ROMAN SOCIAL CLASSES

Roman social stratification was assessed according to economic class (access to wealth and means of production), status and power. Roman social classes in the late republic and early imperial periods were determined primarily by birth and legal status rather than by education, wealth or ethnic background as social class is determined today. Being born into a social class with its legally determined privileges, duties and parameters was generally more socially determinative than personal achievement in education or amassing of wealth. Some social mobility was built into the system and usually granted from the top down.

The Roman world had two main classifications of people: the upper and lower classes or orders (*ordines*). The very small upper classes controlled the vast majority of the property, wealth, power and status and constituted less than 1 percent of the population. As a way of establishing and reinforcing status the wealthy were expected to contribute financially to local schools, baths, temples, feasts and games, (*see* Athletics). They sat in the best seats at public events and received more of the public doles. The lower classes had little or no property, wealth, power and status and constituted 99 percent of the population. Early Christians fell almost exclusively within the lower classes.

1. The Three Upper Classes
2. The Lower Classes
3. Social Mobility
4. The Social Level of the Early Christians

1. The Three Upper Classes.

The three aristocratic classes or orders established by law and qualifications of property ownership, especially under Augustus, were called the *honestiores* ("possessors of honor"). These were the *ordo senatorius* ("senators") and the *ordo equester* ("equestrians" or *equites*) of Rome, and the *decurions,* the provincial aristocracy. By the first century a.d., most wealth was concentrated in the Italian homeland in the hands of the senators and equestrians. Wealth in all three orders was kept primarily in the form of land—country estates worked by slaves and furnishing the means for the owner to live in luxury in the city.

The rich despised manual labor. They upheld the life of leisure as the truly satisfying one because it is self-sufficient and allows attendance to virtue. Their occupations revolved around social, political and military activities, as well as gentleman farming, trading (in small quantity) and advanced teaching and architecture.

Members of the upper orders were entitled to more at any imperial dole of cash, food or wine. Compare Jesus' words: "For to those who have, more will be given" (Mk 4:25 par. Mt 13:12; Lk 8:18 NRSV). They had the preferential seats at theater

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Augustus (The Twelve Caesars)
par. De Parasito
NRSV New Revised Standard Version

productions and banquets, where they were also served better food. They were tried in different courts and given more lenient sentences for convictions of the same crimes as members of the lower classes (*see* Roman Law and Legal System).

1.1. The Senatorial Order. During the republic the senators were magistrates who represented the aristocratic families of the Roman city-state (patricians). In the emperor's fight to consolidate power during the early days of the empire, many of these senators were purged and replaced by senators from outside the city of Rome and even by those of non-Roman origin. During the empire senators were appointed by the emperor as representatives from all over the Roman Empire. They were six hundred to nine hundred in number, with qualification for the order being 250,000 denarii worth of property (a denarii is roughly a day's wage for a laborer), the equivalent of 1,000,000 sesterces. Because the empire was an agricultural economy, the senators' money was usually built and maintained from landed estates. They held the highest government offices in Rome, running the legions (praetorians), administering the provinces (consulars) and functioning as ceremonial priests. R. MacMullen estimates that senators made up less than two-thousandths of 1 percent of the population.

1.2. The Equestrian Order. The equestrians were originally wealthy landowners who could afford to ride to war on a horse. During the republic they were rich Romans who had not entered political or military life. Unlike the senatorial order, there was no set number of equestrians. The emperor could appoint anyone to this order who met the qualifications of being a citizen of free birth with property worth at least 100,000 denarii (= 400,000 sesterces). During the reign of Tiberius, to keep too many freedmen from aspiring to be equestrians, the qualification was modified to two generations free. MacMullen estimates that the equestrians comprised less than one-tenth of 1 percent of the population.

Like that of the senatorial order, the wealth of equestrians was usually built from agriculture on landed estates. They usually held a series of salaried positions, including in the army, procuratorial appointments involving financial administration (especially in small provinces that did not need large numbers of troops), appointments involving food doles in Rome and to the imperial fleets, and, at the highest levels, prefectures of Egypt and the praetorian guard. Senators were frequently replenished from this order.

1.3. Decurions. Decurions were provincial, monied aristocrats. They obtained their fortunes through inheritance, landowning (the main source of wealth), trading and manufacturing. Rome utilized decurions to administrate the provinces. They served as magistrates on the local council that formed the highest local authority, working alongside the popular assembly. There were about one hundred decurions to a council, but the number could range from thirty to five hundred and was generally larger in the East. The property requirement was usually 25,000 denarii, or one-tenth that needed to be a senator. Decurions collected taxes, supervised markets and harbors and served as ambassadors. For a job well done and with

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Tiberius (The Twelve Caesars)

other necessary qualifications met, the emperor could appoint decurions to the equestrian order. The decurions probably constituted less than 5 percent of the population of the provincial cities.

1.4. Caesar and His Household. Of course the emperor was at the top of the social order. His honorable status was shared by members of his imperial household and officials of the central administration, the *Servi Caesaris* or *Familia Caesaris,* who lived very comfortably on his property. At one time his household numbered about 20,000 and was mainly composed of slaves. Their roles ranged from being domestics to heads of state bureaus, supervising the emperor's property and collecting his revenue. As a boy, a slave received training in Latin, Greek and mathematics and worked in domestic service. From ages twenty to thirty he occupied minor posts in civil service. He was manumitted at thirty but could move to more important posts such as record officer, accountant, paymaster or correspondent. Upon manumission these former members of the imperial household usually became prominent among the monied freedmen.

2. The Lower Classes.

The lower classes, the *humiliores* ("of lowly birth and status") constituted the vast majority of the population. These classes were distinguishable yet overlapping. There was no middle class within the urban commercial and industrial portions of society as we would think of middle class. There was intermediate wealth represented by the aristocracy of smaller cities and towns. Also, within the lower classes there were small landowners, craftsmen, shopkeepers and soldiers with some economic means. However, none of these formed a middle class. There was an enormous chasm between their wealth and power and even the decurions at the lower end of the three upper orders.

2.1. Owners of Small Farms and Businesses. At the top of the lower classes were owners of small farms and businesses. These owners usually employed slaves, whether the owners were the masters of the slaves or the owners were free men or freedmen hiring slave labor. Sometimes these farms and businesses were run by free men or freedmen for their rich patrons. The small businesses included such ventures as auctioneer, baker, barber, butcher, dyer, fuller, grocer, innkeeper, moneylender, potter, shipper, smith, tanner, trader, weaver and wine and oil exporter. These artisans and craftsmen took pride in their work and handed down the trade to their children. They could rise to be magistrates and decurions in the aristocracy of their local communities. These often formed *collegia*, or guilds, that were social organizations formed around a shared trade (*see* Associations).

2.2. Free Poor. The plebs were freeborn Roman citizens, both urban and rural. As much as one-third of the population of Rome may have fallen into this category. Socially the plebs had an advantage over freedmen, slaves and freeborn non-Roman citizens (*peregrini*), but economically they were disadvantaged. Slave labor was cheaper, and plebs could not get funding to engage in business activities as freely as could freedmen. Freedmen could more readily obtain financing from their savings during slavery or from their former masters.

The free poor often had no means of production and relied upon work on farms and docks and in construction. They were often fishermen, fowlers, hunters, shoemakers, barbers and other occupations in which the equipment was not expensive. Their lot was uncertain, depending as it did upon the availability of work and the beneficence of others. They could attach themselves as clients to patrons, which would make their lot more reliable, or they could beg or steal. If they were Roman citizens within the cities they could be fed by the Roman monthly grain dole, which supplied about two-fifths of their food needs. Those faring better owned means of production and employed slaves, such as bakers or those in construction where they could be superintendents of buildings, dressers of stone or plasterers.

2.3. Freedmen. The freedmen (*libertini*) were a class of former slaves who had been manumitted. Their lot was mixed. While they were slaves, some were taught a trade, given a wage and were able to leave slavery to practice their professions or start their own businesses. They could also remain in the business ventures of their former masters as agents in business transactions thought too unseemly for the master to be conducting in person. Others found themselves as day laborers without the certainty of food, clothing and shelter that they enjoyed as slaves; that is, they found their lot even less than a slave's lot. In the upheaval of the last century of the republic large numbers of slaves were manumitted, and the class grew enormously, causing considerable social dislocation.

2.4. Slaves. Slaves were legally classified as commodities (*res*). They were of two main types: those born in slavery to a family already in slavery and rooted in society, and those reduced to slavery by conquest or pirates. Possibly a quarter of the population of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves, and within Rome it may have been 25 to 40 percent. They were workers on farms, road construction, harbors, shipping and mining. Slaves in rich households could count on shelter, food, clothing, some wages and advancement for their children. Many were well-educated and often themselves served as tutors to the children of their masters (especially those of Caesar's household) and were managers of their masters' households. Usually overlooked is the fact that even poor free men and freedmen had their own slaves working within their small farms and businesses. Thus slave ownership was found among people of widely divergent economic means.

Slaves were primarily occupied with agricultural crops and domestic service on large estates. Other jobs filled by slaves (rarely by freedmen) revolved around food and clothing, in both the household and in business. Slaves provided food as fishermen, fowlers and hunters; prepared food as millers and bakers; and served food, whether in a household or a bakery business. They provided clothing as spinners, weavers, fullers, menders and cobblers, whether in the household or a small shop. They also provided domestic service on large estates and worked in inns and baths. In transportation, slaves took care of horses in stables and drove mules and wagons.

3. Social Mobility.

The upper and lower classes were separated by a number of legal and cultural barriers (e.g., those of the senatorial class could not marry former slaves). However, as P. Garnsey, P. R. C. Weaver and J. E. Stambaugh have pointed out, some social mobility did exist. *Peregrini* could become citizens, slaves could become freedmen, plebs and freedmen could become equestrians, and equestrians could become senators.

One could move up the social scale by marriage to someone further up the social scale. Women could gain wealth and power through inheritance or investment but were expected to remain in private life and not assume public office. However, many became involved in manufacture and commerce and became bene-factors to cities by providing public buildings and temples. Even before manumission, slaves of the household of Caesar could marry a freeborn woman, own slaves and acquire wealth; and after manumission they continued in government positions. This put them ahead socially, beyond others in the lower classes.

Usually mobility was initiated by a person in a higher social position who sponsored a person of a lower class on the basis of the latter's great personal achievement. For example, the emperor could appoint a notable person to the senatorial or equestrian order. Locally some people could rise to the local aristocracy by appointment of the governor or emperor on the advice of worthy citizens and on the basis of meritorious achievement or service.

Obtaining Roman citizenship was also a factor in social mobility. Citizenship could be granted from the emperor, senate or generals to individuals or whole communities. Citizenship was also acquired upon discharge from military service or upon manumission from slavery. During the empire, however, citizenship did not confer significant or enforced privileges.

Manumission from slavery made slaves freedmen. Freedmen from Caesar's household had great opportunities for upward social mobility that other segments of the population did not. However, generally the social mobility of freedmen was restricted. They became patrons of their former masters, and these obligations could be litigated if not performed. Freedmen could not hold public office or serve in the Roman legions. They could not join the equestrian order no matter how much wealth they garnered. They could not marry within the senatorial order. The children of freedmen were free from birth, so unlike their parents, they could rise to the equestrian and senatorial orders. Many of these restrictions were created to keep the freedmen from overwhelming the aristocracy.

It must also be noted that social mobility moved in both directions. People could also move down the social scale by losing their fortunes or through conviction as criminals. The emperor could remove a person from the senatorial or equestrian orders.

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e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

4. The Social Level of the Early Christians.

The second-century pagan author Celsus wrote against Christianity, seeing it as a religion of "the foolish, dishonourable and stupid, and only slaves, women, and little children" led by "wool-workers, cobblers, laundry-workers, and the most illiterate and bucolic yokels" (Origen *Cont. Cels.* 3.44, 55, trans. Chadwick 1965), that is, a lower-class movement of slaves, women and children; of uneducated day workers. In the last century, A. Deissmann, noting that the language of the NT is akin to the language of the common people of the nonliterary papyri (*koinē*), concluded that the early Christians were poor, uneducated and dispossessed within Roman society. Until recently this has been the assessment in NT studies.

However, Pliny (Pliny *Ep.* 10.96.9; c. a.d. 112) said that Christians were of every social rank. When addressing the Corinthians, Paul said "not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth" (1 Cor 1:26 NRSV), a statement implying that some Christians did fit this description. *Koine* Greek was also the language of very educated people within the upper classes. These indications and recent study, especially of Paul's letters by W. A. Meeks, A. J. Malherbe and G. Theissen, among others, indicate that Christianity was drawn from a cross-section of the population. The upper classes of Greco-Roman society do not seem to be represented in Paul's letters: senators, equestrians and decurions. The extreme bottom is also not well-represented: the subsistence day laborers. The groups that are present are the slaves, freeborn poor, freedmen, small business owners and some of moderate wealth. This assessment is confirmed in the second century by Justin Martyr (*Apol. II* 10.8), Tatian (*Or. Graec.* 32), and Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 8.3–4; 31.6). It was not until the third century that Christians appear within the upper orders of Roman society.

Some early Christians were wealthy (although not aristocracy) as indicated by their possessing houses able to accommodate church meetings, ownership of slaves and ability to travel. Some Christians were rich patrons who accommodated Paul and the fledgling church in their homes, including the mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12), Lydia (Acts 16:15, 40), Jason (Acts 17:5–9), Titius Justus (Acts 18:7), Nympha (Col 4:15), Philemon (Philem 2) and Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2–3, 18; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19). Several could travel: Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:18–19; Rom 16:3–5; 1 Cor 16:19), Phoebe (Rom 16:1–2) and Chloe's people (1 Cor 1:11). As Theissen has pointed out, social stratification explains several of the conflicts in the Corinthian church. For example, at the agape feast and Lord's Supper the wealthy may have excluded the poor. The problem may have been that a wealthy patron of the agape feast acted like a patron at a banquet and only allowed food distribution

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NT New Testament
Ep. Epistulae
c. circa, about (with dates); column
Apol. Apologia
Or. Graec. Oratio ad Graecos

according to social status—the best for the rich, the worst for the poor (1 Cor 11:17–34).

Small business and crafts people were well-represented in the early church. There are references to Jesus as a "carpenter's son" (Mt 13:55), Simon a tanner (Acts 9:43), Paul and Aquila and Priscilla as leather workers (Acts 18:2–3; *see DPL*, Tentmaking) and Lydia as a dealer of luxury textiles (Acts 16:14). There were slaves and freedmen of the household of Caesar in the church (Phil 4:22), as well as slaves and slaveowners (Onesimus and Philemon). Paul even legislates for slaves and masters in the church (1 Cor 7:20–24; Eph 6:5–9; Col 3:22–25). Erastus in Corinth (Rom 16:23) may be the aedile (superintendent of public works) who paved the courtyard outside the theater of Corinth. He may have been a freedman with Roman citizenship. Paul addresses several passages to those who work with their hands, perhaps as artisans and day laborers (Eph 4:28; 1 Thess 4:11; 2 Thess 3:6–13).

See also Benefactor; Citizenship, Roman; Patronage; Roman Political System; Slavery; Social Values and Structures.

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D. F. Watson

ROMAN TRIUMPH

By the time of the NT, the spectacular parades that entered through the *Porta Triumphalis* ("triumphal gate") of Rome had become perhaps the most important and well-known political-religious institution of the period. Images of the emperor in a triumphal chariot were even frequently used on imperial coins. These lavish pageants or triumphal processions, known as the Roman triumph (Gk *thriambos;* Lat *triumphus),* were carried out by special decree of the city of Rome in order to celebrate great victories, to honor the general, consul or emperor who had achieved them and to render thanksgiving to the deity who had granted them. According to the ancient historian Orosius (a.d. 385–418[?]), 320 such triumphs were celebrated between the founding of Rome and the reign of Vespasian in a.d. 69–79 (Orosius *Hist.* 7.9). It is widely recognized that there are two explicit references to the institution of the Roman triumph in the NT: 2 Corinthians 2:14 and Colossians 2:15. In addition, J. R. White has argued that it informs the corresponding metaphor of death in 1 Corinthians 15:29–31. Finally, T. E. Schmidt has suggested that the imagery of the Roman triumph is implicit in Mark 15:16–32. An understanding of these important passages is therefore dependent on an awareness of the nature of the Roman triumph itself and of what it meant to lead and to be led through the streets of Rome in such a procession.

1. The Nature of the Roman Triumph
2. The Use of the Triumph Imagery in the New Testament

1. The Nature of the Roman Triumph.

H. S. Versel has argued that the Roman triumph in the Hellenistic period was the result of a long development that extends back into the pre-Roman period of the Etruscan dynasties (late sixth century b.c.). Originally, the triumph was most likely a sacral New Year's festival in which the king, dressed to represent the deity in his yearly arrival or renewal, was carried into the city in anticipation of a sacrifice, at which time there was a cry for the epiphany of the god in his triumph (Gk *thriambe;* Lat *triumpe).* This rite was later transferred to Zeus in Greece, to Dionysus in Egypt and then to Jupiter in Rome (*see* Religion, Greco-Roman).

DPL Dictionary of Paul and His Letters
ed. edition; editor(s), edited by
rev. revised (edition)

LEC Library of Early Christianity
Gk Greek
Vespasian (The Twelve Caesars)
Hist. History of the Peloponnesian War

But during the days of the republic, the idea of a human being representing a deity, not to mention embodying his or her presence, was offensive to Roman sensibilities (cf. Diodorus Siculus *Bib. Hist.*. 14.117.6; Livy *Hist.* 5.23.5; Plutarch *Cam.* 7.1; Dio Cassius *Hist.* 52.13.3). As a result, the victorious generals now took the place of the god, so that the triumph celebrated their military triumphs and the political supremacy of Rome rather than being directly linked to the enthronement of a deity. The triumphator's former role as an epiphany of the deity was now replaced by his identity as the bearer of good fortune who returns to bring welfare to Rome and who in turn leads in the worship of Jupiter for his blessing (cf. Tacitus *Hist.* 4.58.6; Livy *Hist.* 45.39.10). However, by 20 b.c. the triumphs had again become the exclusive privilege of the emperor, forming an essential part of the imperial quest for power. By the mid-first century a.d. the significance of the triumph had therefore come full circle, since once again the triumph portrayed the ruler as a god. But now the triumph not only publicized the caesar's conquest and domination but also pictured his own deification.

Central to the Roman triumph, in contrast to the minor triumph or ovation awarded for lesser feats, was the portrayal of the general, consul or caesar as victor and savior (*sōtēr,* in the sense of one who brings good fortune). As the focal point of the procession, the triumphator rode the triumph in a chariot. He was dressed in a purple toga, wore a tunic stitched with gold palm motifs and had a crown upon his head. His face was painted red and he carried an eagle-crowned scepter in his hand, all of which were elements taken from the depiction of Jupiter in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. The victor was surrounded by his soldiers and by leading exhibits of the spoils of war, graphic representations of the significant battle(s) on billboards and placards announcing the peoples conquered.

Most significantly, the victor led in his triumph representative samples of the vanquished foes and leaders, the former being paraded through the streets as slaves, the latter in mockery of their former royalty. The parade route ended at the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, where the people offered sacrifices of thanksgiving and petitions for the future health of Rome. At the climax of the pageant, those prisoners and royalty who had been led in triumph and were not destined to be sold into slavery were executed in honor to the victor as the ultimate sign of his conquest and in homage to Rome's deity (Versnel, 58–63, 83–87). Indeed, the accounts of the NT period often highlighted the fact that the Roman triumph culminated in the death of those captives being led in it (cf., e.g., Plutarch *Aem.* 33.3—34.2; 36.6; *Anton.* 84.2–4; and esp. Josephus *J.W.* 6.9.4 §§433–34; 7.5.4 §§123–57, which details Titus's triumph after his victory over the Jews and is the most extensive of the extant ancient accounts). The glories of the spoils, the story of the battles, the

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cf. *confer*, compare
Bib. Hist. Bibliotheca Historica
Hist History of the Empire after Marcus
esp. especially
J.W. Jewish Wars

strength of the prisoners of war, the humiliation of the conquered rulers and the final sacrifices and death of the captives were all meant to display vividly the glory, wisdom, power and sovereignty of Rome and its leaders.

Moreover, the entire event took place in recognition of the favor of the supreme god, to whom the triumph as a whole was intended to be an act of worship. Thus, as Versnel has observed, "In no other Roman ceremony do god and man approach each other as closely as they do in the triumph" (Versnel, 1). Hence to be granted such a triumph was the greatest honor Rome could bestow (Livy *Hist.* 30.15.12). Conversely, to be led to death in such a triumphal procession was the ultimate act of defeat and humiliation.

2. The Use of the Triumph Imagery in the New Testament.
Though the noun *thriambos* (the triumph) is not found in the NT, its corresponding verb *thriambeuo* ("to lead in a triumphal procession," cf. Plutarch *Rom.* 25.4; *Thes.* 4.2; *Pomp.* 45.1–5) occurs in both 2 Corinthians 2:14 and Colossians 2:15, where Paul employs the image of the Roman triumph metaphorically to describe God's role as the sole, divine ruler and sovereign victor over his enemies. It is striking, however, that in both these texts the focus is on the direct object of the verb, thereby calling attention to the role of those led in triumph in revealing, ultimately through their death, the glory of the one who had conquered them. Read against this cultural backdrop, Colossians 2:15 affirms that God, having previously conquered and disarmed the rulers and authorities of this age, is now leading them in a triumphal procession (*thriambeuō*). Just as being led in a triumphal procession meant being led to death, so too the result of God's triumph over the rulers of this age is the manifestation of his sovereign glory through the public display of their destruction.

In 2 Corinthians 2:14 Paul himself in his role as an apostle (hence the use of the literary or apostolic plural in this verse) is now the object of the verb: "But thanks be to God who always leads us in his triumphal procession (*thriam-beuō*) in Christ and [in this way] makes known through us the fragrance of the knowledge of him in every place." In addition, some scholars have taken the image of the fragrance in this passage (cf. 2 Cor 2:14–16a) to refer to the incense that was sometimes carried along in the triumph, while others (more correctly in my opinion) view it as a reference to the incense of the OT sacrifice.

But ever since John Calvin found it impossible to imagine that Paul could be praising God for leading him like a prisoner of war in such a triumphal procession, the more significant issue has been the application of the metaphor of the Roman triumph itself. Calvin himself, for theological reasons, gave the verb a causative sense, which he recognized was different from the common meaning of the verb, and translated the verse, "Thanks be to God who causes us to triumph." Rather than being led in the triumph to his death, Paul was now portrayed as sharing in God's triumph like a general walking alongside of the chariot.

OT Old Testament

Although such a rendering is impossible both linguistically (in 1879 Findlay demonstrated that *thriambeuō*, being a transitive verb, was never used in such a factitive sense) and historically (those led in triumph were not the victors), this reading of the text has influenced the translation and interpretation of the passage ever since (cf. Egan's attempt to redefine it to mean "display," "noise abroad" or "publicize," even though there is no textual or linguistic support for such a reading).

More recently, J. M. Scott has argued that although Paul does picture himself as being led in triumph, the image refers not to being led to death but to Paul's vision of the triumphator's chariot in front of him, which in the Roman triumph helped to symbolize the deity. Taken in this way, the metaphor points to Paul's experiences of a Jewish *merkabah* (= chariot) mysticism, as in 2 Corinthians 12:1–6, since Paul associated the Roman chariot with the chariot vision of God's glory in Ezekiel 1:15–21 as picked up in the imagery of Psalm 68(67):18–19 (cf. Eph 4:8). In 2 Corinthians 2:14, Paul is thus speaking of being led into mystical experiences of God's glory, by which he makes God known to others. On the other hand, C. Breytenbach has argued that the metaphor should not be pressed so far but refers simply to Paul's role as the one who reveals God's glory as victor, without including the other images of the Roman triumph. In his view, Paul is referring only to his ministry as an apostolic mediator of the knowledge of God in a general sense.

However, such attempts to emphasize a different aspect of the triumph other than Paul's being led to death as the key to the metaphorical image in 2 Corinthians 2:14 cannot do justice to the immediate context of 2 Corinthians 2:12–13, where Paul has just described his anxiety over the welfare of the Corinthians as he awaited news from Titus, which he reminds the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11:28 was one of his greatest experiences of suffering. For Paul, to be led into such situations of suffering as an apostle is to be led to his "death" in Christ and for the sake of the gospel. Nor can it make sense out of the exact parallels between 2 Corinthians 2:14 and 1 Corinthians 4:9 and 2 Corinthians 4:10–11, where Paul's suffering as an apostle is also pictured in terms of being sentenced to death or delivered over to death as the means by which God reveals his resurrection power (= life) in the world.

In light of these parallels and within the context of 2 Corinthians 2:14 itself, it becomes clear that for Paul, being delivered over to death is a metonymy for suffering (see too 2 Cor 1:8–11). In 2 Corinthians 2:14 Paul praises God for his suffering because, rather than calling his apostolic ministry into question, Paul's suffering is the very means through which God reveals himself in the world (cf. Duff's helpful analysis of the force of the metaphor as an epiphany procession). Only if the image is taken here in all of its grim reality does the text make sense within its own context and within Paul's larger apologetic for his legitimacy as an apostle. As the former enemy of God's people who had been conquered by God in his conversion call on the road to Damascus, Paul, now a "slave of Christ" (his favorite term for himself in his role as an apostle), was always being led by God in a triumphal procession "to death" (i.e., into situations of weakness and suffering; cf. 1 Cor 15:31).

In this way Paul makes known the majesty, power and glory of his conqueror, either through his experiences of divine deliverance (cf. 2 Cor 2:8–11) or through his divinely enabled endurance in the midst of adversity (cf. 1 Cor 2:2–5; 4:8–13; 2 Cor 4:7–15; 6:3–10; 11:23–33; 12:7–10; Phil 1:12; 2:25–30; *see DPL*, Suffering). Hence, 2 Corinthians 2:14 is not an abrupt break in Paul's argument but the necessary and logical response to the suffering introduced in 2 Corinthians 2:12–13 (Hafemann, 35–72, 80–83). In 2 Corinthians 2:14 Paul praises God for the very thing his opponents maintained called his apostleship into question.

This interpretation of 2 Corinthians 2:14 has found confirmation in White's argument that this same Pauline use of "death" as a metonymy for suffering is the key to understanding not only 1 Corinthians 15:31 ("I die every day") but also the image of "being baptized on account of the dead" in 1 Corinthians 15:29. Instead of being an obscure reference to an unknown ritual lost in history, Paul is referring to the Corinthians' baptism under the ministry of Paul, here pictured in terms of his suffering (i.e., his being dead) as an essential, legitimizing aspect of his apostolic calling and of the gospel of the resurrection that he preached. To be baptized in Christ also meant being identified with those who preached Christ and suffered for his people (cf. 2 Cor 4:5). Thus 1 Corinthians 15:29 refers to the convert's identification with Paul's ministry as an apostle, once again pictured in terms of "death" as a metonymy for the daily suffering that Paul endures in hope of the resurrection and final reign of God in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15:28, 30–32). In Paul's words, "For what will those do who are being baptized on account of the 'dead' [i.e., in response to the ministry of the apostles who suffer for the sake of the gospel]? If the truly dead are not being raised, why then are people being baptized on account of them [i.e., on account of the apostles, since their gospel offers no hope]?" (1 Cor 15:29). Paul would not willingly suffer, and the Corinthian believers would not have accepted his suffering as legitimate, being baptized as a result, were it not for the truth of Paul's gospel.

Finally, Schmidt has speculated that Mark selected and arranged key elements of the passion narrative in Mark 15:16–32 to recall the image of the Roman triumph: the gathering of the whole guard in Mark 15:16; the ceremonial royal robe and crown in Mark 15:17; the real mockery by the soldiers in Mark 15:18–19, who in the triumph would deride the victor to keep him humble; the offer and refusal of the myrrhed wine in Mark 15:23, which in the triumph was given to and refused by the victor and then poured out on the altar of sacrifice; and the placement on the right and left of those crucified with Jesus in Mark 15:27, in mock parallel to those who sometimes surrounded the enthroned ruler in these positions of power during the triumph. For Mark's Roman audience, these elements would highlight that the death of Jesus took place in ways that ironically recalled the adoration of the emperor who led the triumphal procession in his attempts at self-glorification and

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Titus (The Twelve Caesars)

i.e. *id est*, that is

even deification. Now, however, the real triumph had been celebrated by a defeated king who, though executed himself, was in reality the true Son of God. Against the backdrop of the triumph, "Mark is presenting an *anti*-triumph in reaction to the contemporary offensive self-divinization efforts of Gaius and especially Nero" (Schmidt, 16). The purpose of such a portrayal is clear: one of the same Roman soldiers who first mocked Jesus as a triumphant king is the one who joins God himself in confessing Jesus' lordship.

See also Roman Emperors; Roman Empire; Roman Military.

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