



History and Future of the



Extended Arm Salute



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Introductory Remarks

Over an extended period of time, I have wondered what the final resurrection of the Roman Empire would be like and what symbols it would use: the double-headed eagle? Perhaps the cross? How about the Imperial crown and orb – would it be worn by the future fascistic European Holy Roman Emperor? What about the extended arm salute – would that return to be used once again, I wondered?

With all the pondering came research which has been published on the above in the 1980s and thereafter. But below I have developed my thoughts and research on the extended arm aspect further.

Today, most identify the salute with that used by Hitler, Mussolini and Franco and its alleged origin in ancient Rome. Very few would be aware of its much more ancient roots.

The salute can be seen in a number of films such as Ben-Hur, Cleopatra, Quo Vadis, Spartacus, The Fall of the Roman Empire and Gladiator. All this has served to popularise the belief in its act and Roman origin.

Few know that politically, many American schools used this salute as part of the oath of allegiance as did some early Communists. To this day neo-Nazis and Islamo-fascist groups make use of it. So, it has been used by all sorts of movements and people for both innocent and sinister purposes.

Yet thousands of years ago it was used to honour a god, acknowledge rank or used to pledge friendship or trust. Its origin is far more ancient than most realise.

Let us now peak into the mists of time to uncover its mysterious origin and then postulate as to its future usage.

Ancient Egyptian and Assyrian Origins

Could the famous Roman salute have its roots in ancient times, centuries before the rise of the Romans?

In 1978 I stumbled across a book authored by Migene Gonzalez-Wippler, *The Complete Book of Spells, Ceremonies and Magic* and had a browse through it. My eyes fell on a page that showed the extended arm salute – in some form or other – extending back to ancient Egypt.

Below is the relevant extract from Migene Gonzalez-Wippler's book concerning the salute's ancient origin:

"The High Priestess [representing Selene, Isis, Diana, Artemis and Ishtar] moves behind the altar that faces the east quarter of the earth. Her right knee bent slightly, her left leg stretched behind her, she pushes her left arm back against her body and **raises her right arm straight in front of her in a gesture similar to the fascist salute**. This is the sign of Zelator, one of the

degrees conferred on the magician during the first Initiation ... The dagger's blade rests, between her palms, tip pointing upward, as she ends the sign of the cross ... The swastika or truncated cross is one of the symbols representing Isis mourning for Osiris." (pp. 108-09)¹ [emphasis mine]

And from the below you can see that it is also portrayed in the Amarna paintings:



Akhenaten Family Amarna - Mom and daughter salute the king at an informal presentation under the rays of the Aton in one of the famous Amarna paintings

The Assyrians, too, practiced this salute, raising their arms to indicate their "submission and loyalty to the king, a **common theme in Assyrian glyptic art.**" (Hershel Shanks, "Jeremiah's Scribe and Confidant Speaks from a Hoard of Clay Bullae", *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Sept-Oct, p. 62). [emphasis mine]

Donald Mackenzie in *The Migration of Symbols and their Relations to Beliefs and Customs* describes the god Asshur lifting up his hand as if blessing the people who adore him.^{2, 3}

¹ See also Trevor Ravenscroft's *The Spear of Destiny* which contains some interesting postulations in this connection. "Raising the hands over the head in prayer was characteristic of pagan worship. In giving homage to the sun deity, the pagans would raise their hands toward the sun (thus shading their eyes)." (YNCA's Q&A, *Light*, Nov-Dec 1993, p. 24).

² The extended arm salute was accompanied by the cry "sieg und heil" (victory and salvation). The title of Assur, the national god of Assyria, was Saha "victorious, the mighty, overcoming." Saha is cognate with the Gothic "sig" and the German "sieg" (Laurence Waddell, *The Makers of Civilization*, p. 418). Interestingly, the Nordic victory runes were called Sig. The Greek god Zeus is also known as Zag – referring to his lightning bolt.

³ Darius calls himself "an Asura and a son of an Asura" according to Kalyanamaran, vol. 1, p. 142. It is interesting that Bullinger in his *Number in Scripture* states that the prophecies concerning the king of Assyria "reach through" to the heads of all the Gentile powers mentioned in Daniel (p. 68). Interestingly, Elagabalus, a Roman Emperor (218-222 AD), dressed as the Popes do and was the Roman Pontiff of his day. He also elevated the Babylonian/Canaanite priests from Syria who migrated to Rome to the official priesthood of Rome. He wanted to be addressed as the ancient Assyrian king Asshur-banipal who had actually brought the Babylonian priests into Samaria and Syria. Elagabalus also claimed that the Roman Empire, under his direction, was actually the revival of the Assyro-Babylonian Empire (*Historians History of the World*, vol 6, p. 378).

Writing in c 788-696 BC, Isaiah equates the Egyptians with the Assyrians (Isaiah 52:4; cf. Jeremiah 2:18). It seems that this passage refers to Exodus Chapter One and has little to do with the later Assyrian captivities which were not done "without a cause". Note also Ezekiel 31:3: "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs."

As the context is Egypt, Bullinger, in his *Companion Bible*, writes that "Ginsburg thinks this should read te-Ashshur (= a box tree) instead of 'Ashshur (= an Assyrian). There is no article; and Egypt is the subject here, not Assyria."³ However, God appears to be playing on words here and is hinting at the Assyrian influence in Egypt and vice-versa. Symbolically this passage also refers to Satan (Compare Zechariah 11:1-2; Isaiah 2:13; 10:33-34; Psalms 37:35; 27:6; Isaiah 41:19; 60:13).

The Bible reveals that empires succeeding the Assyrians continued their political heritage. For example, the king of Babylon, Nabopolassar, is actually called the king of Assyria in II Kings 23:29. This was shortly after the fall of Nineveh

The double-headed eagle, another Indo-European symbol, featured prominently among the Hittites as did the extended arm salute (Archibald Sayce, *The Hittites, the Story of a Forgotten Empire*, p. 116; Laurence Waddell, *The Makers of Civilization*, plate IVA opposite pp. 72, 73, 10).⁴⁵

Other researchers have also discovered this practice among the ancient Hittites:

"[one sculpture shows] two men, or gods, **raise their arms to a seated deity** ... [another] sculpture shows Assyrian influence, especially in the treatment of the beards and hair" (Gregory McMahon "The History of the Hittites" *Biblical Archaeologist*, June/September, 1989, p. 68).

"On the front face of the stela is a god wearing a conical cap with **his right arm raised** above his head and his left arm extended forward at shoulder height" (Jeanny Canby, "Hittite Art", *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Sept-Oct, 1989, p. 125) [emphasis mine].⁶

Also of interest is that the double-headed eagle symbol is found in several places including on the back of a sphinx at Alaja Huyuk in Turkey, and among the sculptures of Yazilikaya.⁷ Later, the Assyrians incorporated this symbol, using it as a sign of their solar god, Ashur. (Rudolf Wittkower, *Allegory and the Migrations of Symbols*, p. 21). This symbol found its way through the Roman Empire and over time into the Holy Roman Empire.

There are very ancient roots to these symbols which have been lost to those that have continued to use them centuries later. They would have no idea as to their pagan origin.

in 612 BC (cf Jeremiah 50:17-19). Referring to the returned Jewish captives in the days of Zerrubabel, we read of the following event in 515 BC:

"And [they] kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God." (Ezra 6:22) As Assyria had fallen a century previous to this, the only conclusion one can draw is that according to the context the reference here is clearly concerning Darius I who stepped into the heritage of the Assyrians after Babylon had fallen in 539 BC and their king (Nabonidus) was captured some time later.

⁴ Interestingly various artifacts have been found on the northern slopes of the Caucasus are the "counterpart" of those discovered in northern Syria (Gordon Childe, *The Danube in Prehistory*, p. 194) where the Hittites fled when their empire fell apart. Gordon Childe states that this type of battle-axe may be traced from Central Europe to the peoples of the Caucasus region and from thence to Mesopotamia. These battle-axe peoples of Europe, he claims, came from the southeast (ibid, pp. 188-90) - the Caucasus region – demonstrating that ancient peoples were moving into Europe, bringing with them their symbols and beliefs. The iron cross (Laurence Waddell, *The Makers of Civilization*, p. 455). This is probably an adaptation of the black sun symbol used by the Assyrians and Babylonians which is very similar to the German Knight or Iron Cross

⁵ The Swastika sun-cross, both Indo-European emblems, featured very prominently in Hittite art and daily life (Laurence Waddell, *The Makers of Civilization*, plate IVA, opposite p 72; page 156; Also Archibald Sayce *The Hittites, the Story of a Forgotten Empire*, p. 142)

⁶ Other inscriptions and sculptures depict double-headed eagles (These quotes are from the *Biblical Archaeologist* special edition on "Reflections of a Late Bronze Age Empire: The Hittites", June-Sept 1989). Note also John Speyer's statement: "The double-headed eagle, being the symbol of NIN.UR.TA, thus accidentally or otherwise became the symbol of Empires ruling over Antea territory. Incidentally, a city within Assyria, Kar-Tukilti-Ninurta, was named after NIN.UR.TA and was located along the Tigris just north of the Assyrian city of Assur." (p. 311)

⁷ According to Harold Bayley in *The Lost Language of Symbolism* "a two-headed Eagle - the symbol of Omnipotence. The two-headed eagle was worshipped by the Hittites as the emblem of the King of Heaven, and the Hittite Bird of the Sun is said to be the magic Roc of Oriental mythology ... The eagle was identified with Zeus the Thunderer, and the European Sprad-Eagle ... accords very closely with the Red-Indian Thunderbird as illustrated" (pp. 75-76). Hastings *A Dictionary of the Bible* also refers to this: ""The Hittites seem to have had a special fancy for combining parts of different animals into strangely composite and sometimes grotesque forms" (vol. 2, article, "Hittites")

The Roman Salute

Above we saw how the extended arm salute may be traced to ancient Egypt, Assyria and also to the Hittites. Whether it was practised by the ancient Greeks and Persians is unknown at this stage, but likely.

It can take several forms and be used as a greeting, in worship or as a military salute. To this day we extend our arms out and wave to greet others or in adoration of monarchies.



Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD) in the Musei Capitolini, Rome

In the Roman form, the fingers of the right hand can be positioned in a variety of ways as long as the right arm is extended. Here is what one source reveals:

“ADLOCUTIO. Adlocution. The custom of haranguing the soldiers was frequent with the Emperors, as is evidenced by a variety of their coins. This ceremony was performed, either at the moment when an individual obtained the imperial purple, or when the reigning prince adopted someone with a view to the succession; or when he admitted another person into immediate participation of the empire, of which examples are often recorded by historians. Memorials of these military orations, which an emperor delivered before some expeditionary force, at the time of its going out on a campaign, or of its returning after a victory_ in which the soldiers were to be reminded of their duty; or rewarded for their good_conduct and success, with praises, and "not least in their dear love," with donatives also - are preserved on many of the very finest coins of the Augusti.

On these reverses, a raised platform or tribune, more or less lofty, called by the Romans suggestum, is exhibited, on which the Emperor, wearing either the toga, or the paludamentum, **is seen standing, with his right arm elevated, as if appealing to the sentiments of the troops,** or beckoning for silence.

Frequently the Praetorian Prefect, in some cases two Praetorian Prefects, appear standing behind the Emperor. Below is a group of the legionaries, from three to five or six generally in number, with their faces turned towards their prince; some holding the eagles, vexilla, and ensigns; others their bucklers and spears. With regard to the customary attitude and gesture of the speaker in addressing the troops, Cicero_affords an illustrative passage, in his oration, against Gabinius - "When (says he) the general (Imperator), openly, in the presence of the army, **stretched out his right hand**, not to incite the soldiers to glory, but to tell them that they might make their own market" (*Omnia sibi et empta et emenda esse.* - *Provinc. cons. c. 4.*)" (Seth Stevenson, "Adlocutio", *A Dictionary of Roman Coins. Republican and Imperial.*)

[emphasis mine]



Marcus Aurelius (121-180 AD) statue

Roman historian and politician, Tacitus (c 56- c 120 AD) seemed to write of this salute in his famous work, *Histories*. This work consisting of 16 books, chronicles Roman history from 69 AD to 96 AD:

"One day, as Vespasian left his quarters, a few soldiers who stood near, instead of using the usual form with which they would salute their legate [legionary commander], suddenly saluted him as Emperor." (*Histories*, Book 2, Section 80)

Similarly, Flavius Josephus (c 37 – 100 AD) wrote:

"Nor is any thing done without such a signal; and in the morning the soldiery go every one to their centurions, and these centurions to their tribunes, to salute them." (*The Jewish War*, Book 5, Section 3)⁸

The caution here is that *salute* might be a form of verbal greeting rather than a physical sign. However, as these quotes show, the significance is the same. It is a ritualized form of greeting to show respect for rank.

Even Marcus Cicero (106-43 BC), and ancient Roman philosopher and lawyer, made mention of a salute to Julius Caesar performed by Octavian (Augustus):

"Although that youth [the young Caesar Octavian] is powerful and has told Antony off nicely: yet, after all, we must wait to see the end." But what a speech! He swore his oath with the words: "so may I achieve the honours of my father!", and at the same time **he stretched out his right [arm]** in the direction of his statue." [emphasis mine]

A salute of sorts can be witness in ancient stone and coins, such as those below.

⁸ See also *New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* (p. 358).



Augustus of Prima Porta statue, c20 BC



Roman sculpture on Trajan's column showing the raised arm salute to acknowledge the Emperor



Source: Dictionary of Roman Coins



Sculpture (Bas-relief) approx 120-100BC



The adlocutio by Trajan with his soldiers (Column of Trajan, Rome)



The rear side of a coin of Nero with the raised arm.

Notice, however, that some of these salutes are with a pointed finger or all fingers separated and not together as in the fascist salute. So it is self-evident that the salute appears to have been slightly modified in modern times, but performs the same purposes.

Usage during the Holy Roman and Napoleonic Periods

When Otto I was elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 962 AD "The people raised their right hands to show their assent in the election and shouted 'victory and salvation' (Sieg und Heil)...," recorded Friedrich Heer. He went on to comment "For us the salutation has a sinister ring from its associations with the terrifying man from Braunau-am-Inn" [i.e. Adolf Hitler] (Heer, *The Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 26, 33).

Henrietta Marshall provides further details

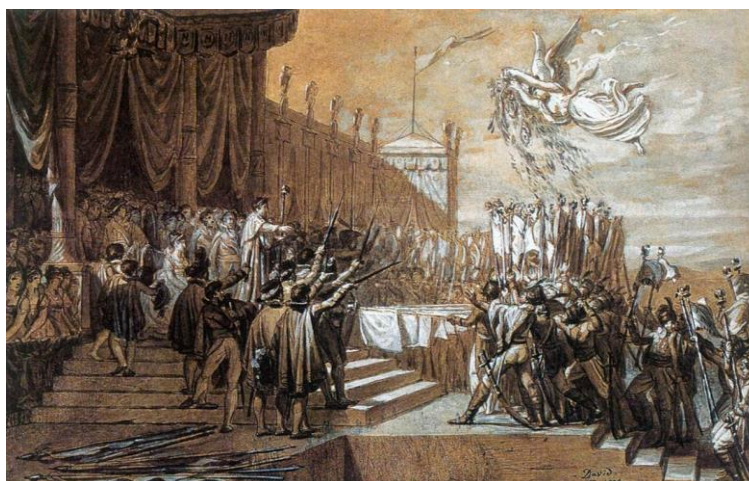
“Holding his crosier in his right hand, the Archbishop led the young King by the left into the middle of the Cathedral, which was crowded by an eager throng in glittering holiday array. Turning to the swaying crowd of people the Archbishop cried aloud:

"See, I bring Otto to you, whom God has chosen for your King, whom Henry pointed out, and whom the princes of the realm have acclaimed. If the choice pleases you, **raise your right hand to heaven.**"

All raised their hands, and a thundering shout rang out, "All hail to our new King and ruler."

Then with slow and solemn steps the Archbishop led the King to the altar, where lay all the splendour of royalty, the sword and the mantle, the golden bracelets, the crown and sceptre.” (*A History of Germany*, p. 46) [emphasis mine]

Centuries later we find Napoleon involving himself with this Roman practice.



The Oath of the Horatii by Jacques-Louis David (1784)

Refer to *Wikipedia* on the famous painting:

“*The Distribution of the Eagle Standards* is a painting by Jacques-Louis David depicting a ceremony arranged by Napoleon after his assumption of power as emperor. In it he sought to revive the military ethos of the Roman empire. However, the ceremony, and the painting that commemorated it, **also provided an important model for the use of the Roman salute and its revival at public ceremonies organised by fascists and the Nazis** during the 20th century.

The event took place on December 5 1804, three days after his coronation. **Napoleon distributed standards based on the "eagles" of the legions of Rome.** The standards represented the regiments raised by the various

Departments of France, and were intended to institute feelings of pride and loyalty among the troops who would be the backbone of Napoleon's new regime. Napoleon gave an emotional speech in which he insisted that troops should defend the standards with their lives...

The final painting depicted the moment when Napoleon blessed the standards being held out towards him. **Napoleon has his arm raised** in imitation of ancient "adlocutio" scenes, which depict Classical heroes addressing troops. David's composition was heavily influenced by the friezes on Trajan's column." [emphasis mine]⁹



Distribution of the Eagle Standards (1810)

Susan Jaques in *The Caesar of Paris. Napoleon Bonaparte, Rome, and the Artistic Obsession that Shaped an Empire* provides further details for the use of this salute at the time of Napoleon:

“Like the *adlocutio*, or orator’s pose, seen in Roman coins, sculpture, and possibly the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, Napoleon’s right arm is raised and index finger pointed. In the left foreground, “Bonaparte” is etched on the rocks by the names of his predecessors, Hannibal and Charlemagne. At Napoleon’s feet, David added miniature soldiers hoisting a cannon up the mountain.” (p. xiii)

“As France’s newly crowned emperor, he had distributed eagle standards to regiments of various departments based on the Aquila of the Roman legions. There, too, his men swore to defend the standards with their lives. In *The Distribution of the Eagle Standards* (1810), Jacques-Louis David depicted Napoleon blessing the standards. Like the *adlocutio* of Rome’s emperors portrayed in ancient sculpture and coins, Napoleon is shown with his right arm raised, about to address his troops.” (p. xvii) [emphasis mine]

⁹ According to *Wikipedia* (article “Roman Salute”):

“After the republican government was replaced by Napoleon's imperial regime, David further deployed the gesture in images of Napoleon receiving the acclamation and loyalty of his soldiers. These consciously imitated ancient Roman *adlocutio* scenes. The most important of these paintings is *The Distribution of the Eagle Standards* (1810).” [emphasis mine]



Tennis Court Oath by Jacques-Louis David (1790-94)

While one cannot find the hard evidence to prove it at this time, one wonders if this salute (or a variation thereof) was used in the Holy Roman Empire down the centuries. It is quite possible.

In any event, the salute was used by various organisations over the decades after the passing of the Napoleonic Empire and also later by the 1920s and 1930s fascists and national socialists all over Europe and other parts of the world. It was especially relevant to them in the belief that they continued the Roman Empire and Holy Roman Empire traditions:

“... the *saluto romano* that Benito Mussolini had introduced in Fascist Italy— although the main influence on the young Hitler was not Il Duce but Georg von Schönerer, the leader of the anti-Semitic Pan-German (Alldeutsche) Party in turn-of-the century Austria. The raised arm of the *saluto romano* was an explicitly antibourgeois gesture, **intended to underscore Mussolini’s claim to leadership by connecting it with the Roman Empire**” (Tilman Allert, *The Hitler Salute*, p. 51) [emphasis mine]

Before and during World War 2 the Japanese used both arms in extended form to cry *banzai* which meant "Long live His Majesty the Emperor".

What of the future? Will this salute be used by a future restoration of the Roman system?

Conclusion

I may as well mention something else:

When the new Holy Roman Empire comes – a militaristic United Europe (of which the current European Union is the probable genesis), it will likely be full of pomp and ceremony, drawing upon the long history of Europe: one can imagine the coming glorious ceremonies, pageants, symbolism, parades with soldiers dressed in Roman uniforms together with intense teaching of Roman and Holy Roman history in schools and colleges.

Post-modernism and political correctness/wokeness will be eschewed and old values restored. A coming backlash is brewing in Europe and other places, which will result in a vicious revenge on those attempting to crush Western Civilisation.

Notice that the Hitlerian restoration of the Roman system was detested by many associated with the old elites including Emperor Wilhelm II and even President Paul von Hindenburg, let alone many Prussians and aristocrats. Not all restorations of that Roman system are in alignment or agreement. Some are worse than others.

For example, Prince Loewenstein in 1934 published a work, *After Hitler's Fall*. In it he advocates a Germany that is Christian, and which has its roots more firmly in the Reich concept than the deism of Hitler's Germany (this is indicative of the ongoing love-hate relationship between the Catholic Church and the Emperors of Europe: the former advocating worship of a Christ and dominance of the Church; the latter believing that they should be in control and followed as sort of saviours by the masses). Here are some extracts from the pages of the Prince's book:

"This book deals with the idea and form of the coming Reich ... For the New Germany for which we are fighting is founded on its mission of universal service ... the beginning of the Reich ... dates from the time when the **Roman Empire** united all the barbarous tribes ... Hence the foundations are Roman and will remain so till the end of time ... a unified worldwide Reich ... those who fail to understand the real history of the **Roman symbol** are constantly misunderstanding its significance ... the effects of which will appear anew in the future - "**The Holy Germano-Roman Empire**" ... **there is thus a fraternal relationship between the Roman and German state-ideas ... young Germans enlisted in enormous numbers in the Roman legions ... Even the Caesarean world empire was strongly influenced by German forces; in Gaul, as well as in the East against Pompey, Germans won the victories for the Roman eagles.**" (pp. 1-4, 12-3, 53) [emphasis mine]

That inner group wished to establish a Roman Catholic-dominated Europe, a bit different to that of Hitler and Mussolini¹⁰ who were more oriented toward the Roman rather than the Holy Roman aspect of this system.

But Prince Loewenstein believed that the Roman Eagle will be a major symbol of the coming

¹⁰ Of further interest is Loewenstein's statement: "There is no antithesis between the Reich and what [true] socialism affirms ... but there is a sharp antithesis between the Reich and the negative side of socialism ... [what is needed is] collaboration between the idea of the Reich and the ideas of traditional European Socialism." (ibid, pp. 236-37)

Reich (both single and double-headed varieties), together with the cross. (ibid, pp. 257-9)

It would appear that the future Holy Roman Empire will eventually morph into a Roman Empire, coming full circle to its origins. It will attack the Great False Church and the Emperor will demand that he be worshipped (Rev 17:16). This trend commenced with Napoleon, Mussolini and Hitler – they had a concordant with the Church followed by a ‘falling out’. This will occur again.

Finally, Prince Loewenstein exclaims:

" ... I call to mind the twelve men who wore **the Germano-Roman Imperial crown** and were my ancestors ... A German Reich will arise to fulfill the history of all its centuries - A German Reich, in whose golden eagles is alive the idea of social, political and spiritual liberty." (ibid, p. 279) {emphasis mine}

Will this future Empire restore the extended arm salute? It is hard to say, given the enormous negativity surrounding it and offensiveness it has among many European nations. Although it seems very unlikely that this Roman gesture will be used in a future United Europe, it is still possible. Rather, we should be looking for the restoration of other symbols.

It would appear that these European nations will, instead, rally around symbols such as the double-headed eagle, Roman eagle, the standard and the regalia of the old Holy Roman Empire. All symbols of tradition and ultra-conservative values.

This does not rule out that the extended arm salute or a variant of it may be used in a future fascistic European Union, but it is something to keep a ‘watching brief’ on at this time.

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