narration² (so that Peter's Gentile mission, and Jerusalem's approval, precedes the Gentile ministry of the anonymous believers of 11.20). Peter's 'tour' of coastal cities (starting in 9.32) occurs only after his return to Jerusalem (8.25), and in 12.17 he left for 'another place'. Thus some suggest that 'the *cohors Italica* may have come in with the reconstitution of the province in 44', and the story may be dated to that time.³

Yet the Gentile mission should have been well under way in Antioch by then, and not merely beginning; thus another alternative seems somewhat likelier, and is plausible especially given a Pauline chronology that is (in my opinion appropriately) lower than usual: the events here might occur before Agrippa's rule began in 41 CE.⁴ Nothing in Luke's narration would preclude this option even if his sequence were strictly chronological; Agrippa does not appear before Acts 12.1, and Luke offers no indication of the chronological distance between the present events and those of Acts 12.

In either case, we do not need to believe that Luke's narration is strictly chronological here. Chronology was important to history and, where possible, to some other genres.⁵ Sometimes, however, it was not possible or desirable. Military historians like Polybius and Thucydides could provide careful chronology because they or their sources had annals or

2. Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 81, notes that the dating is not certain and that Luke could have transferred the account from a different time.

3. E. Mary Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule: From Pompey to Diocletian* (SJLA, 20; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), p. 147 n. 13.

4. With, e.g., Irina Levinskaya, 'The Italian Cohort in Acts 10:1', in P.J. Williams, Andrew D. Clarke, Peter M. Head and David Instone-Brewer (eds.), *The New Testament in its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B.W. Winter on his 65th Birthday* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 106-25 (106); F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), p. 215; Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles* (rev. W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann; AB, 31; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), p. 92; Hilary Le Cornu with Joseph Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts* (Jerusalem: Nitivyah Bible Instruction Ministry, 2003), p. 820.

5. In general, see *Rhet. Her.* 1.9.15. An author following other than a chronological outline of material may need to justify why he has arranged it as he has (Vitruvius, *Arch.* 2.1.8).

notes available;⁶ the same was not true when one's sources depended on oral recollections.⁷ Thus, for example, Seneca the Elder promises to recall events of the past so long as he need not do so in sequence;⁸ Papias reports that Mark recounted Peter's reports, but not in order.⁹ Biographies (like Luke's first volume) were even less constrained by chronology than history was;¹⁰ having surveyed Augustus's life, Suetonius promises, 'I shall now take up its various phases one by one, not in chronological order, but by classes, to make the account clearer and more intelligible.'¹¹ Even in historiography, when using episodic narrative 'woven...around the impact of a personality', a topical arrangement was appropriate.¹²

6. E.g. Thucydides 2.1.1; 5.26.1. For one's personal notes or diaries in the Roman tradition of the *commentarius*, see Stefan Rebenich, 'Historical Prose', in Stanley E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.–A.D. 400* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 265–337 (313–14); C.B.R. Pelling, 'Commentarii', in *OCD*, p. 373. *Commentarii* were originally minutes of civic authorities or councils, normally in a series, but by the late Republic included lecture notes, speech drafts etc. (Jörg Rüpke, 'Commentarii', in *Brill's New Pauly*, III, pp. 628–29 [628]), and personal or business diaries (*idem*, 'Ephemeris', in *Brill's New Pauly*, IV, p. 1022). Others filled notebooks with their thoughts (Pliny, *Ep.* 1.6.1, 3).

7. Even in oral performance of standard stories, performers may often rearrange the sequence (Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd, *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], pp. 433–35). For weaknesses in chronology, see, e.g., Sallust's historical monographs (M.L.W. Laistner, *The Greater Roman Historians* [Berkeley: University of California Press; London: Cambridge University Press, 1947], pp. 58–59); different reckoning methods in Livy's sources confused his chronology (Laistner, *Historians*, pp. 94–95).

8. Seneca the Elder, *Controv.* 1, pref. 4.

9. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39. Early Judaism also recognized the need to rechronologize some Old Testament accounts; see 4Q158 (Michael O. Wise, 'Introduction to 4Q158', in Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr and Edward Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* [San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999], pp. 199–200).

10. Ancient biographies were not expected to be in chronological order (Herwig Görgemanns, 'Biography: Greek', in *Brill's New Pauly*, II, pp. 648–51; Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974], pp. 119–21).

11. Suetonius, *Aug.* 9 (LCL 1.133). For Suetonius's thematic approach, see also John Matthews, 'The Emperor and his Historians', in John Marincola (ed.), *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Malden, MA/Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), I, pp. 290–304 (292).

12. Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (ed.

Sometimes historiography also required one to backtrack or advance into the future, to keep to a train of thought or geographical region. Thus Josephus sometimes follows a topic explicitly out of chronological sequence (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.194); at other times he does so without explicitly informing readers.¹³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus complains that Thucydides' chronological style breaks up his flow of thought and obscures his narrative, whereas Herodotus more naturally follows the flow of events.¹⁴ Only if one specified chronology (and in the process contradicted other historical sources) did one open oneself to criticism.¹⁵

Acts generally develops chronologically, but there are likely exceptions. For example, because Luke follows Peter from 9.32–11.18, then returns to the Hellenist summary of 8.1 in 11.19, his arrangement in 11.19–30 is as much topical (and somewhat geographic) as chronological (a tension all ancient historians had to straddle). Because Luke lacks clear chronological markers at this point (except that this evangelism began between Stephen's death and Agrippa I's persecution), we cannot say whether disciples in Antioch, like Philip, may have preceded Peter's ministry to Cornelius's household.¹⁶ For Luke, it was important that theologically Peter's activity took precedence, so this may be why

Conrad H. Gempf; WUNT, 49; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1989), p. 74.

13. For example, Josephus narrates an event from 33–34 CE in *Ant.* 18.106, yet he has noted Pilate's later recall (36 CE) already in 18.89.

14. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Pomp.* 3. Thucydides went so far as to divide his narrative by summers and winters, distorting continuity so inappropriately that later historians avoided this method (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Thuc.* 9; LCL 1.485 n. 8 mentions one partial exception).

15. See Suetonius's criticism of Pliny in *Cal.* 8.3. Later rabbis doubted that the Torah was chronologically arranged (originally to resolve potential contradictions; see Alvan Kaunfer and Elie Kaunfer, 'Time and Torah: A Curious Concept Revisited', *Conservative Judaism* 54.2 [2002], pp. 15–32).

16. E.g. F.F. Bruce, *Peter, Stephen, James, and John: Studies in Early Non-Pauline Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), pp. 26–27; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 368. Many attribute the specific arrangement of the accounts to distinct sources, which is plausible though not certain. The objection to the existence of a source made by saying that Luke fails to display sufficient concrete material (Conzelmann, *Acts*, p. 87) is not compelling in view of Luke's limited space, but oral tradition does seem most likely here (C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* [2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994–1998], I, pp. 52–53).

the Cornelius story appears before this summary.¹⁷ Because 11.19-30 interrupts Petrine material in 9.32–12.24, yet remains sketchy, Luke may have different sources and not know their relative chronology. While I am inclined to think that the Cornelius narrative historically preceded the movement in Antioch, my point is that clear chronology is lacking.

Yet even if we assume neither alternative, deciding that the narrative occurs during Agrippa's reign, and even if that meant that he had his own Jewish soldiers in Caesarea, the area would retain many former soldiers who were from the area or who had settled there. Clearly Gentile soldiers lived in Caesarea then as they did afterward.

Soldiers in Caesarea

Literary evidence indicates that in most of the early first century Caesarea held a cavalry unit and five infantry cohorts of auxiliaries; archaeological evidence also attests an increasing Roman presence and influence.¹⁸

Soldiers were certainly stationed there after this period. During the later governorship of Felix, Jews provoked Syrians in Caesarea (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.175). The Syrians had less wealth than Jews in Caesarea, but counted on connections with the soldiers stationed there, most of whom were from either Caesarea or Sebaste (20.176). Conflict escalated, and when the Jewish side refused to desist, Felix set his soldiers against the crowd, and let them plunder the homes of well-to-do Jewish citizens (20.177). In times of conflict, the Roman auxiliaries in Caesarea, who were mainly Syrian, would side with the local Syrians against the Jews (*War* 2.266-268).¹⁹ From this we may gather that within no more than three decades

17. If it preceded Antioch's Gentile mission historically, this would help explain the lack of reported resistance to the latter (Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003], p. 177); but Antioch's great distance might also help account for this.

18. For Roman-style artwork in the Herodian period, see Asher Ovadiah, 'Mosaic Pavements of the Herodian Period in Israel', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 5 (1990), pp. 207-21; cf. a Roman villa, even in the countryside (though in the late second century: Gershon Edelstein, 'What's a Roman Villa Doing outside Jerusalem?', *BAR* 16.6 [1990], pp. 32-42).

19. Josephus estimated that Syrians in Caesarea massacred 20,000 Jews in a single hour in 66 CE (*War* 2.457), provoking Jewish slaughter of Syrians elsewhere (2.458). Although there is some evidence for some Jewish auxiliaries under Rome (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 15.317; 18.84), other sources seem to support the more common exemption of Jews; see evidence in Robert A. Kraft, 'Judaism on the World Scene', in Stephen Benko

of Cornelius's encounter with Peter the majority of the Gentile soldiers in Caesarea were anti-Jewish, or at least would prove pro-Syrian if a conflict between the two groups arose. They also had local ties.

Most relevantly, an explicit passage in Josephus describes Gentile soldiers already stationed in Caesarea at the close of Agrippa's rule.²⁰ Many soldiers in Caesarea and Sebaste during Agrippa's time hated Agrippa; they were nearly relocated after his death, but were allowed to remain, being very attached to the locale. In Josephus's account, Caesarea and Sebaste ungratefully rejoiced at Agrippa I's death (*Ant.* 19.356); the numerous soldiers there went to his house and carried out images of his daughters, which they then abused on top of brothel-houses (*Ant.* 19.357).

The emperor Claudius was angry at the report of this (*Ant.* 19.361), and ordered Fadus to go there and punish Caesarea and Sebaste for their insults both to the deceased Agrippa and to his living daughters (19.363). He then ordered that the soldiers in Caesarea and Sebaste be removed to Pontus, being replaced by Roman legionaries stationed in Syria (19.364). Nevertheless, these soldiers managed to persuade the emperor to allow them to stay; Josephus concludes that these same soldiers later led to disasters for his people (19.365).²¹

As Josephus's narrative suggests, soldiers often became attached to local areas. By the second century, soldiers were usually recruited locally and stationed in a single location;²² such stability was less characteristic

and John J. O'Rourke (eds.), *The Catacombs and the Colosseum: The Roman Empire as the Setting of Primitive Christianity* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1971), pp. 81-98 (86-87). Syrian recruits were sometimes considered the least disciplined and most discontent and prone to mutiny (Fronto, *Preamble to History*, 12).

20. Michael P. Speidel, 'The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators: The Italian and the Augustan Cohort in the Acts of the Apostles', *Ancient Society* 13/14 (1982/1983), pp. 233-40, argues for Roman soldiers in Judea even in 41-44 (so Levinskaya, 'Cohort', pp. 106-107).

21. Given the dates, it is unlikely that many of these soldiers would remain active during the Judean war just over two decades later, the years of service normally being twenty: see Ludwig Friedländer, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire* (4 vols.; trans. Leonard A. Magnus, J.H. Freese and A.B. Gough; New York: E.P. Dutton, 1907-1965), I, p. 192; G.H. Stevenson, 'The Army and Navy', in S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock and M.P. Charlesworth (eds.), *The Augustan Empire: 44 B.C.-A.D. 70* (The Cambridge Ancient History, 10; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 218-38 (227). But the same sentiments would have been passed down to newer recruits.

22. John Brian Campbell, *The Roman Army, 31 BC-AD 337: A Sourcebook* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 212.

in the first century but more common than in earlier times. Military camps were often closely connected with their locales. In peacetime, soldiers could function as builders and engineers, some projects solely for their own benefit²³ but others (like bridges and roads) would ultimately be put to more civilian use.²⁴ Rome also used military engineers and soldiers to help local public projects.²⁵ Localities helped supply army camps, which in turn helped to stimulate local economies.²⁶ Temporary settlements (*canabae*) often grew up around army camps, containing merchants, artisans and women who often bore children to the soldiers.²⁷ It appears that the soldiers stationed in Caesarea felt at home there and wished to remain.

It is virtually impossible lexically to deny that Josephus refers to soldiers in Caesarea during this time.²⁸ Even if we were to argue that these soldiers must have been angry because of disfranchisement from active service under Agrippa (which the text does not indicate),²⁹ they would be soldiers nonetheless (we cannot allow Josephus to employ that language and then forbid it to Luke).³⁰

23. Campbell, *Army*, pp. 120-21 (noting that they had to build their own fortresses, water supplies and so forth).

24. Campbell, *Army*, p. 121. They could also sell their products locally.

25. Campbell, *Army*, p. 121.

26. Campbell, *Army*, p. 140.

27. Campbell, *Army*, p. 141 (noting that the camp commander decided the location of the *canabae*, whether a mile distant or directly beside the camp).

28. Josephus, *Ant.* 19.357 employs στρατεύόμενοι, a verb that *BDAG* defines as ‘do military service, *serve in the army*’ (or ‘to engage in a conflict’). Josephus employs the verb 143 times, normally in military contexts. More clearly still, it is the military cohorts (σπείρας, to be replaced by legionary στρατιώτας, 19.364) stationed in these cities who are nearly moved (19.364-365).

29. The proposal would be unlikely in any case. The emperor forced Agrippa to desist from expanding Jerusalem’s city wall, out of concern for preventing accumulation of independent power (Josephus, *Ant.* 19.326-327; *War* 5.152). The emperor surely would have allowed Agrippa his own elite guards, but to deactivate Rome’s auxiliaries (as opposed to allowing Rome to transfer them elsewhere) would be meddling in the affairs of the Syrian legate.

30. Nor can we easily attribute Josephus’s portrayal of Gentile soldiers in Caesarea to his apologetic bias; why would he invent Gentile soldiers who hated a Jewish king? If Josephus was prone to inventing all such opposition, we could then explain away the entire local history of conflict by which he explains the subsequent war, an approach that is not plausible.

Cornelius's Local Connections

From Josephus's account we learn that the soldiers stationed in Caesarea felt very attached to the locale; although the climate was pleasant, we may surmise that many were recruits from this area, or had entered into unions with local women. These relationships may not have been officially legal, but they would have connected soldiers to local areas and encouraged many to retire there. Roman law from Augustus onward prohibited soldiers from marrying, and Roman camps lacked domiciles for wives; any children born to their unions with local concubines were thus counted illegitimate and not Roman citizens.³¹ It is even possible that any marriage that did exist at enlistment was dissolved.³² The military did not need to take local attachments into account when transferring troops, although this transfer became less common in later times.³³

Nevertheless, avoiding local ties would have been quite difficult in practice. In this period soldiers normally served a minimum of twenty years, often roughly between ages 17 and 37. (The period was later extended to 25 years under Hadrian.)³⁴ Centurions sometimes chose

31. Stevenson, 'Army', pp. 227-28; Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 58; John J. O'Rourke, 'Roman Law and the Early Church', in Benko and O'Rourke (eds.), *Catacombs and Colosseum*, pp. 165-86 (181-82); Campbell, *Army*, p. 151; for popular knowledge that marriage was not for soldiers, see, e.g., Quintilian, *Decl.* 306.17. Over 4000 offspring of Roman soldiers with Spanish concubines in 171 BCE were counted illegitimate (Livy 43.3.2). Thus even a high officer, at least in the more rigid past, might count it below his dignity to take for himself a female captive (Scipio the Elder, *Saying* 2, in Plutarch, *Mor.* 196B).

32. A.M.H. Jones, *A History of Rome through the Fifth Century* (New York: Walker, 1970), II, pp. 155-56.

33. Campbell, *Army*, p. 152.

34. Friedländer, *Life*, I, p. 192; Stevenson, 'Army', p. 227 (though noting that some complained they had been kept 30-40 years under Tiberius). In earlier times only 16 years were demanded (Polybius 6.19.2), except in times of special danger (6.19.4); the early first-century figure was 16 years plus four 'as reservists' (Glen L. Thompson, 'Roman Military', in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter [eds.], *Dictionary of New Testament Background* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], pp. 991-95 [993-94]; cf. gratuities in 6 CE for those with at least 20 years' service in *Res Gestae* 3.17). Mortality was high, probably most often from natural causes (on the latter, cf. Valerie M. Hope, 'Trophies and Tombstones: Commemorating the Roman Soldier', *World Archaeology* 35 [2003], pp. 79-97); but it seems that the majority did survive (see *Res Gestae* 1.3 with the LCL note).

to stay longer, as career soldiers.³⁵ Granted, because centurions were ‘often transferred from one legion to another’,³⁶ forming long-term local relationships might be more difficult for them than for others.

Official policy against local marriages was rarely enforced. Soldiers formed marital unions with provincials, which the women often found economically suitable.³⁷ Such unions could include soldiers receiving ‘dowries from their wives’ parents’.³⁸ Many soldiers probably considered themselves married, regardless of official rules, especially as legions became increasingly stationary in later times.³⁹ Tariff lists reveal that the authorities knew that soldiers and sailors had attachments to local women.⁴⁰ Concubinage was unofficially permitted, and even General Vespasian had a concubine (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 3).⁴¹ Legionaries in Cologne married locals (Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.65).⁴² These unions lacked some securities that legal Roman marriage would have provided.⁴³ Once soldiers were discharged, however, their children were sometimes or perhaps even

35. One had been in the army over 36 years in Caesar (or Hirtius), *Bell. Afr.* 45.

36. James L. Jones, ‘The Roman Army’, in Benko and O’Rourke (eds.), *Catacombs and Colosseum*, pp. 187-217 (203). So also Stevenson, ‘Army’, p. 226 (but noting exceptions).

37. That soldiers had prostitutes and other women was public knowledge (see, e.g., Christoph Höcker, ‘Prostitution. II. Classical Antiquity’, in *Brill’s New Pauly*, XII, pp. 58-61 [60]), requiring toll fees at customs stations (*IGRR* 1.1183 in Robert K. Sherk [ed.], *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* [Translated Documents of Greece and Rome, 6; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988], p. 149, §106B).

38. Jones, *History*, p. 156 (the form often being ‘interest-free loans’).

39. Campbell, *Army*, p. 152, noting military families ‘in nearby *canabae* or other settlements’. This would presumably already be true in places like Caesarea, where Josephus indicates the soldiers’ local attachments.

40. Naphtali Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 141 (*OGIS* 674 = *IGRR* 1.1183, from 90 CE).

41. Gottfried Schieman, ‘Concubinatus’, in *Brill’s New Pauly*, III, pp. 682-83 (682). An officer praises Tiberius’s moderation in usually pretending not to see infractions (Velleius Paterculus 2.114.3).

42. Epitaphs from Roman Algeria indicate that although soldiers (and other Romanized men) nearly always married Romanized local women in some areas, in other areas intermarriage with non-Romanized women was higher (13.2% in the sample; David Cherry, ‘Marriage and Acculturation in Roman Algeria’, *Classical Philology* 92 [1997], pp. 71-83).

43. In the second century CE, soldiers could bequeath property, but only to those of their own nation (BGU 5.34), and their children could inherit if they died intestate only if of the same nation (BGU 5.35). Cf. Thompson, ‘Military’, p. 994.

often retroactively legitimated as a reward to the soldiers, provided each soldier sought it for the children of no more than one concubine.⁴⁴ Claudius made the same grant to soldiers who had served 25 years or more.⁴⁵

Roman law later noted that emperors typically allowed veterans to legally marry foreigners, counting (subsequent) offspring as Romans (Gaius, *Inst.* 1.57). But what of offspring born during one's term of service in the provinces? Even in earlier times, generals sometimes pardoned soldiers who stole away from camp nocturnally because of romance.⁴⁶ In the late second century, Severus granted soldiers 'the right to live at home with their wives', legally ratifying a widespread existing situation but further weakening traditional military discipline.⁴⁷

Roman law did recognize concubinage, but the loss of rank incurred by the woman generally led men to seek concubines of lower rank.⁴⁸ Concubinage as a substitute for marriage was common in the early empire,⁴⁹ and was perhaps especially dominant among slaves and freedpersons.⁵⁰ A man could legally hold only one concubine, however, and not concurrently with a wife.⁵¹ Roman law recognized concubinage, provided one had only one (and also not be married at the same time).⁵² In these

44. See BGU 140.10-33; *Inscriptiones latinae selectae* 1986; *CIL* 16.1, 42; *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani* 1.78; Sherck, *Empire*, p. 154, §111; Gardner, *Women*, p. 143; O'Rourke, 'Law', p. 182. An auxiliary in 131 CE is happy with his daughter's birth (BGU 1690); and Rome might grant an auxiliary centurion's request for his daughter's citizenship (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.107).

45. See S.R. Llewelyn, with collaboration of R.A. Kearsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1980-81* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1992), §19, p. 148.

46. Fabius Maximus, Saying 4, in Plutarch, *Mor.* 195EF.

47. Herodian 3.8.5 (LCL I, p. 309).

48. W.W. Buckland, *A Text-Book of Roman Law from Augustus to Justinian* (rev. Peter Stein; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 3rd edn, 1963), p. 128.

49. Gardner, *Women*, p. 57.

50. Gardner, *Women*, p. 58 (also noting that the men were more often the partners with higher status).

51. Buckland, *Roman Law*, p. 128. Concubinage was prohibited during marriage (Paulus, *Opinions* 2, in Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome* [Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982], p. 193, §196; cf. Gardner, *Women*, pp. 56-57); a married man's concubine was considered dishonorable, at least traditionally (Aulus Gellius, *Noct. att.* 4.3.3).

52. Buckland, *Roman Law*, p. 128. By contrast, royal houses of the east, especially

circumstances, the children were related to the mother but not legally related to father, though he could bequeath to them property provided it did not infringe on the rights of legitimate heirs.⁵³ The offspring's lack of claim on an estate sometimes made concubinage preferable to a second marriage for a man with heirs.⁵⁴

Auxiliaries like Cornelius, many of whom served near their homes (see discussion above), may not have faced the same restrictions as legionaries. 'Senior officers and *auxilia*' could live with their wives before the time of Severus.⁵⁵ Auxiliaries were normally not Roman citizens before the time of their discharge, limiting the effects of Roman concerns about the children's status, though Cornelius's name might suggest that he was a Roman citizen.

How relevant all of this is to Cornelius's 'household' (Acts 10.2) is unclear, since Luke does not specify whom it includes (cf. the servants in 10.7).⁵⁶ It does illustrate, however, that local ties were quite common. Thus some retired soldiers and local recruits would likely have chosen to remain on in Caesarea.

A Retired Soldier?

Even if the events occurred in 41–44 CE, and even if we (against the evidence of Josephus) deny the possibility of active Gentile soldiers residing there in that period, Cornelius could be a retired soldier (who

Persian (Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 13.556b–557e) but occasionally Judean (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.380; *War* 1.97; cf. *War* 1.511; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975], p. 90; but these were not positive examples), were known to have multiple concubines. Multiple concubines appear to be presupposed in *Ps.-Phoc.* 181; the rabbis refer to concubinage, but in biblical times (S. Safrai, 'Home and Family', in S. Safrai and M. Stern with D. Flusser [eds.], *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions* [2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974–1976], pp. 728–92 [748]).

53. Buckland, *Roman Law*, p. 129. Eventually sons in such unions, by entering the military, could receive 'rights of succession'.

54. Pat Edwin Harrell, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church: A History of Divorce and Remarriage in the Ante-Nicene Church* (Austin, TX: R.B. Sweet, 1967), pp. 30–31.

55. C.R. Whittaker in Herodian LCL I, p. 309 n. 5.

56. Older debates about infant baptism in the passage are thus a moot point; we cannot know whether Cornelius's household included infants.

may have served in the region) who settled in Caesarea, as his own home (perhaps in Caesarea rather than an adjoining camp) and the presence of family might suggest (see comments above). Romans had traditionally provided land grants for veterans (sometimes—especially in earlier times—in a colony; but sometimes on their own).⁵⁷ Although land grants were not systematic, they continued until the second century CE.⁵⁸ By this period cash gifts appear more common than land grants (at least for common soldiers); but soldiers in any case usually preferred to settle ‘near their last camp’ rather than in a veteran colony.⁵⁹ Centurions became members of the equestrian order when they retired, which could further explain Cornelius’s prominence here.⁶⁰ Although veterans could choose to remain as reservists⁶¹ and Rome would recall veterans to war in emergency situations (like the civil wars of the first century BCE), soldiers normally spent their retirement in peace (Cicero, *Phil.* 5.16.44).

In view of Cornelius’s access to a soldier to send in 10.7, I am inclined to think that Luke does not envision Cornelius as retired, unless (as is possible) this soldier is also retired, or Cornelius hired him as a part-time worker; but one could argue that Luke’s sources reflect a retired centurion. Some have even argued, on the grounds that Archelaus’s and Agrippa’s auxiliaries both passed into Roman service (in 6 and 44 CE respectively; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 19.364-365), that Cornelius belonged to

57. C.S.C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 134; Barrett, *Acts*, p. 499; James D.G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), p. 135; on land grants for veterans, see comment on Acts 16.23 in my forthcoming Acts commentary (where I argue that the jailer is not likely a veteran).

58. John Brian Campbell, ‘Veterans’, in *OCD*, p. 1592.

59. Thompson, ‘Military’, p. 994 (though noting on p. 993 that centurions often remained in the army for their entire lives); Campbell, *Army*, p. 212. They do not seem to have been especially involved with local politics, and it is not clear to what extent they contributed to stimulating local economies or to Romanization (Campbell, *Army*, pp. 222-23).

60. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 38; John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment* (Library of Early Christianity, 2; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 34. This claim might refer particularly to legionary centurions.

61. John Brian Campbell, ‘*Vexillum*’, in *OCD*, p. 1594. For calling up veterans in times of earlier, severe military crises, see Velleius Paterculus 2.111.1; 2.113.1; in the most severe emergency like Hannibal’s invasion, fewer soldiers were mustered out or settled abroad (Velleius Paterculus 1.15.1). Neither sort of situation would prove relevant to Cornelius in Caesarea at this date.

an auxiliary unit later absorbed into Roman service and attached to the Italian cohort in Syria.⁶² (Nevertheless, if so, I would argue from *Ant.* 19.356-65 that these units already consisted of Gentiles.)⁶³

While on the whole I think it likelier that Cornelius was still on active duty, the possibility that he was retired would allow us to accept Luke's report of a Gentile soldier converted even if the events occurred during Agrippa's reign and Agrippa used only Jewish soldiers. If Agrippa temporarily supplanted the local Syrian soldiers with his own Jewish soldiers, a semi-retired state would be possible. But in the final analysis, these approaches merely illustrate that Haenchen's position cannot be supported from any angle. The explicit presence of auxiliaries in Caesarea, even during the reign of Agrippa, makes clear that there is no reason to question Luke's claim. Whether the Gentile was ethnically Roman (a matter Luke does not explicitly address, though the name may imply citizenship by whatever means it had been acquired) is a separate question (addressed further in my forthcoming Acts commentary), but Gentile auxiliaries clearly lived in Caesarea in this period.

Conclusion

When all has been examined, it is difficult to see why anyone would find impossible Luke's portrait of a Gentile centurion becoming a Christian unless one was driven by implacable skepticism. Cornelius could have been retired; could have converted after or (more likely) before Agrippa's reign; or, for that matter, could have been converted during his reign. Josephus is clear that Gentile soldiers existed in Caesarea during the reign of Herod Agrippa I.

62. Witherington, *Acts*, p. 347 (though allowing that the account may refer to 39-40 CE).

63. Jewish soldiers were rare in Roman armies: see Kraft, 'Judaism', pp. 86-87; Shim'on Applebaum, 'The Legal Status of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora', in Safrai, Stern and Flusser (eds.), *Jewish People in First Century*, pp. 420-67 (458-60).