Loyalty, the Emperor and the Roman Army, AD 235-395.

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
Macquarie University Department of Ancient History, 8th February 2013.

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Summary

This thesis seeks to analyze the shape and composition of the all-important relationship between the Roman emperor and the army from the beginning of the third century crisis in 235 until the death of Theodosius 1 in 395. In particular it attempts to understand the reasons a bond of fidelity (*fides*) could be created and maintained, or even broken between the emperor and his army. First, this thesis seeks to trace the qualities that the army demanded in their emperor if they were to maintain fidelity to his cause alone. Here, particular focus is placed on the army's demand that their emperor be an effective commander in the field (*imperator*) as well as a generous provider of the troops' *praemia militiae*. How the emperor could respond to these demands is also examined in detail. It will be shown that without successfully fulfilling these roles the emperor could not hope to maintain the loyalty of the army. Second, this thesis investigates the range of additional strategies an emperor could employ to strengthen the existing bond of fidelity he had with the army. These included a range of ceremonial interactions as well as a raft of tools designed to either prove to the troops that he was capable of meeting the criteria they demanded in their emperor; or that sought to encourage the troops to identify more closely with his cause and his cause alone. It will be stressed that all these tools could be useful but ultimately relied on the troops existing opinion of how the emperor fulfilled his key roles.

Research Statement

This statement certifies that:

i. the following dissertation comprises only original research undertaken towards the award of a PhD except where indicated;
ii. acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used;
iii. ethics approval was not required for this research;
iv. the dissertation does not exceed 100 000 words, exclusive of front matter, footnotes, figures and references as required by the Macquarie University Higher Degree Research Office.

Mark Kenneth Hebblewhite
8th February 2013

Preface and Acknowledgements

This dissertation was born out of a diverse range of personal interests. The first is the Roman Army, an institution that has fascinated me since childhood. It was during my undergraduate years that the second passion informing this study was formed. The focus placed on the later antique period at Macquarie University led me to abandon my previous allegiances to the Roman Republic and the 'glory' of the High Empire. Instead I found myself drawn to the grim days of the third century crisis, and the Herculean efforts of the emperors of the fourth century who kept the empire territorially intact, often on the smell of an oily rag.

Following my undergraduate studies I entered into a career in politics. It is here my third passion emerged. As a political advisor and member of the minority left faction of the Australian Labor Party I developed an unhealthy obsession with political intrigue and shifting loyalties, in particular I became fascinated with how political victory could be achieved. Despite being on the receiving end of many lessons in power politics from the vaunted NSW right "machine" my interest in the art of spin, propaganda and pork barreling remained intact.

The role of the army in the imperial machinations of the late antique period, in particular the ongoing efforts of an emperor to ensure the army remained loyal to his cause, represented the perfect intersection for all these interests. Even after years of research on the issue, the complexity and ruthlessness inherent in this relationship is breathtaking. There remains far more work to be done.

During the course of researching and writing this dissertation, I have received a great measure of support, encouragement, and in particular, sage advice, from a number of individuals. My supervisors Professor Alanna Nobbs (OA) and Dr Peter Edwell have assisted me every step of the way. Both have displayed a level of patience with me that at times I did not deserve. They both have my eternal gratitude, as without them this dissertation would never have been completed. Special mention must also be made of Associate Professor C.E.V. (Ted) Nixon and Dr Peter Brennan. Neither was under any obligation to assist me yet both went above and beyond with their time, advice and thought provoking criticisms. Ted's keen eye and acerbic wit saved me from countless errors, while Peter proved time and time again that he is a world-class scholar of the late Roman army. I would also like to thank my good friend Dr Christopher Matthew and his wife Kate. Their support, advice and infectious enthusiasm for military history have sped me along greatly.

Several bodies provided financial aid throughout the preparation of this dissertation for which I am so incredibly grateful. This has included: Macquarie University Faculty of Arts (Macquarie Research Excellence Scholarship 2007-2011) and the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (Junior Fellowship 2009).

I could not have completed this dissertation without the love and support of my family. My parents Ken and Frances Hebblewhite, along with Len and Gail Willan, selflessly gave years of their lives to babysit – thus freeing me up for the task of writing and researching this dissertation. Unfortunately my father passed away during the course of this dissertation. However, I know he would have been proud to see it completed. Finally, to my partner Melissa Willan, and my son Tobias Hebblewhite: not only are you the two most important people in my life, you also inspired me to keep going when I may have otherwise cast this dissertation aside. Both of you mean more to me than words can describe and this dissertation is dedicated to you both.

Selected Roman Emperors and Usurpers 235-395

The following list includes the names and dates of selected emperors and usurpers from the period 235-395 that have been referred to in this thesis.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient texts and authors follow those listed between pages 1464-1476 of Jones, A.H.M (1986) *The Later Roman Empire*, Vol 2. Baltimore. Those not contained in Jones follow the abbreviations set out in S. Hornblower, S. and A. Spawforth, (eds.) (1996) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn, Oxford.
For collections of papyri, standard abbreviations are used, as listed in the Duke University *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets:* <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>.

AE - *Le Anneé epigraphique* (Paris 1893 -).

ANRW – *Aufstieg und Neidergang der römischen Welt.*

CIL - *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (eds.) Th. Mommsen et al., (Berlin 1863,-).

CTh. – *Theodosian Code.* (ed.) Th. Mommsen, (Berlin, 1954); (tr.) C. Pharr (Princeton, 1952).

CJ - P.Krueger (ed.), *Codex Iustinianus; Corpus Iuris Civilis* vol 2, (Berlin, 1877).

DOP – *Dumbarton Oaks Papers.*

FIRA – *Fontes iuris Romani anteiustiniani,* (eds.) S.Riccobono et al., (2nd edn, 3 vols, Florence, 1940-3).

HTR – *Harvard Theological Review.*

ILS - *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae,* (ed.) H.Dessau. (Berlin 1892-1916).

JRMES – *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies.*

JRS – *Journal of Roman Studies.*

LCL – Loeb Classical Library.

NC – *Numismatic Chronicle.*

NPNCF – Nicene and Post Nicene Christian Fathers.

PBSR – *Papers of the British School at Rome.*

PLRE – Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, (ed.) J. Martindale (Cambridge, 1971-92).

RAC –Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum.

RE – Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft (Stuttgart, 1893-).

RIC - Roman Imperial Coinage.

SC – Sources chrétiennes.

TTH – Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool).

ZPE – Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.

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