

Kings-ὑπάτοι

1. Aelius Septimius Abgar

In the above mentioned parchment P2, dated 28th December 240 A. D. in Haiklā New Town of Hunting, the king Aelius Septimius Abgar is called “king, son of Ma‘nu, *paṣgribā*, son of Abgar the king, who was honoured with the *hypateia* in Urhoy, in Edessa, the great city, mother of all the cities of Bet Nahrin.”¹⁴ I have discussed the descent of Aelius Septimius Abgar from a person who was titled *paṣgribā* elsewhere,¹⁵ but what is interesting for us now is the Syriac expression *DMYQR BHPTY’ B’RHY* “who was honoured with the *hypateia* in Urhoy.” It represents a *hapax* in Syriac, which is not surprising at all, seeing that the documents and non-patristic texts are very scarce in that language. However, as I underlined elsewhere,¹⁶ in the Greek texts taken from the same documentary dossier and published by Denis FEISSEL and Jean GASCOU, this same term, ὑπατεία, is to be found in its original language. In Greek it is obviously not a *hapax*: the term ὑπατεία/*consularitas*, an abstract noun from ὑπάτος/*consul*, customarily recurs in the consular dating formulas like ἐπὶ ὑπατείας τινός, “during the consulship of someone.” The context in which the term ὑπατεία is often attested in Greek documents, is also unique in itself, although it does not coincide perfectly with the one in the Syriac text.

PEuphr. 1 is a petition, dated 28th August 245 and concerning a suit between fellow villagers presented to Iulius Priscus, brother of the emperor

¹⁴ Cf. *supra*, n. 1.

¹⁵ GNOLI 2002, cf. also *infra*: ‘Appendix.’

¹⁶ GNOLI 2000, 67-88.

Philip the Arab qualified as ἑπαρχὸς Μεσοποταμίας, διέπων τὴν ὑπατεῖαν (PEuphr. 1, l. 1). PEuphr. 3 and 4 represent the double copy of a request addressed to Iulius Proculus, ἑπαρχὸς πρεπόσιτος πρετεντούρης, accepted by the διασημότατος Pomponius Laetianus, διέπων τὴν ὑπατείαν. Thus in these Greek documents two Roman *equites* are said to exert a ‘consulship’ after a formula (διέπων + acc.) that is typical for *interim* functions.¹⁷ Equally typical for temporary functions is the formula διέπων τὰ μέρη τῆς ἡγεμονίας, which in PEuphr. 2 denotes the powers of a certain [-] Marcellus, also an *equus* (διασημότατος = *perfectissimus*), who, on the basis of an hypothesis by the editors of the document, I have proposed to identify with that Claudius Marcellus who was to be appointed καθολικός in Egypt under Philip the Arab.¹⁸

So, in one and the same documentary dossier, which is coherent in both its chronology and provenance, three members of the Roman equestrian order and a foreign king, Aelius Septimius Abgar of Edessa, exert their powers as defined in official documents by means of the concept ὑπατεία/HPTΥ’/ *consularitas*, with perfectly analogous structures (present/past participle + *hypateia*). This structures are never attested elsewhere, either in Greek or in Syriac, as in this case these two languages do not use verbal predicates having the same semantic value: Greek διέπω actually does not coincide with Syriac *yqr* “I honour, I hold in esteem.”

Javier TEIXIDOR translated the Syriac expression defining the powers of Aelius Septimius Abgar in P2 in two different ways: first with “honoré comme *consularis* à Orhaï,”¹⁹ thus maintaining that the expression hinted at the granting of *ornamenta consularia*, already attested elsewhere for other eastern kings; then afterwards translating the expression with “honoré du consulat à Orhaï.”²⁰ The latter translation, which can hardly be explained on the basis of Roman law, was thus commented:

Il [*sc.* Aelius Septimius Abgar] portait d’ailleurs le titre de roi mais non celui de «roi d’Édesse»: il fut simplement honoré du consulat. Les *ornamenta consularia* étaient parfois conférés aux rois clients ainsi qu’à des amis de l’empereur. Dans le cas du roi Abgar, son titre honorifique ne fait que

¹⁷ SCHWARTZ 1976.

¹⁸ GNOLI 2000, 99-101.

¹⁹ TEIXIDOR 1989, 220

²⁰ TEIXIDOR 1990, 150.

soulligner son manque de pouvoir à Édesse et, bien entendu, dans la province d'Osrohoène.²¹

In TEIXIDOR's opinion, then, the *hypateia* of Abgar represents something different from the *ornamenta consularia*, which would make of Abgar a *consularis*, but rather a true consulship, to be distinguished from the *ornamenta* as being even less effective. The translations and interpretations of this formula proposed later by other scholars do not differ much from the one by TEIXIDOR: Sebastian BROCK translates "who was honoured with a *hypateia* in Urhay," maintaining that "*hypateia* normally means 'consulship,' but clearly this cannot be the case here, where it must have a wider sense of 'position of high office,'"²² while for David POTTER "one explanation of this curious phrase is that he was given the *ornamenta consularia* rather than a position within the imperial government."²³ DRIJVERS and HEALEY think of a "consular rank," which I interpret as *consularis* following the granting of *ornamenta*,²⁴ as does Fergus MILLAR, who is actually very conscious of the difficulty raised by such an interpretation.²⁵ Steven ROSS on the contrary understands the 'consulship' of Abgar as something unknown to the Roman regulations we are familiar with.²⁶ Even if I do not completely share his conclusions on the matter, Ross's method, the only one that closely relates the *hypateia* of Abgar with that of the Roman *equites*, seems to me correct.²⁷

²¹ TEIXIDOR 1990, 161-162.

²² BROCK 1991, 261 and n. 11.

²³ POTTER 1996, 283. Cf. also BENOIST 2000, 323.

²⁴ DRIJVERS, HEALEY 1999, 240: "who was honoured with consular rank in Urhoy."

²⁵ MILLAR 1993, 478: "who was honoured with the HPTY' (*hypateia* – a 'consular' rank) in 'RHY (sic)."

²⁶ ROSS 2001, 78-81, in part. 80: "the ὑπατεία of Abgar (...) involves neither a real consulship nor a grant of consular ornamenta."

²⁷ In his article published contemporaneously with my monograph Stéphane BENOIST deals with the documents coming from the middle course of the Euphrates in the framework of a research dedicated to the *ornamenta consularia*. However he does not sufficiently take into account the fact that the famous Syriac document and the Greek ones derive from one and the same documentary batch and that the data they contain shall be treated as one: BENOIST 2000, 318: "Les découvertes récentes de Charax Sidou (!) sur le Moyen Euphrate, parchemins en syriaque," while the Greek documents are analysed at page 322. His interpretation of the ὑπατεία in these documents as something like an extraordinary superprovincial command, some sort of *imperium maius* (cf. *IBID.* 322-323), is based on an hypothesis by the editors of the documents (FEISSEL, GASCOU 1989,

The sharp contrast between the interpretation of the *hypateia* of Abgar, as given by the editors of the Syriac documents and the one given to the *hypateia* either directly or *ad interim* attributed to Iulius Priscus, [-] Marcellus and Pomponius Laetianus in the Greek documents is actually evident. It is undoubtedly difficult to maintain that in this case three Roman *equites* were not provided with effective powers, particularly as far as Iulius Priscus is concerned: he was the brother of an emperor who was about to grant him an *imperium maius* in the East.²⁸ The interpretation by the editors changed in this case too. First they thought to attribute an *imperium maius* over the Near East as a whole to the three people,²⁹ then they thought that the expression might allude to a simple *interim* government in the imperial consular province of Syria Coele:

ni le cas de Laetianus ... ni la carrière de Priscus ne s'opposent à cette acception nouvelle du grec ὑπατεία Priscus ou Laetianus, n'étant pas sénateurs, ne pouvaient porter personnellement le titre d'ὑπατικός, ce qui n'empêchait pas l'empereur de leur confier, comme à tant de chevaliers, l'intérim du gouvernement provincial, avec le titre propre à la Syrie de «vice-consulaire», διέπων τῆν ὑπατείαν.³⁰

In my often cited essay dedicated to this subject I think I have shown how the intuition by Steven Ross to link together the *hypateia* of Aelius Septimius Abgar with those of Iulius Priscus, [-] Marcellus and Pomponius Laetianus was actually right. If we accept this assumption, as the *hypateia* of Abgar is explicitly effective “in Edessa,” we should *ipso facto* exclude the likelihood of its being an *interim* command in Syria Coele. Rather some stimulating comparisons with Palmyra arise, where some people are qualified as ‘consuls’ and whose ‘consulship’ has always puzzled scholars.³¹

553-554) abandoned later by the latter themselves: FEISSEL, GASCOU 1995, 81 n. 68: “en nous fondant sur une interprétation inexacte de PEuphr. 3-4, nous proposons de voir dans l'ὑπατεία une sorte d'*imperium maius*,” cf. ECK 1992, 201 e n. 11; GNOLI 2000, 67-73. Like BENOIST, POTTER 1996, where the lists at pp. 275-277 shall be cautiously taken into consideration because of a too extended meaning of the concept of *imperium maius*; LUTHER 1999, 195 n. 53.

²⁸ On the figure of Iulius Priscus PFLAUM 1960, 833-836; *PIR*² J 488; GNOLI 2000, 92-99; KÖRNER 2002, 54-64. On the *imperium maius* in the Orient POTTER 1996, cf. *supra* n. 25.

²⁹ FEISSEL, GASCOU 1989, 553-554.

³⁰ FEISSEL, GASCOU 1995, 81-82.

³¹ The same conclusions about the similarities existing between Edessa and Palmyra have

2. *Septimius Odainath*

As we know during the some twenty years in the mid 3rd century A. D. also Septimius Odainath, the *rais*, *rš*, of Palmyra is often mentioned as *συνκλητικὸς/snqltq'* = lat. *senator* and *ὕπατικὸς/hptq'* = lat. *consularis*. Furthermore some inscriptions attribute to him the rank of *λαμπρότατος/nhyr'* = lat. *clarissimus*. Such senatorial and consular titles are not limited to one person only, but in 3rd century Palmyra were attributed also to his two sons, Septimius Ḥairān/Herodianus and Septimius Vaballath Athenodorus.

I have already extensively treated this subject in my essay, to which I refer the reader for the less recent bibliography. Since then a range of studies have been published dealing with the internal vicissitudes of Palmyra during the 3rd century A. D. It would thus seem to be of some interest to present again my considerations on the subject in the light of more recently published literature.³²

Septimius Odainath's family rose to the highest position in Palmyrene aristocracy most probably under the reign of Septimius Severus. This very uncertain point becomes likely on the basis of the gentilicia of the Palmyrene *élite*, seemingly including among the names designating Roman citizens in Palmyra the gentilicium of Septimius as exclusively reserved to the family of Odainath. On the other hand, the gentilicia of Iulius Aurelius Septimius and Iulius Aurelius pertained the former to the closest collaborators of the family of Odainath, while after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* the latter eccentric name of Iulius Aurelius was given to all the citizens of the town instead

been expressed by ROSS 1993, POTTER 1996, BENOIST 2000, GNOLI 2000, sceptically by HARTMANN 2001, 444 n. 50.

³² Particularly important has been the publication of the vast and detailed work by Udo HARTMANN 2001. Even though it appeared after the publication of my essay, the author has neglected to discuss the interpretations proposed by me there and he just cites them in the footnotes of his volume. Also Jean-Baptiste YON 2002a shows he does not know my work, while Michael SOMMER 2005 knows it and uses it, even if not always correctly, as far as the history of Edessa is concerned, while neglecting the chapter about Palmyra. POTTER 2004, 258-270 confirms his previous positions, without any sensible updating, and almost completely ignoring the works by Italian scholars. The work by GARDNER, LIEU, PARRY 2005 is a mere compilation. *Non vidi* CUSSINI 2005.

of Aurelius only, as in the rest of the Roman world.³³

The name of Odainath's father is not known with certainty.³⁴ The fact that he is often called 'son of Naṣōr' represents just a clue, because, as YON has already demonstrated, Palmyrene genealogies are 'telescopic,' in the sense that some generations may be left out in order to exalt one's lineage by virtue of one's descent from important ancestors.³⁵ Be that as it may, the role of 'Chief' of Palmyra was explicitly assured to the (very) young Odainath already since the 30s of the 3rd century A. D. (*rš dy tdmwr/ἔξαρχος Παλμυρηνῶν*).³⁶ A few years later, under the reign of Philip the Arab, the title of Odainath changes, becoming *συνκλητικός* = lat. *senator*.³⁷ Afterwards his titles further change to *ὁ λαμπρότατος ὑπατικός*. The inscriptions bearing these titles date back to the year 257/258 A. D.³⁸ but already

³³ GNOLI 2000, 143-146. On Palmyrene onomastics PIERSIMONI 1994; PIERSIMONI 1995; YON 2000. On Palmyrene gentilicia the work by SCHLUMBERGER 1942b is still crucial. The most complete discussion on the Palmyrene notabilate is actually in YON 2002a, who there like elsewhere is very prudent about the difficult relationships existing among the gentilicia in Palmyra: *IBID.*, 124; YON 2004, 316-319. Important considerations also in HARTMANN 2001 and SOMMER 2005. As far as the addition of the gentilicium of Iulia Domna to the one of Caracalla is concerned, it might be explained by means of the particular devotion showed by the Palmyrene both inside and outside their hometown towards Syriac princesses: cf. KETTENHOFEN 1979, 135-136. About the specific relationship between Edessa and Palmyra cf. the diverging positions of SEYRIG 1959 and GATIER 1996.

³⁴ Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 108-128; *contra* YON 2002b, 407.

³⁵ YON 2002a; YON 2002b, 407: "Les généalogies palmyréniennes son souvent télescopées ... pour cette raison, la référence à son arrière-grand-père Naṣōr, peut-être même à son grand-père Wahballat, sont à prendre *cum grano salis*."

³⁶ *PAT* 2753 = CANTINEAU 1931, 138 n° 17 = MILIK 1972, 317 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1973, 78 = INGOLT 1976, 120 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 1. One more evidence of this title is the bilingual inscription *PAT* 2815 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985 n° 13: *ἔξαρχον Παλμυρηνῶν* = palm. *RS[?] DY [TDMWR]*.

³⁷ *PAT* 0558 = *CIS* II 4202 = *Inv.* VIII 55 = *IGRR* III 1034 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985 n° 2: *ὁ λαμπρότατος συνκλητικός* = palm. *snqltq?*; MOUTERDE in CHÉHAB 1962, 19-20 = SEYRIG 1963, 162 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 3: *τὸν λαμπρότατον*; *PAT* 0290 = *CIS* II 3944 = *Inv.* III 16 = *IGRR* III 1035 = MILIK 1972, 232, 317 = INGOLT 1976, 130 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 4: *τὸν λαμπρότατον συνκλητικόν* = palm. *snqltq?*; *PAT* 2815 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 13: *λα[μ]πρότατον*, without any translation into Palmyrene.

³⁸ SEYRIG 1963, 161 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 5: *Ὁδαινάθου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ὑπατικοῦ*, dated back to 257/258; SEYRIG 1963, 161 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 6: *Ὁδαινάθου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ὑπατικοῦ*; DUNANT 1971, n° 52 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 7: *Σεπτίμου Ὁδαινάθου τὸν λαμπρότατον ὑπατικόν*, dated in 257/258; same formula and

before that time, in addition to Odainath, also his son Ḥairan, characterized by senatorial attributions, appears in the Palmyrene inscriptions.³⁹ In the end in a posthumous inscription dedicated to him by two Palmyrene high officials in August 271 Odainath is attributed the dual title of *mlk mlk' wmtqnn' dy mdnh klh*.⁴⁰ The first part of this title does not imply any particular problem: it is the Aramaic translation of MP *šāhānšāh*, Gr. βασιλεύς βασιλέων, he shared with his son Herodianus, maybe coinciding with Ḥairān.⁴¹ The second part of the title provoked a long debate and elsewhere I demonstrated why I think it should be considered as the Palmyrene Aramaic rendering of the title *corrector totius Orientis*.⁴²

date in DUNANT 1971, 66 n. 2 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 8 and in PAT 0291 = CIS II 3945 = Inv. III 17 = IGRR III 17 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 9 (April 258).

³⁹ PAT 0290 = CIS II 3944 = Inv. III 16 = IGRR III 1035 = MILIK 1972, 232, 317 = INGOLT 1976, 130 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 4: Σεπτίμιον Αἰράνην Ὀδαινάθου τὸν λαμπρότατον συνκλητικὸν ἔξα[ρχον Παλμυ]ρηῶν = palm. *sptmyws hyrn br 'dynt snql'lyq' nhyr' wrš' tdmwr*, dated back to October 251; SEYRIG 1963, 161 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 5: [Σεπτίμιον] Αἰράνην τὸν λαμπρότατον υἱὸν Ὀδαινάθου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ὑπατικοῦ, dated back to 257/258; SEYRIG 1963, 161 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 6: Σεπτίμιον Αἰράνην τὸν λαμπρότατον (υἱὸν) Ὀδαινάθου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου ὑπατικοῦ.

⁴⁰ PAT 0292 = CIS II 3946 = Inv. III 19 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 11 (posth., August 271).

⁴¹ Inv. III 3 = SEYRIG 1937 = SCHLUMBERGER 1942a = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 10: [B]ασιλεῦ βασιλέων ... Σεπ|τιμίω Ἡροδι|ανῶ. But cf. *infra* § 2a on this inscription.

⁴² GNOLI 2000, 153: "In PAT 0292 e 0317, due testi evidentemente contemporanei, Odainat è detto *MTQNN' DY MDNH' KLH* (PAT 0292), mentre a Wahballat venne conferito il titolo di *'PNRTT' DY MDNH' KLH* (PAT 0317), in entrambi i casi la formula è preceduta dalla qualifica di *MLK MLK'*. Il rapporto esistente tra *MTQNN'* e *'PNRTT'* potrebbe essere lo stesso esistente tra *restitutor* e *corrector*, tra l'imperatore e un suo subordinato." Differently HARTMANN 2001, 149: "Die Begriffe *mtqnn'* und *'pnrtt'* werden hier offensichtlich synonym verwendet, beide Herrscher beanspruchten also dieselbe Titulatur." However none of the motives in support of this position by HARTMANN, and particularly the dual rendering of the term *fiscus* (*'nwšh* e *psqws*) in Palmyrene, HARTMANN 2001, 150, seem to be convincing. The contemporaneity of PAT 0292 and 0317 and the propagandistic use this linguistic ambiguity linked to the *corrector*-ship over the East entailed in the domestic policy of Palmyra define the terms of the problem in a way that is completely different from the simple combination of texts that are heterogeneous as far as their datings and aims are concerned and for which no political use can be imagined. The different positions of HARTMANN and me are very old, however, and they can be realized in a similar way between CLERMONT-GANNEAU 1920 and CANTINEAU 1933, and between POTTER 1996 and SWAIN 1993. In this case it is impossible to solve the problem only on the basis of textual elements. The only solution is to insert these texts in the historical framework they belong to.

If the ‘consulship’ of Odainath is not accepted as a variation of the same ‘consulship’ of Aelius Septimius Abgar, which is moreover conferred not to Odainath, but at least on his father, most probably under the reign of Septimius Severus, the reconstruction of this career appears extremely hard to understand.⁴³

What is usually accepted is that the transformation of the internal regulations of Palmyra and the consequent creation of a ‘Head of the Town,’ *rš*, should be attributed to a hypothetical crisis that occurred in Palmyra’s caravan trade during the 30s of the century following the “*montée des Sassanides*.” Even if such a crisis actually occurred,⁴⁴ it is not clear how Odainath, probably not yet twenty years old and thus very young, could have imposed himself on the Palmyrene aristocracy. But an even greater difficulty is represented by the admission of the young new ‘sheikh’ to the Senate of Rome. If the senatorial and consular titles of Odainath are to be understood as a reference to the customary Roman institutions, as they usually are, it must inevitably be maintained that the young Odainath, who somehow emerged as very young at the local level was *adlectus* (maybe *inter praetorios*) in the Roman senate by Philip the Arab. This possibility would not be inconceivable in itself either: indeed it is probable that Philip might have surrounded himself with people being close to him, at least at a ethnic and cultural level; however we are unaware of any significant public role at all being attributed to the very young Odainath before *PAT 2753*.⁴⁵

⁴³ A connection between the ‘consulship’ of Aelius Septimius Abgar of Edessa and Odainath (and sons) of Palmyra has been proposed, even though in a variety of ways and explications, by TEIXIDOR 1989; ROSS 1993; GAWLIKOWSKI 1998; POTTER 1996; 2004, 259-260; GNOLI 2000; ROSS 2001. Explicitly adverse HARTMANN 2001, 444 n. 50.

⁴⁴ Cf. the sceptical position in YON 2002b, 409: “On connaît aussi de longues périodes (environ 30 ans) sans inscriptions caravanières, en particulier juste avant et après l’arrivée des Sassanides, ou dans les années qui précèdent les Sévères, mais la période la plus longue est celle qui va de 86 (*Inv. X*, 127) à 131 (*Inv. X*, 81). Or il ne viendrait à l’idée de personne de penser que le commerce a cessé pendant ces années; de toute façon, la documentation qui a survécu dépend du hasard et n’est pas représentative des variations du volume commercial qui passait par Palmyre.”

⁴⁵ We are actually not informed about any role Odainath might have played outside Palmyra before 260. His participation in the actions in Syria during the expedition by Šābuhr in 253 represents a modern deduction, that is useful to the explanation of his career as a senator, as provincial governor and then as *corrector totius Orientis* and *rex regum*. HARTMANN 2001, 75: The role played by Odainath during the second expedition

The situation becomes even worse if we take the admission to the Senate of Rome and the different gradation of the titles *συνκλητικὸς* and *ὕπατικός*. For this phase of Odainath's career two explanations have been proposed: 1) after the *adlectio* into the Senate by Philip, the 'chief' of Palmyra would have been granted *ornamenta consularia*,⁴⁶ 2) Odainath should have been named *consul suffectus in absentia* in 257/258, the year in which the majority of the inscriptions designated him with the title of *ὕπατικός/consularis*, and as such he would hold the role of governor of the praetorial imperial province of Syria Phoenice.⁴⁷

It must also be emphasized that nothing is known about the circumstances leading Valerianus to appoint Odainath to the provincial command of Syria Phoenice. Furthermore no trace has remained of that provincial command outside Palmyra. *Pace* HARTMANN,⁴⁸ the dedication in Tyrus, attributing Odainath the simple title of *λαμπρότατος/clarissimus*, without mentioning any 'consulship' represents a clue that the dedication was not intended for a provincial governor. The *aporia* represented by the qualification of *consularis* attributed to a government of praetorial rank is actually surmountable, as RÉMY⁴⁹ has already extensively shown. It is not easy to justify the *ratio* eventually leading Valerianus to appoint Odainath as governor of the province. The ascent of Odainath is usually explained by means of the military power this person would exert as head of the biggest local army in the Roman East. Such military power expressed the *exploit* following the capture of Valerianus, when Odainath caused extensive damage to the victorious Sassanid army, even making two forays into Persian territories, the second of which arrived as far as Ctesiphon. What remains difficult to ac-

by Šābuhr in 253 "bleibt dunkel;" *IBID.*, 100: "für militärische Aktionen des Odaenathus gegen die Perser in der Zeit vor 260 gibt es keine Hinweise."

⁴⁶ About this now quite neglected hypothesis cf. the bibliography in HARTMANN 2001, 104-105 n. 167. In *IBID.*, 444 n. 50 the position of Odainath in Palmyra and of Aelius Septimius Abgar in Edessa shall not be compared with each other, as the title *consularis* of Odainath must be distinguished from the *ornamenta consularia* of Abgar. I have already questioned and still question the idea that the *hypateia* of Abgar is to be understood as equal to the *ornamenta consularia*, thus I do not understand the citation of my work in HARTMANN, *ad loc.*

⁴⁷ HARTMANN 2001, 106-108.

⁴⁸ HARTMANN 2001, 106 and n. 174. Cf. POTTER 1990, 390: "The Tyrian inscription obviously proves nothing other than the fact that Odaenathus was an important man."

⁴⁹ RÉMY 1986. Cf. HARTMANN 2001, 107 nn. 178-180.

count for is the fact that Valerianus, after deciding to entrust a great general of local origin with the defence of the East, and waiving the prohibition by Marcus Aurelius against senators of provincial origin governing the province they came from,⁵⁰ decided to attribute to Odainath neither one of the great provincial consular provinces, nor a super-provincial power, as he would receive only later, but on the contrary he would appoint him to the command of the feeblest of all provinces in the Roman Near East.

Regardless of all these considerations, the problem of the ‘consulship’ of Odainath becomes even more difficult and complicated if we think of the powers his sons had, as revealed by their titles. Septimius Ḥairān shares with his father the same career, as well as his death:⁵¹ like him he is *rš dy tdmwr/ ἔξαρχος Παλμυρηνῶν*, while when Odainath became *λαμπρότατος ὑπατικός*, he took the title of *λαμπρότατος*, which is absolutely correct following the Roman institutions.⁵² It is harder to explain the following development of Septimius Ḥairān’s career. What is missing is something comparable to the subsequent ascent of Odainath to the role of *mtqnn’ dy mdnh klh/ corrector totius Orientis*,⁵³ but not to that of *mlk mlk’* as attested for Odainath in the same posthumous inscription, if the reading of the inscription on the Tetrapylon and the identification of Septimius Herodianus mentioned there with Septimius Ḥairān are correct.⁵⁴ What is apparently completely illogical is actually the acquisition of the title *ὑπατος/consul*, many times at-

⁵⁰ Dio LXXII, in Xiph. 265, 24 (III, 271 BOISSEVAIN); rightly HARTMANN 2001, 108 n. 181 underlines that such prohibition was not so absolute.

⁵¹ KAIZER 2005, with a full discussion of the several reconstructions reported in the sources maintains as the most probable tradition the one transmitted, besides many other sources, also in the *Historia Augusta*, i.e. that Odainath was killed by his wife Zenobia with the help of Ḥairān, the son of his first marriage, and corrected by the tradition converging in Synkellos that the murder should have taken place in Asia Minor, in Heraclea Pontica. I go on considering the tradition in *Anon. p. Dionem*, fr. 7 (MÜLLER, *FHG* IV 195) and Joh. Antioch. fr. 231 (412 ROBERTO) more preferable: Odainath was killed by the legatus Cocceius Rufinus on the orders of Gallienus. Cf. GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, 259; GNOLI 2000, 147, 152; SARTRE 2001, 978; POTTER 2004, 263 and 641 n. 1.

⁵² Cf. *supra* n. 39.

⁵³ Cf. *supra* n. 40.

⁵⁴ *Inv.* III 3 = SEYRIG 1937 = SCHLUMBERGER 1942a = INGHOLT 1976, 135 = GAWLIKOWSKI 1985, n° 10. HARTMANN 2001, 114 and n. 198. About this inscription cf. *infra*, § 2a. About the eldest son Odainath had had during his first marriage cf. HARTMANN 2001, 128.

tested as far as the other son of Odainath, the usurper Vaballath, is concerned. The latter was first granted the titles of *vir clarissimus*, *rex regum*, *restitutor totius Orientis*:⁵⁵ Then, since the end of 270 he had borne the title of *vir clarissimus rex consul imperator dux Romanorum* as attested in Latin on a series of Syriac milestones.⁵⁶ The highly accurate analysis by HARTMANN starting from the presumption that the Palmyrene ‘consulship’ of Odainath and his sons was a customary Roman consulship fails to explain this fact:

Der Dynast beanspruchte gleichzeitig mit der Annahme des Titels *imperator* zudem den Rang eines *vir consularis*. Ob er offiziell den Suffektkonsulat bekleidete, die *ornamenta consularia* vom Kaiser verliehen bekam oder den Titel gar usurpierte, kann auf Grund der Quellenlage nicht entschieden werden. Das Mindestalter eines Konsuls hatte er natürlich noch nicht erreicht. Auch stammte Vaballathus nicht aus der kaiserlichen Familie. Ein von Rom legitimierter Konsulat ist daher sehr zweifelhaft. Die Ehrung mit den *ornamenta* durch Claudius oder Aurelianus kann ebenfalls als unwahrscheinlich

⁵⁵ Differently, HARTMANN 2001, 244 refers *corrector totius Orientis* to this first phase as last element. Such idea is based on the equivalence between the terms *mtqnn*’ as referred to Odainath in PAT 0292 and *ʾpnrtʿ*’ as referred to Vaballath in PAT 0317, which is far from certain and contested by me: cf. GNOLI 2000, 153.

⁵⁶ HARTMANN 2001, 248 n. 16. The explanation of the titles of Vaballath recently offered by POTTER represents a step backwards in comparison with the previous works by the same author: POTTER 2004, 267: “The status *vir consularis* was, as we have seen, conferred upon Odaenathus; the title *rex*, or king, is simply a Latin translation of *mlk*, or king; *imperator* in this context simply means ‘victorious general;’ and *dux Romanorum* looks like yet another version of *corrector totius orientis*. These titles proclaim a very simple principle: that the position of Odaenathus was like that of a king in the Semitic world, inheritable. For a Roman the status conferred by the holding of an office might be passed on, but not the office itself. It might, perhaps, not be too much to imagine that the subtle distinction between the office and the status that accompanied it would be lost at the Palmyrene court, especially in a circumstance that worked against the interests of a regime that had been able to do what a series of Roman emperors had not: defeat the Persians. The title taken by Odaenathus plainly meant a great deal in the Palmyrene context, which is why Vaballathus stressed them.” Useless to say that I do not share this position of *naïvité* of the Palmyrene court towards the Roman institutions. POTTER neglects HARTMANN, who very seriously faces the problem of the different phases of Vaballath’s titles, and he also misunderstands the article by GALLAZZI 1975, which he reveals to be acquainted with through the mediation by LONG 1996. The latter faces the problem of the titles of Vaballath from an almost completely numismatic point of view. Her attempt to ‘save’ Vaballath from the allegation of usurpation can hardly be shared actually.

angesehen werden. Man muß also wohl von einer Beanspruchung des konsularischen Ranges durch den *imperator* ohne Bestätigung aus Rom ausgehen. Auch hinter dieser Erweiterung der Titulatur steht der Versuch, die Herrschaft über den Orient und die neuerworbenen Provinzen zu legitimieren.⁵⁷

The only way to overcome all these difficulties seems to be to maintain that Rome gave the ‘Chief’ of Palmyra, Odainath’s father, the *hypateia* over the town.⁵⁸ Finally, research into the origins of the concept of *hypateia* will allow us to come back to the institutional features of this power.

3. *The origins of the ὑπατεία*

Either at the end of 63 A. D. or during the summer of the following year 64 A. D.⁵⁹ in Rhandaia, next to the river Arsanias,⁶⁰ where during the year before the shame of the capitulation of Caesennius Paetus was perpetrated, negotiations were carried out in the Roman camp putting an end to the conflict in Armenia that had lasted for about a decade.⁶¹

The ascent to the Parthian throne by Vologeses I in 51 A. D. deeply modified the situation in Parthia and in its satellite reigns: Pacorus, the eldest brother of the king of Parthia was installed in Media Atropatene, while Vologeses tried to give his youngest brother, Tiridates, the kingdom of Ar-

⁵⁷ HARTMANN 2001, 246, where also the bibliographical references on the supposed suffect consulship of Vaballath are reported.

⁵⁸ GNOLI, 2000, 125-153.

⁵⁹ On the chronology of the negotiations (second half of 63 A. D.) cf. HENDERSON 1901, 273-274, and after him almost everybody who has dealt with this subject. However all problems raised by Tacitus’ narration and Dio’s excerpt remain critical: WELLESLEY 1969, 72 and recently again WHEELER 1997, who just deals with the first phase of the war (55-60 A. D.). HEIL 1997, 220 on the contrary supports a dating of the event that is later exactly by one year, during the same period in 64 A. D. on the basis of the fact that there was no time enough either for the *legio XV Apollinaris* mentioned in Tac. *Ann.* XV 26, 2, or for the *vexillationes ex Illyrico* (Tac., *ibid.*) to come in time from Carnuntum. Cassius Dio seems to confirm this opinion, as Dio LXII 19, 1 (III, 57 BOISSEVAIN) situates these events after the fire of Rome. HEIL’s arguments are not decisive either, as the author himself admits.

⁶⁰ Dio LXII 21, 1 (III, 60 BOISSEVAIN). On the location of Rhandaia cf. HEIL, 111.

⁶¹ Differently HEIL, 120-130, cf. *infra*.

menia.⁶² Here the young Radamistus, son of Pharasmanes, king of Iberia, seized power by killing Mithridates, a dreary sovereign supported by Rome, together with all his family in the fortress of Gornea (Garni). Rome was not extraneous to the massacre of Gornea: according to Tacitus Radamistus suborned the *praefectus* Caelius Pollius, who commanded the garrison in the fortress.⁶³ However we should not think that Pollius' behaviour was suggestive of Rome's hostility towards Mithridates and the diplomatic journey of the centurion Casperius - a subordinate of the prefect Pollius, but incorruptible unlike his superior - to the legate (envoy) of Syria Ummidius Quadratus and to Pharasmanes testifies the illegality of Pollius' action.⁶⁴

Both the excerpt by Dio and the testimony by Tacitus linger over and comment on the choice of the place of the meeting in Rhandeia in perfectly parallel passages. We are authorized to assert that this choice was due to the attentive direction that seems to permeate the agreement in its slightest details:

Accordingly, Corbulo and Tiridates held a conference at Rhandea, a place satisfactory to both - to the king because his troops had there cut off the Romans and had sent them away under a capitulation, a visible proof of the favour that had been done them, and to Corbulo because he expected his men to wipe out the ill repute that had attached to them there before (transl. CARY).⁶⁵

Tiridates demanded a place and a day for an interview. The time was to be early; for the place, the scene of the recent investment of Paetus and the legions was chosen by the barbarians in memory of their success there; and it was not avoided by Corbulo, who wished the contrast in fortune to enhance his fame (transl. JACKSON).⁶⁶

⁶² Cf. CHAUMONT 1976.

⁶³ Tac. *Ann.* XII 45, 4.

⁶⁴ Tac. *Ann.* XII 45, 4 (journey to Ummidius Quadratus); 46, 2 (journey to Pharasmanes).

⁶⁵ Dio LXII 23, 2 (III, 61 BOISSEVAIN): συνῆλθον οὖν ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ Ῥανδείᾳ ὃ τε Κορβούλων καὶ ὁ Τριδάτης· τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ χωρίον ἀμφοτέροις ἤρεσε, τῷ μὲν ὅτι ἀπολαβόντες ἐς αὐτὸ τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ὑποσπόνδους ἀφῆκαν, πρὸς ἐνδειξάν ὣν εὐηργέτηντο, τῷ δὲ ὅτι τὴν δύσκειαν τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ πρότερον συμβᾶσαν σφισιν ἀποτρέψεσθαι ἐμελλον.

⁶⁶ Tac. *Ann.* XV 28, 2: *Tiridates locum diemque conloquio poscit. Tempus propinquum, locus, in quo nuper obsessae cum Paeto legiones erant, [cum] barbaris delectus est ob memoriam laetioris ibi rei, Corbuloni non vitatus, ut dissimilitudo fortunae gloriam auget.*

According to the report by Tacitus, the meeting was held in various stages. First, *die pacta*, a delegation headed by Corbulo, Tiberius (Iulius) Alexander, future prefect of Egypt under Vespasianus, and Vinicianus Annius, son-in-law of Corbulo, went to the camp of Tiridates, accompanied by a guard of sixty cavalymen with a twofold aim, to pay their respects to the king and reassure him about Rome's intentions. Tiridates, who was mounted on his horse while waiting for the Roman delegation, hastened to dismount as soon as he saw the Roman general immediately followed by Corbulo himself.⁶⁷ Tacitus briefly reports on the talks that took place on that day. From his narration we infer that Corbulo played a passive role in the negotiations, as he limited himself to generic polite praises, while it was Tiridates who actually proposed a solution for the crisis: he would go to Rome to honour the emperor in a new way, and this notwithstanding the fact that the result of the war had not been negative for the Parthians, as the place of the meeting itself demonstrated. Corbulo agreed with the Arsacid proposal and decided to seal it all with a highly symbolic ceremony: Tiridates would lay his royal insignia down in front of the image of the emperor and he would get them back only from the hands of Nero in Rome.

A few days later the two armies were deployed in front of each other, *magna utrimque specie* and between the two formations a platform (*tribunal*) was built on which the *sella curulis* supporting the image of Nero was set. Tiridates approached it, made ritual sacrifices and then, after removing his diadem from his head, laid it down under the statue of the Roman emperor. After the public part of the ceremony had been ended by this simple but highly symbolic and spectacular ritual, whose characteristics have been properly emphasized by Tacitus,⁶⁸ Corbulo invited Tiridates to a banquet in

⁶⁷ HEIL 1997, 122-129 tends to underestimate these acts of courtesy between Corbulo and Tiridates, considering them as a part of the literary contexts deviously created both by Tacitus and Dio (and by Corbulo himself at last) to lead the readers to believe that on the occasion of the meeting in Rhandaia an actual agreement was reached for the solution of the conflict, an idea the German scholar fierily contests.

⁶⁸ This crowning procedure was later used again by Trajan, as the brief reports by Xiphilinus and Malalas tell us on the coronation of Parthamaspatēs by Trajan immediately after the outbreak of the revolt in Mesopotamia: Dio LXVIII 30, 3 (III 218 BOISSEvain): Τραϊανὸς δὲ φοβηθεὶς μὴ καὶ οἱ Πάρθοι τι νεοχμῶσωσι, βασιλέα αὐτοῖς ἴδιον δοῦναι ἠθέλησε, καὶ ἐς Κτησιφῶντα ἐλθὼν συνεκάλεσεν ἐς πεδίον τι μέγα πάντας μὲν τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πάντας δὲ τοὺς Πάρθους τοὺς ἐκεῖ τότε ὄντας, καὶ

his honour that lasted all the rest of the day and during which the ‘barbarian’ king looked a bit naïf,⁶⁹ as he was surprised by everything that was around him and asked his benevolent host about everything. Tacitus most probably obtained the chance to recreate the atmosphere of a true encounter of cultures between an uncouth barbarian king and the superior Latin culture from the report of the event contained in Corbulo’s *Commentarii* and expressed it by means of few and meaningful words:

To his glories Corbulo added courtesy and a banquet; and upon the inquiries of the king, whenever he observed some novelty - the announcement, for instance, by a centurion of the beginning of the watches; the dismissal of the company by bugle-note; the application of a torch to fire the altar raised in

ἐπὶ βῆμα ὑψηλὸν ἀναβάς, καὶ μεγαληγορήσας ὑπὲρ ὧν καὶ κατειργάσατο, Παρθασπάτην τοῖς Πάρθοις βασιλέα ἀπέδειξε, τὸ διάδημα αὐτῷ ἐπιθείς (“Trajan, fearing that the Parthians, too, might begin a revolt, desired to give them a king of their own. Accordingly, when he came to Ctesiphon, he called together in a great plain all the Romans and likewise all the Parthians that were there at the time; then he mounted a lofty platform, and after describing in grandiloquent language what he had accomplished, he appointed Parthamaspatēs king over the Parthians and set the diadem upon his head [transl. CARY].”) The unreliable report about this event in Malalas considers the coronation of Parthamaspatēs as the result of a fantastic court-plot: Malal. XI 6 (273-274 Bonn = 207 THURN) μαθὼν ὅτι διαφθονεῖται τῷ Σανατρουκίῳ, βασιλεῦ Περσῶν, ὁ ἴδιος αὐτοῦ ἐξάδελφος Παρθεμασπάτης, πέμψας πρὸς αὐτὸν ὑπενόθευσεν αὐτὸν Τραϊανὸς βασιλεὺς, ταξάμενος δοῦναι αὐτῷ τὴν βασιλείαν Περσῶν, ἐὰν συμμαχήσῃ αὐτῷ. καὶ ὑπονοθευθεὶς ἦλθε πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτός· καὶ λαβὼν αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ ἴδιον αὐτοῦ μέρος μετὰ τοῦ πλήθους αὐτοῦ ὁ αὐτὸς θειότατος Τραϊανός, ὥρμησε κατὰ τοῦ Σανατρουκίου, βασιλέως Περσῶν· καὶ πολλῶν Περσῶν πεσόντων συνελάβετο τὸν Σανατρούκιον, βασιλέα Περσῶν, φεύγοντα· καὶ ἐφόνευσεν αὐτόν. καὶ ἐποίησεν ἀντ’ αὐτοῦ βασιλέα Περσῶν τοῖς ὑπολειφθεῖσι καὶ προσπεσοῦσιν αὐτῷ Πέρσαις (“Hearing that there was a quarrel between Sanatroukios, emperor of the Persians, and his cousin Parthemaspatēs, the emperor Trajan sent a message to Parthemaspatēs and offered him a bribe, promising to give him the empire of the Persians if he would become his ally. Parthemaspatēs accepted the bribe and came over to Trajan at night. Taking him and his troops on to his own side, the most sacred Trajan set out against Sanatroukios, emperor of the Persians. Many Persians fell and he captured Sanatroukios, emperor of the Persians, as he fled, and put him to death. Trajan made the man named Parthemaspatēs, the son of Osdroes, emperor of the Persians in his place, in accordance with the agreements, and those Persians who survived prostrated themselves before him [transl. JEFFREYS].”) Cf. the hint at the βῆμα ὑψηλὸν in the above mentioned passage and in Dio LXII 23, 3 (III, 61 BOISSEVAIN), cited in the following page and n. 71.

69

Cf. CHAUMONT 1976, 118.

front of the general's pavilion - he so far exaggerated each point as to inspire him with admiration for our ancient customs (transl. JACKSON).⁷⁰

The following day Tiridates asked (*oravit*) Corbulo to be allowed to go and take his leave of his brothers and mother, leaving behind one of his daughters as a hostage and *litteras supplices* for Nero.

The report contained in the excerpt by Cassius Dio is far more concise, as one would only expect, and coincides with the one by Tacitus in its fundamental elements, although it also reveals interesting differences. The fact that Dio seems to ignore the double meeting between Corbulo and Tiridates, merely recording just one, does not seem particularly meaningful to me, as the fact might be attributed also to the Byzantine excerptor.

Indeed, the proceedings of the conference were not limited to mere conversations, but a lofty platform had been erected on which were set images of Nero, and in the presence of crowds of Armenians, Parthians, and Romans Tiridates approached and paid them reverence; then, after sacrificing to them and calling them by laudatory names, he took off the diadem from his head and set it upon them (transl. CARY).⁷¹

The expression οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπλῶς λόγους τινὰς ἐποίησαντο certainly sums up the exchange of initial civilities, reported instead by Tacitus, albeit very briefly. The most revealing difference is represented by the presence of πολλῶν μὲν Ἀρμενίων πολλῶν δὲ Πάρθων καὶ Ῥωμαίων at the ceremony of submission of Tiridates. It is understandable and almost obvious, I would say, that many Parthians were part of Tiridates' army and furthermore that they represented the sinews of the army being built up by Vologeses in order to reinstate his brother on the throne of Armenia. Nevertheless this Parthian presence at the ceremony probably underlies the immediately following piece of news in the excerpt by Dio:

⁷⁰ Tac. Ann. XV 30, 1: *Addidit gloriae Corbulo comitatem epulasque; et rogitante rege causas, quotiens novum aliquid adverterat, ut initia vigiliarum per centurionem nuntiarum, convivium bucina dimitti et structam ante augurale aram subdita face accendi, cuncta in maius attollens admiratione prisci moris adfecit.*

⁷¹ Dio LXII 23, 3 (III, 61 BOISSEVAIN): οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀπλῶς λόγους τινὰς ἐποίησαντο, ἀλλὰ καὶ βῆμα ὑψηλὸν ἠγέρθη καὶ ἐπ' αὐτοῦ εἰκόνες τοῦ Νέρωνος ἐστάθησαν, ὅ τε Τιριδάτης πολλῶν μὲν Ἀρμενίων πολλῶν δὲ Πάρθων καὶ Ῥωμαίων παρόντων προσῆλθέ τε αὐταῖς καὶ προσεκύνησεν, θύσας τε καὶ ἐπευφημήσας τὸ διάδημα ἀπὸ τε τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀφεῖλε καὶ παρέθηκεν αὐταῖς.

Monobazus and Vologaesus also came to Corbulo and gave him hostages. In honour of this event Nero was saluted as *imperator* a number of times and held a triumph, contrary to the precedent (transl. CARY).⁷²

Matthäus HEIL⁷³ had no difficulty in demonstrating the groundlessness of Dio's statements about the imperial *salutationes* and the triumph Nero obtained in Rome in that circumstance, notwithstanding all attempts to find archaeological corroboration for this piece of news.⁷⁴ But also the news about the presence of the kings of Adiabene and Parthia, Monobazus and Vologeses, at the ceremony is to be definitely rejected. The narration by Tacitus is by far the more preferable in this connection. After the agreement Tiridates made a diplomatic journey to the other Arsacid courts before he went to Rome to meet Nero. Tacitus would certainly not let slip the presence of the three named kings, otherwise Corbulo would have mentioned it in his *Commentarii*.⁷⁵

Between the two versions, the one by Tacitus, who describes Tiridates while consulting his brothers during a diplomatic journey after meeting Corbulo, and the one by Cassius Dio, who recounts that the meeting among the Arsacid brothers had taken place in the presence of Corbulo, the former is certainly to be considered preferable. Both sources, in any case, agree in emphasizing the fact that all the Arsacid family was somehow involved in the negotiations between Tiridates and Corbulo. And this precise circumstance is sufficient in itself to deprive HEIL's fundamental theory of most of its value, although his work is actually remarkable from many other respects. In his view the only result the meeting of Rhandaia produced was a truce in the war, thus between Corbulo and Tiridates no "Vertrag von Rhandaia" was concluded and no "eigentliche Kriegsende" came about as a consequence of a "völkerrechtlicher Vertrag."⁷⁶ The sources we dispose of and that are analysed above do not mention any such treaty. Tacitus and Cassius Dio, who both follow a historiographical tradition directly or indirectly linked to the

⁷² Dio LXII 23, 4 (III, 61 BOISSEVAIN): και ὁ Μονόβαζος και ὁ Οὐολόγαισος πρὸς τὸν Κορβούλωνα ἤλθον και ὁμήρους αὐτῶ ἔδωκαν. και ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ Νέρων αὐτοκράτωρ τε πολλάκις ἐπεκλήθη, και τὰ ἐπινίκια ἔπεμψε παρὰ τὸ νενομισμένον.

⁷³ HEIL 1997, 126-128.

⁷⁴ SPERTI 1990, about it cf. HEIL 1997, 127 n. 46.

⁷⁵ About the report in Tacitus' *Annales* and Corbulo's *Commentarii* see the full discussion in QUESTA 1967.

⁷⁶ HEIL 1997, 120-128.

report by Corbulo himself, tried to give the impression that the meeting of Rhandaia put an end to war, generating a lasting peace that was favourable to Rome and whose author was Corbulo. The actual reality was indeed completely different. In Rhandaia a simple agreement was reached, based on the the word of the two parties.

Die Übereinkunft war demnach nur eine Art gentlemen's agreement, das auf dem wechselseitigen Vertrauen in das gegebene Wort beruhte. Es legte fest, mit welchen Schritten beide Seiten zu einer Beendigung des Krieges gelangen wollten - weiter nichts. Ob die Absprache tatsächlich zum Frieden führte hing also vom politischen Willen der Konfliktparteien ab. Hätte eine von ihnen ihre Entschlüsse geändert, hätte der Krieg ohne weiteres fortgesetzt werden können. Vom ›eigentlichen‹ Kriegsende oder gar von einem Friedensvertrag zu reden, wäre viel zu hoch gegriffen.⁷⁷

HEIL's analysis is a bit too subtle and is far too closely bound to a modern, even 'contractualistic' interpretation of interpersonal relationships, as it were. Moreover, that the end of hostilities depended on the good will of both parties represents an undeniable reality, that not even the signing of any document can change. No doubt the whole ceremony was thus structured so as to lead to a final formalization of the treaty by Nero himself, but this request came from Tiridates and not from the Romans.⁷⁸ The unjustified imposition of Tigranes by Rome and the aggression by Caesennius Paetus were episodes such as to lead the Arsacids to suspect that the agreements made by them *in loco* with local governors had a limited value. This gave rise to a demand for stronger guarantees, the highest ones Rome was able to offer. The aim of Tiridates and of the Arsacid party was to reduce to the utmost the time needed for the agreement in order to obtain the best possible guarantees concerning the actual value of the agreement itself also for Rome and as soon as possible. In these circumstances that gave rise to the extraordinary ceremony 'in the presence' of the image of Caesar.⁷⁹ The presence of the statue of the emperor represented the highest guarantee Tiridates could receive immediately, without waiting for the solemn ratification by Nero in

⁷⁷ HEIL 1997, 123.

⁷⁸ Cf. *supra*.

⁷⁹ Starting from different assumptions LEMOSSE 1961: 461 wrote about a ceremony that was "bien plus conforme au droit national de la dynastie iranienne."

Rome.⁸⁰ The non-respect of the agreement by Corbulo or any other general after him, would make him guilty of treason in front of Nero, from the time that Tiridates' diadem was laid in front of the *imago Caesaris*.

This is not in any case the decisive point for an understanding of the diplomatic value of the treaty of Rhandaia. As mentioned elsewhere, Tacitus relates that Tiridates asked Corbulo for permission to make a diplomatic journey to all Arsacid capital cities, and that he left the Roman general his daughter as hostage together with a pleading letter to Nero. The assignment of hostages is also confirmed by a piece of news by Cassius Dio, even though it may seem exaggerated and tendentious, as we have already seen. Indeed one may legitimately doubt the contents of the letter, which must have been unknown to Corbulo. In any case in a similar predicament Tacitus reports in detail about the substance of what came out of this journey by Tiridates:

On his departure, he found Pacorus in Media and Vologeses at Ecbatana - the latter not inattentive to his brother; for he had even requested Corbulo by special couriers that Tiridates should be exposed to none of the outward signs of vassalage, should not give up his sword, should not be debarred from embracing the provincial governors or be left to stand and wait at their doors, and in Rome should receive equal distinction with the consuls. Evidently, accustomed as he was to foreign pride, he lacked all knowledge of ourselves who prize the essentials of sovereignty and ignore its vanities (transl. JACKSON).⁸¹

As far as I know, this passage has been neglected by modern scholars,⁸²

⁸⁰ Once more claimed by Tiridates, and not by Corbulo, notwithstanding the doubts raised by the impersonal construction in Tac. Ann. XV 29, 2: *tum placuit Tiridaten ponere apud effigiem Caesaris insigne regium nec nisi manu Neronis resumere*. But cf. what is written just before, which explains in my opinion very clearly the sense of *placuit*: *Ille [Tiridates] de nobilitate generis multum praefatus, cetera temperanter adiungit: iturum quippe Romam laturumque novum Caesari decus, non adversis Parthorum rebus supplicem Arsacidem* (Tac. Ann. XV 29, 1).

⁸¹ Tac. Ann. XV 31: *Et digressus Pacorum apud Medos, Vologaesen Ecbatanis reperit, non incuriosum fratris: quippe et propriis nuntiis a Corbulone petierat, ne quam imaginem servitii Tiridates perferret neu ferrum traderet aut complexu provincias obtinentium arceretur foribusve eorum adsisteret, tantusque ei Romae quantus consulibus honor esset. scilicet externae superbiae sueto non inerat notitia nostri, apud quos vis imperii valet, inania tramittuntur*.

⁸² E. g. HEIL 1997, 130 restricts himself to citing this passage, simply defining it as a 'Vorbereitung' to the journey to Rome. SCHUR 1923, 30 curiously maintains that the ne-

who in this case have followed Tacitus' judgement on the matter, something that rarely happened for other passages of this historian. This was all a mistake, because it is a very interesting passage from many points of view. First of all it represents a good example of Tacitus' eloquence. Vologeses concern about the *imago servitii* his brother could offer the world when he was brought to Rome is completely inappropriate in a context in which the agreements described above were reached leading to the grand ceremony of the deposition of the crown of Armenia at the feet of Nero's statue before both deployed armies in a place rightly making Tiridates' army *eques compositus per turmas et insignibus patriis* proud.⁸³ Tacitus' narration actually aims at the antithetical representation of the images of the two Roman generals operating in Armenia: the idle and haughty Cesennius Paetus⁸⁴ and the non-loquacious but consistent Domitius Corbulo,⁸⁵ who was more interested in the solution of the Armenian crisis than in an arrogant behaviour that might hurt Arsacid feelings.⁸⁶ Thus why should Vologeses have feared such a 'politically incorrect' behaviour by Corbulo? Vologeses' 'fear' is actually an invention by Tacitus in order to justify his fine end sentence: *scilicet externae superbiae sueto non inerat notitia nostri, apud quos vis imperii valet, inania tramittuntur*.

This sentence has much influenced later historians, confirming the idea that Corbulo's Armenian campaign was concluded with an agreement actually giving Rome the *vis imperii* in Armenia, leaving the Parthians only minor things, *inania*, of use in satisfying people used to *externae superbiae*.⁸⁷ No doubt some Roman troops were quartered in Armenia as a result of

gotiations lead by Vologeses were aiming at guaranteeing all privileges for his brother "für die Dauer seines Aufenthalts im römischen Reiche."

⁸³ Tac. *Ann.* XV 29, 2.

⁸⁴ About L. Iunius Caesennius Paetus (*PIR*² C 174) : GROAG 1897, 1903; PFLAUM 1954; GARZETTI 1966; MEULDER 1993; VERVAET 2002a; CORDIANO 2003; CARTER 2004.

⁸⁵ About Cn. Domitius Corbulo (*PIR*² D 142): WOLFFGRAMM 1885; DE LA VILLE DE MIRMONT 1915; STEIN 1918; MOMIGLIANO 1931; HAMMOND 1934; SYME 1970; GILMARTIN 1973; DELPUECH 1974; MEHL 1979; TRAINA 1996; ALLISON 1997; VERVAET 1999b, 1999a, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2003.

⁸⁶ The Armenian matter as seen from inside the work by Tacitus: SYME 1958: 492-497. Cf. in particular 494: "Tacitus (so it appears) accords undue space and importance to the eastern realms."

⁸⁷ Thus above all SCHUR, 1923, 35-36; 1949, 2014.

the treaty⁸⁸ and the investiture of the kings in that country was a Roman matter from then on, but it is also true that the agreement provided for the choosing of future kings among Arsacid descendants.⁸⁹ The judgement by Marie-Louise CHAUMONT about the agreement of Rhandaia closing the Armenian expedition by Corbulo is not wrong: “statut équivoque et bâtard.” In her opinion:

cette suzeraineté restait nominale et sans efficacité contre la mainmise parthe, entérinée par l'accord de Rhandaia. Désormais Rome ne pourrait plus, comme par le passé, disposer à sa guise du trône arménien en faveur de tel ou tel de ses candidats; il lui faudrait nécessairement passer par une solution arsacide et parthe. Dans ces conditions, le droit d'investiture réservé à l'empereur risquait de se réduire le plus souvent à une simple formalité.⁹⁰

Actually the uncertainties relating to the terms of the treaty represented the premises leading up to the Parthian wars of Trajan. If we still desire to fix which party the *vis imperii* was owed to in Armenia in 63 A. D., whether to the Romans as victors, or to the defeated Parthians, then the central part of the passage by Tacitus now needs to be analysed: the sending by Vologeses of *proprii nuntii* to Corbulo to agree about the powers due to Tiridates as client king of Rome. Vologeses requests were very clear: first of all Tiridates had to be granted with the *ius gladii ferendi* due to the provincial governors.

This right is thus defined in a well-known passage by Cassius Dio:

So, then, he [*scil.* Augustus] caused the appointed governors to be known as propraetors and to hold office for as much longer than a year as should please him; he made them wear the military uniform, and a sword, with which they are permitted to execute even soldiers. For no one else, whether proconsul, propraetor, or procurator, has been given the privilege of wearing

⁸⁸ The *legio III Gallica* was settled with a garrison in Kasrik: *CIL* III 6741 = *ILS* 232; 6742, 6742a, and also further garrisons had to be quartered there and scattered in the strategic sites of the country, but for us they are attested only in later periods.

⁸⁹ Without any solid bases are the criticisms to this conclusion by HEIL 1997. Cf. *infra*.

⁹⁰ CHAUMONT 1976: 123. Equally critical judgements about the situation coming out in the East after the treaty of Rhandaia are to be read in e.g. ZIEGLER 1964, 75; STEP'ANYAN 1975; WOLSKI 1987; SCHOTTKY 1989: 165: “Mit der offiziellen Krönung jenes Mannes in Rom begann 66 n. Chr. das mehrhundertjährige Regiment parthischer Nebenlinien in dem Gebirgsland, das erst 428 n. Chr. durch das definitive Eingreifen der Sasaniden ein Ende fand;” WOLSKI 1993, 170; HEIL 1997, 141: “der Status Armeniens wurde damit prekär und schillernd, aber der parthische Einfluß überwog eindeutig.”

a sword without also having been accorded the right to put a soldier to death; indeed this right has been granted, not only to the senators, but also to the knights who are entitled to wear a sword (transl. CARY).⁹¹

To address such complex problems as the relationship between *ius gladii* and *imperium merum*, whether the *ius gladii* was limited or unlimited and furthermore whether, in a time preceding the Severian era it was either limited to the punishment of soldiers or extended also to civilians, *humiliores* or even in some cases to *honestiores* is beyond the scope of this analysis.⁹² What is striking in Tacitus' passage is that the *ius gladii ferendi* is meant as one of the key elements attributed to the figure of the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* of consular rank, among which Corbulo himself was included.⁹³ *Annales* XV, 31 may certainly be involved in the discussion about the *ius gladii* and more generically about the criminal jurisdiction of governors.

The interference by Vologeses in the agreements between Tiridates and Corbulo aimed at obtaining particularly advantageous conditions for his young brother and such conditions were not to compromise the dignity of the Arsacid family. Such conditions had to be evidently different from those other oriental kings had been granted by Rome on many occasions, other-

⁹¹ Dio LIII 6-7: τῆ τε οὖν ἐπικλήσει τῆ τῶν ἀντιστρατήγων τοὺς αἰρετοὺς χρῆσθαι, καὶ ἐπὶ πλείω καὶ ἐνιαυτοῦ χρόνον, ἐφ' ὅσον ἂν ἑαυτῷ δόξῃ, ἄρχειν ἐποίησε, τὴν τε στρατιωτικὴν σκευὴν φοροῦντας καὶ ξίφος, οἷς γε καὶ στρατιώτας δικαιοῦσαι ἔξεστιν, ἔχοντας. ἄλλω γὰρ οὐδενὶ οὔτε ἀνθυπάτῳ οὔτε ἀντιστρατήγῳ οὔτε ἐπιτρόπῳ ξιφηφορεῖν δέδοται, ᾧ μὴ καὶ στρατιώτην τινὰ ἀποκτεῖναι ἐξεῖναι νενόμισται· οὐ γὰρ ὅτι τοῖς βουλευταῖς ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἱππεῦσιν, οἷς τοῦθ' ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἐκεῖνο συγκεχώρηται.

⁹² About the *ius gladii* MOMMSEN 1887, 268-271; MOMMSEN 1875, 967-968; MOMMSEN 1899, 242-245; JONES 1951; GARNSEY 1968; LIEBS 1981; SPAGNUOLO VIGORITA 1990; MANFREDINI 1991; DI MARCO 1999.

⁹³ The nature of the power exerted by Corbulo in Armenia is at the centre of a never-ending debate. I just cite the latest positions: HEIL 1997, 201-207, seems to be very doubtful about the matter and he concludes: "So enden alle Überlegungen ohne eindeutiges Ergebnis. Daß Corbulo auch eine Provinzstatthalterschaft erhalten hatte und daß es die von Kappadokien und Galatien war, läßt sich nicht zwingend ausschließen. Allerdings fehlen Beweise oder klare Indizien, die die These stützen könnten. Zur Erklärung des Befunds in den Quellen ist die Annahme einer Provinzstatthalterschaft nicht nötig, sogar überflüssig. So halte ich es beim gegenwärtigen Kenntnisstand für das Wahrscheinlichere, daß Corbulo ein reines Militärkommando ohne Provinzstatthalterschaft innehatte." Following VERVAET 2000 the power of Corbulo was not an *imperium maius*, but rather a *praetorius* one, even though it was extended over various provinces (the latter assertion widely limiting the novelties coming out of his deep analysis of the matter).

wise we would not be able to understand the insistence of Vologeses (Tacitus) on this point.

As far as Tiridates is concerned the question was not about granting him *ornamenta consularia*, as such *ornamenta* were customary in the international relationships between Rome and the oriental kings, at least from Claudius on, as a famous passage by Dio reporting the dispositions issued by Claudius after his ascent to the throne in January 41 A. D. testifies:

Next he (Claudius) restored Commagene to Antiochus, since Gaius, though he had himself given him the district, had taken it away again; and Mithridates the Iberian, whom Gaius had summoned and imprisoned, was sent home again to resume the throne. To another Mithridates, a lineal descendant of Mithridates the Great, he granted Bosphorus, giving to Polemon some land in Cilicia in place of it. He enlarged the domain of Agrippa of Palestine, who, happening to be in Rome, had helped him to become emperor, and bestowed on him the rank of consul; and to his brother Herod he gave the rank of praetor and a principality. And he permitted them to enter the senate and to express their thanks to him in Greek (transl. CARY).⁹⁴

Claudius' action was aimed at rewarding Agrippa I, who had stood out in the role of mediator and was effective in the almost bloodless solution of the crisis that exploded after the plot headed by Chaerea leading to the murder of Caligula.⁹⁵ As MOMMSEN had already noted, in this passage Dio mentions to the granting of *ornamenta consularia* (τιμαὶ ὑπατικαί) and *praetoria* (στρατηγικὸν ἀξίωμα) to client kings by Claudius.⁹⁶ Such honours did not imply the full attribution of consular powers however. The *ornamenta* actually conferred no right either to exert the relative power or to sit in the Senate. As Fergus MILLAR wrote: "such *ornamenta* illustrate once again the di-

⁹⁴ Dio LX 8, 1-3 (II, 670 BOISSEVAIN): Καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο τῷ τε Ἀντιόχῳ τὴν Κομμαγηνήν ἀπέδωκεν (ὁ γὰρ Γάιος, καίπερ αὐτός οἱ δοὺς αὐτήν, ἀφῆρητο), καὶ τὸν Μιθριδάτην τὸν Ἰβηρα, ὃν ὁ Γάιος μεταπεμψάμενος ἐδεδέκει, οἴκαδε πρὸς ἀνάληψιν τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπέπεμψεν. ἄλλω τέ τινι Μιθριδάτῃ, τὸ γένος ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ πάνυ ἔχοντι, τὸν Βόσπορον ἐχαρίσατο, καὶ τῷ Πολέμωνι χώραν τινα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ Κιλικίας ἀντέδωκε. τῷ γὰρ Ἀγρίππᾳ τῷ Παλαιστίνῳ συμπράξαντί οἱ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν (ἔτυχε γὰρ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ ὧν) τὴν τε ἀρχὴν προσεπηύξησε καὶ τιμὰς ὑπατικὰς ἔνευμε. τῷ τε ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ Ἡρώδῃ τὸ τε στρατηγικὸν ἀξίωμα καὶ δυναστείαν τινα ἔδωκε, καὶ ἐς τε τὸ συνέδριον ἐσελθεῖν σφισι καὶ χάριν οἱ ἑλληνιστὶ γνῶναι ἐπέτρεψεν.

⁹⁵ Jos., *Ant.* XIX 236-244; *B. J.* II, 204-222.

⁹⁶ MOMMSEN 1894a, 109; PANI 1972, 229; BRAUND 1984, 28-29.

voiced of honour or status and function. The divorce appears even wider in those cases where the same *ornamenta* were granted to client kings, or to writers or orators.”⁹⁷ The effective powers of consuls and praetors should be granted - at least partially - but in this case they were singularly specified (καὶ ἔς τε τὸ συνέδριον ἐσελθεῖν σφισι καὶ χάριν οἱ ἑλληνιστὶ γινῶναι ἐπέτρεψεν) and automatically pertained to the *ornamenta*.⁹⁸

Notwithstanding their apparent similarity, the situation in Judaea in 41 A. D. with the granting to Agrippa and his brother Herod of reigns and senatorial ranks differed from the one that was to occur in Armenia twenty-five years later. Agrippa’s vicissitudes are actually narrated in greater detail by Josephus in a context that has been rightly accused of adopting a partisan position against Agrippa I (and thus being indirectly encomiastic towards the true ‘hero’ of Josephus, Agrippa II).⁹⁹ However Josephus considers the detail of the *ornamenta* granted by Claudius to the two brother dynasts as marginal:

Claudius speedily purged the army of all unreliable units. He then promulgated an edict whereby he both confirmed the rule of Agrippa, which Gaius had presented to him, and delivered a panegyric on the king. He also added to Agrippa’s dominions all the other lands that had been ruled by King Herod, his grandfather, namely, Judaea and Samaria. He restored these lands to him as a debt due to his belonging to the family of Herod. But he also added Abila, which had been ruled by Lysanias, and all the land in the moun-

⁹⁷ MILLAR 1977, 308.

⁹⁸ MOMMSEN 1887, 464; cf. also 457: “Für das Bewerbungsrecht sind die *ornamenta* ohne Bedeutung” ... “Dass die *ornamenta* das Recht im Senate zu sitzen nicht einschliessen, ist notorisch; es bedarf kaum der Hinweisung darauf, dass dieselben in den bei weitem meisten Fällen an solche Personen verliehen werden, die Senatoren weder sind noch werden können oder wollen, und dass, wo das Gegentheil eintritt, das Recht im Senat zu sitzen immer auf einem von den *ornamenta* unabhängigen Titel beruht.” In his complete survey RÉMY 1976 simply limits himself to citing the granting of the *ornamenta* to client kings.

⁹⁹ VITUCCI, commentary to Josephus, *La Guerra giudaica*, Fondazione Valla, Milano 1974: 630 n. 4: “l’importanza avuta dalla sua (*scil.* of Agrippa) azione mediatrice appare manifestamente esagerata.” *Contra* GAHEIS 1899, 2786; SCHÜRER, VERMÈS, MILLAR 1973: 445: “He (Agrippa) was also in Rome when his patron was murdered by Chaerea on 24th January A. D. 41, and contributed not a little to secure the succession of the weak Claudius to the imperial throne.”

tainous region of Lebanon as a gift out of his own territory, and he celebrated a treaty with Agrippa in the middle of the Forum in the city of Rome (transl. L. H. FELDMAN).¹⁰⁰

Upon Agrippa he forthwith conferred the whole of his grandfather's kingdom, annexing to it from over the border not only the districts of Trachonitis and Auranitis of which Augustus had made a present to Herod, but a further principality known as the kingdom of Lysanias. This donation he announced to the people by an edict, and ordered the magistrates to have it engraved on brazen tablets to be deposited in the Capitol. He, moreover, presented Herod, who was at once the brother and, by his marriage with Berenice, the son-in-law of Agrippa, with the kingdom of Chalcis (transl. THACKERAY).¹⁰¹

Let us not be deceived by the emphasis Josephus laid on the solemnities accompanying granting Claudius' grants: the bronze tables deposited at the Capitolium did not spare the sovereign provided with *ornamenta consularia* the humiliations undergone by C. Vibius Marsus, *legatus Augusti propraetore* in the province of Syria.¹⁰² During the three years left to him before he died in 44 A. D.¹⁰³ he first had to abandon his project to extend and strengthen the walls of Jerusalem after a malicious report by Vibius Marsus to Claudius,¹⁰⁴ and then he was to suffer a true affront again by Vibius Marsus himself in Tiberiade: Agrippa had sent there his brother Herod of Chalcis, and the kings Antiochus IV of Commagene, Sampsigeramos of

¹⁰⁰ Jos., *Ant.* XIX 274-275: Κλαύδιος δὲ τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ πᾶν ὅ τι ἦν ὑποπτον ἐκ τοῦ ὀξέος ἀποσκευασάμενος διάγραμμα προὔτιθει τήν τε ἀρχήν Ἀγρίππα βεβαιῶν, ἦν ὁ Γάιος παρέσχε, καὶ δι' ἐγκωμιῶν ἄγων τὸν βασιλέα. Προσθήκηνη τε αὐτῷ ποιεῖται πᾶσαν τήν ὑπὸ Ἡρώδου βασιλευθεῖσαν, ὃς ἦν πάππος αὐτοῦ, Ἰουδαίαν καὶ Σαμάρειαν. καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ὡς ὀφειλόμενα τῇ οἰκειότητι τοῦ γένους ἀπεδίδου· Ἀβιλαν δὲ τήν Λυσανίου καὶ ὀπόσα ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ ὄρει ἐκ τῶν αὐτοῦ προσετίθει, ὄρκια τε αὐτῷ τέμνεται πρὸς τὸν Ἀγρίππαν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς μέσης ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων πόλει.

¹⁰¹ Jos., *B. J.* II 215-217: Καὶ τὸν Ἀγρίππαν εὐθέως ἐδωρεῖτο τῇ πατρῷα βασιλείᾳ πάση, προστιθεὶς ἕξωθεν καὶ τὰς ὑπ' Αὐγούστου δοθεῖσας Ἡρώδη Τραχωνίτιν καὶ Αὐρανίτιν, χωρὶς δὲ τούτων ἑτέραν βασιλείαν τὴν Λυσανίου καλουμένην. καὶ τῷ μὲν δήμῳ διατάγματι τὴν δωρεὰν ἐδήλου, τοῖς ἄρχουσιν δὲ προσέταξεν ἐγχαράξαντας δέλτοις χαλκαῖς τὴν δόσιν εἰς τὸ Καπετώλιον ἀναθεῖναι. Δωρεῖται δ' αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἡρώδη, ὁ δ' αὐτὸς καὶ γαμβρὸς ἦν Βερνίκη συνιοκῶν, βασιλείᾳ τῇ Χαλκίδι.

¹⁰² DABROWA 1998, 44-46.

¹⁰³ *Act. Ap.* 12, 19-23; Jos., *Ant.* XIX 343-352.

¹⁰⁴ Jos., *Ant.* XIX 326-327; *B. J.* II 218-222, V 147-155.

Emesa, Cotys of Armenia Minor and Polemon of Pontus. When Agrippa received the news of the unexpected visit by Vibius Marsus, he went with all other kings towards him to honour him. The governor was in no way convinced by this; indeed he was highly suspicious of this meeting of kings assembled there to honour him, so he broke up that meeting and invited all the kings to go back to their kingdoms. In Josephus' opinion this episode represented "the beginning of a quarrel with Marsus."¹⁰⁵ But Marsus survived Agrippa, quietly preserving his functions.¹⁰⁶ Nor did the situation improve under his son Agrippa II, as the impotence of the latter testifies *ad abundantiam* when he had to face Ventidius Cumanus,¹⁰⁷ a simple *procurator Iudaeae*, and not a consular *legatus*, who forced Agrippa II to undertake a journey to Rome to obtain the recognition of the rights of the Jews who were oppressed by Roman soldiers and Samaritans in various ways.¹⁰⁸ In this entire matter the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* of Syria, Ummidius Quadratus,¹⁰⁹ seems to act as an arbitrator in a dispute between people having powers and ranks infinitely inferior to his.

In marked contrast with their weak powers, Agrippa I and II assumed particularly magniloquent royal titles, as is testified in their most complete form in a now lost inscription that had been read by William Henry WADDINGTON at the shrine of Sī'a, in Ḥawrān:

Ἐπὶ βασιλείῳ μεγάλῳ Ἀγρίππα φιλοκαίσαρος εὐσεβοῦς καὶ φιλορωμα[ί]ου, τοῦ ἐκ βασιλείῳ μεγάλῳ Ἀγρίππα φιλοκαίσαρος εὐσεβοῦς καὶ [φι]λορωμαίου, Ἀφαρεὺς ἀπελεύθερος καὶ Ἀγρίππας υἱὸς ἀνέθηκαν.¹¹⁰

It is most probable, given the context, that the explication of the title βασιλεὺς μέγας as given in this case by VON GUTSCHMID,¹¹¹ i.e. that it was due to the fact that its bearer held more than one kingdom, is the right one.

¹⁰⁵ Jos., *Ant.* XIX 338-342. Cf. PANI 1972, 168-169.

¹⁰⁶ Jos., *Ant.* XX 1: Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα ... πέμπει Μάρσῳ διάδοχον Κλαύδιος Καῖσαρ Κάσσιος Λογγῖνος "On the death of King Agrippa ... Claudius Caesar sent Cassius Longinus as successor to Marsus" (transl. L. H. FELDMAN).

¹⁰⁷ SCHÜRER, VERMÈS, MILLAR 1973, 458-459.

¹⁰⁸ Jos., *Ant.* XX 105-136; *B. J.* II 223-246; Tac., *Ann.* XII 54.

¹⁰⁹ DÄBROWA 1998, 49-53.

¹¹⁰ *OGIS* 419 = WADD. 2365; cf. SCHÜRER, VERMÈS, MILLAR 1973, 452 n. 42.

¹¹¹ GUTSCHMID 1893, 116-119.

Things were quite different in Armenia. There the Arsacid royal lineage, the customs of the population and particularly of most of the Armenian feudal aristocracy were closely bound to the Parthian empire. This cultural as well as political proximity of Armenia to Parthia, ineluctable with whatever treaty, was clearly perceived by Rome:

That country, from the earliest period, has owned a national character and a geographical situation of equal ambiguity, since with a wide extent of frontier conterminous with our own provinces, it stretches inland right up to Media; so that the Armenians lie interposed between two vast empires, with which, as they detest Rome and envy the Parthian, they are too frequently at variance (transl. JACKSON).¹¹²

In addition, the Armenians - whose allegiance was a matter of doubt - were invoking the arms of both powers; though by geographical position and affinity of manners they stood closer to the Parthians, were connected with them by inter-marriage, and, in their ignorance of liberty, were more inclined to accept servitude in that quarter (transl. JACKSON).¹¹³

In favour of his brother Tiridates Vologeses asked Corbulo for the powers and not for the honours due to consuls. The above quoted passage by Tacitus (*Ann.* XV 31, 1) containing the representation of the *externae superbiae* as being more attentive to *inania* than to *vis imperii*, reflects a stereotyped desire for Roman superiority over simple-minded barbarian people rather than the actual reality of the contents of the agreement of Rhandaia,¹¹⁴ which was something quite different: after its military victory Rome was only able to guarantee the re-conquered country had a stable situation at the cost of a compromise that would certainly undermine the medium-term stability in the region. The Roman-Parthian co-ownership of Armenia could not but end in a slow and relentless ‘parthization’ of the royal house and the Arsacid court of Armenia, precisely for the reasons stressed by Tacitus.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Tac., *Ann.* II 56, 1: *Ambigua gens ea antiquitus hominum ingeniis et situ terrarum, quoniam nostris provinciis late praetenta penitus ad Medos porrigitur; maximisque imperiis interiecti et saepius discordes sunt, adversus Romanos odio et in Parthum invidia.*

¹¹³ Tac., *Ann.* XIII 34, 2: *ad hoc Armenii ambigua fide utraque arma invitabant, situ terrarum, similitudine morum Parthis propiores conubiisque permixti ac libertate ignota illud magis [ad servitium] inclinantes.*

¹¹⁴ On Tacitus and the Roman imperialism cf. WALSER 1951; SYME 1958; TRESCH 1965.

¹¹⁵ On *Kondominium* SCHUR 1949, 2014; ZIEGLER 1964, 76 prefers the concept of *Cosuzeränität*.

Parthian diplomacy demanded from Rome that the statute of Tiridates should be different from those of other client kings populating the Roman East. The difference actually resided in the fact that no simple *ornamenta consularia* were requested, which by that time had evidently become useless frills after the events in Tiberiade, which was probably the best known among the oriental courts. In favour of his brother Vologeses was asking for effective powers to be granted and Rome accorded them, thus opening up a new phase in the diplomatic relationships between Rome and the Arsacids. If Rome was able to bring itself round to take this step, it was because of the threat represented by Ctesiphon, while somewhere else in the Roman East the existing power relations were such as to allow Rome to go on with the political strategy of granting vain *ornamenta*.

Little is actually known about the history of the Arsacid dynasty in the years immediately following these events and this not only as far as the Armenian line is concerned. The coinage only tells us about the end of the reign of the great Vologeses I in Parthia and about the difficult succession to the Arsacid throne after the death of his son Vologeses II in favour of his rival Pacorus II, of whom we know almost nothing¹¹⁶ except that his reign was ended by his brother Chosroes in 108/109 A. D.,¹¹⁷ and that it is possible to figure out in what circumstances this happened. A famous excerpt from the *Parthika* by Arrianus refers to some vague claims (ἐπικλήματα) by Pacorus that had to be satisfied in a certain limited period of time.¹¹⁸ In answer to these claims Trajan ordered the Parthian expedition, but when he came to Athens, he was joined by a Parthian legation that had been sent by the new king Chosroes. The tone of the message was much more conciliatory:

¹¹⁶ An echo of the difficulties the young Pacorus II had met to ascend to the throne of Parthia are to be found in a passage of the *Thebais* by Statius, following a convincing exegesis by HOLLIS 1994, who however fails to explain the way by which the news was transmitted.

¹¹⁷ Dio LXVIII 17, 2-3 (= III, 204-205 BOISSEVAIN).

¹¹⁸ Arr. *Parth.* fr. 32 (235 ROOS-WIRTH): ὁ δὲ Πάκορος ὁ Παρθυαίων βασιλεὺς καὶ ἄλλα τινὰ ἐπικλήματα ἐπέφερον Τραϊανῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν ἐπικλήμα ἐποιοεῖτο κατὰ Ῥωμαίων, ὅτι δόξαν ἐντὸς λ' ἡμερῶν μηδετέρους παρὰ τὰ ζυγκείμενα ἐπιτελεῖν, οἱ δὲ οὐ κατὰ τὸ θεσπισθὲν ἐπιτειχίζουσιν.

When Trajan had set out against the Parthians and had got as far as Athens, an embassy from Osroes met him, asking for peace and proffering gifts. For upon learning of his advance the king had become terrified, because Trajan was wont to make good his threats by his deeds. Accordingly, he humbled his pride and sent to implore him not to make war upon him, and at the same time he asked that Armenia be given to Parthamasiris, who was likewise a son of Pacorus, and requested that the diadem be sent to him; for he had deposed Exedares, he said, inasmuch as he had been satisfactory neither to the Romans nor to the Parthians. The emperor neither accepted the gifts nor returned any answer, either oral or written, save the statement that friendship is determined by deeds and not by words, and that accordingly when he should reach Syria he would do all that was proper (transl. CARY).¹¹⁹

I do not think that we should credit the opinion by Cassius Dio, i.e. that Chosroes “had become terrified (κατέδεισε)” when he was made acquainted with the coming of Trajan. It is actually preferable to maintain that the party that was favourable to the war against Rome and headed by Pacorus was defeated by the one led by Chosroes, who on the contrary preferred to negotiate with Rome, thus avoiding the outbreak of war, which however was no longer avoidable, as the answer by Trajan had already revealed.

The actual cause of the war might have been “desire to win renown (δόξης ἐπιθυμία),” while the pretext (πρόφασις) used was the Armenian question with the unilateral deposition of Axidares¹²⁰ by Pacorus in favour of Parthamasiris. The excerpt by Xiphilinus is crystal clear on this point¹²¹ and voids the speculations by modern scholars about the real causes of the con-

¹¹⁹ Dio LXVIII 17, 2-3 (III, 204-205 BOISSEVAIN): ὅτι τοῦ Τραϊανοῦ ἐπὶ Πάρθους στρατεύσαντος καὶ ἐς Ἀθήνας ἀφικομένου πρεσβεία αὐτῶ ἐνταῦθα παρὰ τοῦ Ὀρρόου ἐνέτυχε, τῆς εἰρήνης δεομένη καὶ δῶρα φέρουσα. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἔγνω τὴν τε ὁρμὴν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅτι τοῖς ἔργοις τὰς ἀπειλὰς ἐτεκμηρίου, κατέδεισε, καὶ ὑφείς τοῦ φρονήματος ἔπεμψεν ἱκετεύων μὴ πολεμηθῆναι, τὴν τε Ἀρμενίαν Παρθαμασίριδι Πακόρου καὶ αὐτῶ νιεῖ ἤτει, καὶ ἐδεῖτο τὸ διάδημα αὐτῶ πεμφθῆναι. τὸν γὰρ Ἐξηδάρηνα ὡς οὐκ ἐπιτήδειον οὔτε τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις οὔτε τοῖς Πάρθοις ὄντα πεπαυκέναι ἔλεγεν. καὶ ὅς οὔτε τὰ δῶρα ἔλαβεν, οὔτ' ἄλλο τι ἀπεκρίνατο ἢ καὶ ἐπέστειλε πλὴν ὅτι ἡ φιλία ἔργοις καὶ οὐ λόγοις κρίνεται, καὶ διὰ τοῦτ', ἐπειδὴν ἐς τὴν Συρίαν ἔλθῃ, πάντα τὰ προσήκοντα ποιήσει.

¹²⁰ On the correct spelling of the name, fluctuating in the sources between Ἀξιδάρης and Ἐξηδάρης, cf. JUSTI 1895, 12. On the person see STEIN 1909.

¹²¹ Dio LXVIII 17, 1 (III, 204 BOISSEVAIN): μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἐστράτευσεν ἐπ' Ἀρμενίους καὶ Πάρθους, πρόφασιν μὲν ὅτι μὴ τὸ διάδημα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ εἰλήφει, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τοῦ Πάρθων βασιλέως, ὃ τῶν Ἀρμενίων βασιλέως, τῇ δ' ἀληθείᾳ δόξης ἐπιθυμία.

flict of most of their importance, as they are originated by the weakness of the ‘true causes’ of the outbreak of war offered by Cassius Dio.¹²² It is evident that the Armenian question represents far too good a reason to start a conflict, today as in the past.

The sovereigns of Armenia remain enveloped in darkness. After Tiridates the reign of some Sanatruk - about whom we know practically nothing, which causes lots of chronological problems - can be imagined as being followed by the above mentioned events with Parthamasiris opposed to Axidares and afterwards the brief provincialization of the reign of Armenia by Trajan. With Hadrian the *status quo ante* was re-established in Armenia, as a passage in the *Historia Augusta* very clearly testifies:

the Armenians were permitted to have their own king, whereas under Trajan they had had a governor (transl. MAGIE).¹²³

Once more and in perfect correspondence with the treaty of Rhandaia, Rome formally invested the king of Armenia with his crown. Once more that king, Vologeses son of Sanatruk, was a member of the Arsacid family who would conduct an ‘iranizing’ policy, as testified by the emphasis this sovereign (Vafarš) was given by some Armenian historians, and as we infer from the foundation of a new capital city of the reign called Vafaršapat and of many other towns.¹²⁴ It was most probably this Vologeses/Vafarš and not the contemporary Vologeses III of Parthia who complained to Hadrian in around 136 about the fact that he had not collaborated in defence of the Caucasian passes against the Alan invasions.

The more or less contemporary deaths of both Hadrian and Vologeses/Vafarš lead to a situation of stress at the borders of Armenia, as testified for us by some monetary legends of Antoninus Pius¹²⁵ and by a *bellum Parthicum* that was mentioned in the *Vita Antonini* as a bugbear to dissuade Vologeses III from invading Armenia.¹²⁶ Thus coins bearing the inscription *REX*

¹²² On the causes of the war LEPPER 1948, 158-204, with a full discussion about the previous literature.

¹²³ H. A., *Hadr.*, 21, 10: *Armeniis regem habere permisit, cum sub Traiano legatum habuissent.*

¹²⁴ CHAUMONT 1976, 144.

¹²⁵ *BMC*, 204 n° 1272-1273; *RIC* III, 105, n° 586.

¹²⁶ H. A., *Anton.* 9, 6: *Parthorum regem ab Armeniorum expugnatione solis litteris reppulit.*

ARMENIIS DATVS and dated to between 140 and 144 A. D.¹²⁷ are evidence of the prosecution of the formal agreements of Rhandeia even under Antoninus Pius.

A fragmentary passage from the correspondence of Fronto mentions some sovereigns, among which only one appears to be explicitly connected to Armenia, in a context that would be inexplicable in the absence of further heterogeneous sources:

... that he had given the kingdom of Armenia to Sohaemus rather than to Vologaesus; or that he had deprived Pacorus of his kingdom (transl. HAINES).¹²⁸

In an entry in the *Suda*, certainly taken from Cassius Dio, reference is made to the fact that Sohaemus was re-instated (καταγαγεῖν)¹²⁹ with force in Armenia by Thucydides, one of the lieutenants of Martius Verus, *legatus* of Cappadocia:

Martius Verus sent out Thucydides to reinstate Sohaemus into Armenia, and this general, thanks to terror inspired by his arms and to the natural good judgment that he showed in every situation, kept pressing vigorously forward (transl. CARY, with adaptations).¹³⁰

About Sohaemus we know something more thanks to a brief parenthesis in a novel the patriarch Photius was still able to read in the 11th century. Summing up in his *Bibliotheca* an erotic novel by the rhetor Iamblichus¹³¹ bearing the title of *Babyloniaka* and containing the fantastic history of two lovers, Sinonis and Rhodanes, Photius writes:

The writer [Iamblichos] says that he was Babylonian too and that he had learnt both magic and the Greek *paideia*, and that he was grown by Sohaemus, the Achaemenian, the Arsacid, he who was a king and a descendent

¹²⁷ *RIC* III, 110 n° 619; STRACK 1937, 66-67, 262-263.

¹²⁸ FRONT., *Ver.* 2, 18 (120 VAN DEN HOUT): *vel quod Sohaemo potius quam Vologaesio regnum Armeniae dedisset; aut quod Pacorum regno privasset.*

¹²⁹ On the meaning of the verb (= 'zurückführen', 'wiedereinsetzen', *restituere in regnum*) BOISSEVAIN 1890, 338, but with deductions I do not share as far as this case is concerned.

¹³⁰ Dio LXXI 2, 1 (III, 248 BOISSEVAIN) = *Suda* s. v. Μάρτιος: ὅτι Μάρτιος Βῆρος τὸν Θεουκυδίδην ἐκπέμπει καταγαγεῖν Σόαιμον εἰς Ἀρμενίαν· ὃς δέει τῶν ὅπλων καὶ τῆ οἰκείᾳ περὶ πάντα τὰ προσπίπτοντα εὐβουλία τοῦ πρόσω εἵχετο ἐρρωμένως.

¹³¹ Suidas, s. v. Iamblichos (II, 603 ADLER); the novel is in Phot. *Bibl. Cod.* 94.

of a king and who became senator in Rome and consul at the same time and then again king of *Armenia Maior*.¹³²

Conversely Pacorus left an epitaph in Rome in memory of his brother Merithates who had died there in a year that cannot be fixed with absolute certainty:

To the gods of the afterlife. Aurelius Pacorus, king of Great Armenia, acquired this sarcophagus for his very sweet brother Aurelius Merithates, who lived with me 56 years and 2 months long.¹³³

Modern scholars maintain they can explain the succession to the throne of Armenia in the years from the ascent to the throne of Antoninus Pius until the Parthian war of Lucius Verus as follows: After tensions that cannot be explained in detail today, but that seem to have caused years of instability in Armenia, Rome succeeded in imposing a king Sohaemus by threatening a *bellum Parthicum* (that *REX DATVS* in 140/141).¹³⁴ When Antoninus Pius died (7th March 161), Vologeses IV waged war against Rome by invading Armenia and threatening Syria.¹³⁵ He installed Pacorus in Armenia, who held this reign until his deposition by the generals of Lucius Verus, who had decided to put Sohaemus on that throne for the second time (πάλιν).¹³⁶

The difficulties created by such a reconstruction have already been stressed by M.-L. CHAUMONT.¹³⁷ What is particularly serious is the fact that it is actually very difficult to consider Pacorus, a king who was certainly enjoyed Roman citizenship and who moreover had spent a considerable part of

¹³² Phot., *Bibl. cod.* 94 (75b BEKKER = II, 40 HENRY): Λέγει δὲ καὶ ἑαυτὸν Βαβυλώνιον εἶναι ὁ συγγραφεὺς, καὶ μαθεῖν τὴν μαγικὴν, μαθεῖν δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν παιδείαν, καὶ ἀκμάζειν ἐπὶ Σοαίμου τοῦ Ἀχαμηνίδου τοῦ Ἀρσακίδου, ὃς βασιλεὺς ἦν ἐκ πατέρων βασιλέων, γέγονε δὲ ὅμως καὶ τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ, καὶ ὑπάτος δέ, εἶτα καὶ βασιλεὺς πάλιν τῆς μεγάλης Ἀρμενίας. Ἐπὶ τούτου γοῦν ἀκμάσαι φησὶν ἑαυτὸν.

¹³³ *CIG* III, 6559 = *IG* XIV, 1472 Θ(εοῖς) κ(αταχθονίοις) | Αὐρήλιος | Πάκορος, βασιλεὺς μεγάλης Ἀρμενίας, ἡγόρακα σαρκιοφάγο(ν) Αὐρηλίω) Μεριθάτι ἀδελφῶ γλυκυτάτῳ ζήσαντι | σὺν ἐμοὶ ἔτη || νς''', μῆ(νας) β'.

¹³⁴ Sceptical about the inthronization of Sohaemus in 140-144 A. D. SCHEHL 1930, 189; ZIEGLER 1964, 110 n. 101.

¹³⁵ H. A. *Marc. Ant.* 8, 6; Fronton. *Princip. Hist.* 17 (199 VAN DEN HOUT); Lucianus, *Hist. Conscr.* 21, 25; Lucianus, *Alex.* 27; Dio LXXI 2, 1 (III, 246 BOISSEVAIN).

¹³⁶ GUTSCHMID 1888, 147; BOISSEVAIN 1890, 337-338; ASDOURIAN 1911, 111; DEBEVOISE 1938, 249.

¹³⁷ CHAUMONT 1969, 16; 1976, 148-150.

his life in Rome, as a pro-Parthian and anti-Roman figure installed on the throne of Armenia just after the Parthian invasion. This idea derives from the theory that maintains that behind every invasion there has to be a clear-cut change of government: indeed this position prevents us from adopting the simplest and most economic solution to the problem.

Antoninus Pius reacted to the intermingling policy by the Arsacid Vologeses III on the throne of Armenia by removing the homonymous Vologeses/Vaḷarš and putting on the throne of Armenia a sovereign he liked (*REX ARMENIIS DATVS*, between 140 and 144). Then, as his name, Pacorus, testifies, he took a person of sure Iranian origin, perhaps even a member of the Arsacid family, who was held in Rome as a hostage as we can infer from the place where his brother died on an unspecified day.¹³⁸ This person had all the requisites to be appreciated by Antoninus and his new Armenian subjects since he was of Iranian origin. When Vologeses IV attacked, Aurelius Pacorus most probably offered no fierce resistance: His almost twenty-year-long stay on the throne of Artaxata should have reconciled him with his Iranian origin, and the probable presence at the court of a pro-Parthian party would certainly have exerted some influence on the behaviour of the sovereign. Thus Vologeses did not substitute Aurelius Pacorus, who remained on his throne.

Rome's reaction sounds strangely familiar to our ears: it acted resolutely at the military level and obtained a rapid and complete success. However, the Romans had no clear idea about the political arrangement that would follow the military victory, as the above cited passage from the correspondence of Fronto testifies.¹³⁹ The solution chosen by Lucius Verus, i.e. the enthronement of Sohaemus, turned out to be the worst possible - it has never been easy for a western person to find his way around middle eastern politics!

¹³⁸ That the *REX ARMENIIS DATVS* in 140-144 A. D. was Pacorus and not Sohaemus is an hypothesis already proposed by HÜTTL 1936, 237; but MAGIE 1950, 1528 n. 2, distinguishes the Pacorus in Fronto from the Aurelius Pacorus of the inscription in Rome.

¹³⁹ Cf. the interesting conclusions derived from this passage by CHAUMONT 1976, 149: "il résulte de ces propos: 1°, que Pacorus n'était pas considéré comme un ennemi déclaré de Rome et que, somme toute, la défait parthe ne rendait pas impossible son maintien sur le trône; 2°, qu'un autre prétendant arsacide, Vologèse, peut-être un fils du précédent roi Vologèse, ne paraissait pas moins qualifié que Sohaemus pour devenir roi d'Arménie."

Aurelius Pacorus was evidently able to maintain a wisely balanced behaviour in the very difficult circumstances characterizing his reign: he had been imposed by Rome, then he had been left on his throne by the Parthians and he was not immediately removed after Rome had again taken control over the situation but his deposition came just after a complicated discussion. His successor possessed all the qualities needed to become a mere tool in the hands of Rome, as he was lacking in any political personality and was not accepted by the Parthian neighbours and even less by the Armenian subjects.

Sohaemus was certainly closely connected with the royal house of Emesa.¹⁴⁰ The royal family had a previous experience of government in that area that was now quite remote, when some other Sohaemus was temporarily entrusted by Nero with the government of the nearby Sophene.¹⁴¹ However it is evident that neither of the Sohaemi we are acquainted with had any probable or even possible link with the Arsacid royal family.¹⁴² The bombastic use of adjectives that follows the name of Sohaemus in the above cited passage by Photius τοῦ Ἀχαιμενίδου τοῦ Ἀρσακίδου, ὃς βασιλεὺς ἦν ἐκ πατέρων βασιλέων, certainly contains the echo of the pro-Roman propaganda that was desperately trying to make that king tolerable to the Armenians. The loss of the text by Iamblichus prevents us from reconstructing the original literary context of this annotation, but given the form it has reached us in, it is certainly impossible to disregard a trace of irony by Iamb-

¹⁴⁰ SULLIVAN 1977, cf. the genealogical tree from which the obvious difficulty to link this person to the Emesean dynasts of the Julio-Claudian time clearly stands out. *PIR* III S 546; STEIN 1927.

¹⁴¹ Following Tac., *Ann.* XIII 7 Nero installed a certain Sohaemus *cum insignibus regiis* in Sophene in 54 A. D., exactly in the very year in which C. Iulius Sohaemus became king in Emesa *honora[t]o ornam[entis] consulari[b]us* (cf. *IGLS* VI 2760 = *ILS* 8958) BRAUND 1984, 29. Modern scholarship is split on this: because of the long distance existing between the two reigns of Emesa and Sophene, the idea that the two kings shared the same name, but were distinct people has persisted for a long time (STEIN 1927; STEVENSON 1939, 47; MAGIE 1950, 1412, n. 41; PANI 1972, 224-226; CHAUMONT 1976, 224-226), but more recently the opinion has prevailed that the king of Emesa and the figure about to would receive from Nero the privilege of governing Sophene during a short period coincide (FRANKFORT, 1963; SCHÜRER, VERMÈS, MILLAR 1973, 570 n. 52; BARRETT 1977; SULLIVAN 1977, 216-218; BARRETT 1979; SARTRE 2001, 505).

¹⁴² CHAUMONT 1976, 150: “de telles origines (franchement sémitiques) sont bien peu compatibles avec une extraction arsacide, ne serait-ce que du côté maternel.”

lichus in his report on the description Sohaemus gave of himself. The vacuity of the dynastic claims by Sohaemus must have sounded offensive to the Armenians. One further passage by Cassius Dio describes a rebellion by a certain Tiridates that was appeased by Martius Verus ending in the exile of the former to Britannia:

Yet in general the emperor was always accustomed to treat even his most stubborn foes humanely; thus, when Tiridates, a satrap, stirred up trouble in Armenia and slew the kin of the Heniochi, and then thrust his sword in Verus' face when the latter rebuked him for it, he did not put him to death, but merely sent him to Britain (transl. CARY).¹⁴³

No doubt the solution proposed by CHAUMONT, i.e to see in the vanishing figure of the 'satrap' Tiridates the true Arsacid anti-Roman representative as opposed to the clearly false Arsacid Sohaemus just after his installation by Lucius Verus, is by far the most probable in order to explain all the vicissitudes of Sohaemus. The latter, being forcibly installed by Rome in 164,¹⁴⁴ stirred up a prompt opposition that aggregated around this Tiridates we know only as a 'satrap.' This qualification represents a difficulty but it is also possible to maintain that it simply represents some sort of deliberate institutional weakening of this figure who could certainly very easily pass himself off as an Arsacid, which maybe he actually was. Sohaemus was thus compelled by Tiridates to leave Armenia. Only the military intervention by the *legatus* of Cappadocia Martius Verus allowed the re-installation of this hated bugbear of Rome on the throne of Armenia. The command of Martius Verus can be dated back to after the consulship he held in 166, probably 172.¹⁴⁵ We do not know how long Sohaemus 'the Achemenian, the Arsacid,' remained on the throne, but he would certainly not have been able to resist without the presence of Roman troops as is testified exactly in those years in the Armenian capital city.¹⁴⁶ It was during the second period of the

¹⁴³ Dio LXXI 14, 2 (III, 259 BOISSEVAIN): καίτοι τά τε ἄλλα ἀεί ποτε φιλανθρώπως καὶ τοῖς πολεμιωτάτοις χρώμενος, καὶ Τιριδάτην σατράπην τά τε ἐν τῇ Ἀρμενίᾳ ταραξάντα καὶ τὸν τῶν Ἡνιόχων βασιλέα ἀποσφάζαντα, τῷ τε Οὐήρῳ ἐπιτιμῶντί οἱ περὶ τούτων τὸ ζῆφος ἐπανατεινόμενον, μὴ κτείνας ἀλλ' ἐς Βρεττανίαν πέμψας.

¹⁴⁴ He should be the *REX ARMENIIS DATVS* on the coins of Lucius Verus *RIC*, III 255, n° 511-513; 322 n° 1370-1375; GÖBL 1961, 74-76.

¹⁴⁵ RITTERLING 1904, 193-194; VON PREMIERSTEIN 1913, 87-88, who reports this excerpt with H. A. *Marc. Aur.* 22, 1; KROLL 1930, 2025; STEIN 1927.

¹⁴⁶ *ILS* 9117; *CIG* III 6559 about which MORETTI 1955, 45. *CIL* III 6052 = *ILS* 394 is later.

reign (πάλιν) of Sohaemus on the throne of Armenia that Iamblichus frequented his court.

The testimony by Photius leads to the inclusion of Sohaemus in the list of the senators at the time of Antonines written by Géza ALFÖLDY.¹⁴⁷ As ALFÖLDY was not able to ascribe to him any ordinary consulship, he attributed to Sohaemus a *suffectus* consulship on an unspecified date, without however expressing himself about his previous career. Sohaemus was actually conferred the same *hypateia* as Tiridates was granted by Nero, and the same one as Abgar would receive from Gordianus III. It is certainly not a mistake made by ALFÖLDY. The testimony by Iamblichus/Photius on this matter is unequivocal although quite misleading: [Σοαίμος] ... γέγονε δὲ ὁμῶς καὶ τῆς συγκλήτου βουλῆς τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ, καὶ ὑπατος δέ. While it is possible to grasp the vacuity concerning the Parthian royal descent of this figure it is undoubtedly more difficult to perceive the flattery in the latter sentence. It is merely thanks to the Edessean parchment, the papyri of the Euphrates and the new institutional contexts deriving from them that it is possible to attribute the true meaning of Iamblichus/Photius' words. What remains to be explained, were this not just a vain hope, is if the specification τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ was either a part of the boorish propaganda by Sohaemus like his Achaemenian descent or if it represents a suggestive allusion by Iamblichus to the arrogant nature of that person.

4. The contents of the ὑπατεία.

As David BRAUND emphasized in a monograph dedicated to the reconstruction of the figure of the typical 'friendly King':

Under the Principate, from Gaius on, kings had gifts explicitly linked to the curule office evoked by the gifts of the Republic: *ornamenta praetoria* and

¹⁴⁷ ALFÖLDY 1977, 195, 320. Sohaemus is included in the list of the "nicht näher datierte Konsuln zwischen 161 und 168," but in the text it is said that he might have been made consul "möglichlicherweise schon vor 161." *IBID.*, 320 his Syriac descent is rightly taken for granted, but the only descents explicitly cited are the Achaemenian and Parthian ones.

ornamenta consularia. The first king known to have received either is Agrippa I, who held *ornamenta praetoria* in the reign of Gaius. At the beginning of the next reign, Claudius awarded the same king ornaments *consularia* and additions to his kingdom. At the same time, Agrippa's brother received *ornamenta praetoria*. A dedication from Heliopolis describes Sohaemus of Emesa as *honoratus ornamentis consularibus*: when he received them is uncertain. The last king known to have received the honour is Agrippa II of Judaea who was given *ornamenta praetoria* by Vespasian when he came to Borne in AD 75.¹⁴⁸

The situation of the kings of Armenia, Edessa and of Odainath of Palmyra and his family is very different from the one of the 'friendly King' outlined by BRAUND, i.e. of Agrippa I and II of Judaea, the alpine Cottius and of the Thracian Cotys. In the east, on the borders with the Parthian reign formal acts having a merely ornamental value were of no significance. The protracted conflict against Armenia entailed the creation of a new typology of international relations inside Rome's *imperium*. These relations might be defined in many ways: by resorting to the Greek concept of *hegemonia*,¹⁴⁹ 'protectorate' or, as recently proposed, to the one of 'Teilreich.'

Unter "Teilreich" verstehe ich ein Herrschaftsgebiet eines formal legitimierten Machthabers, der unter Anerkennung der Superiorität des Augustus in Rom kaiserliche Aufgaben in einem Reichsteil als Kaiserstellvertreter im Interesse der Sicherheit des Gebiets übernimmt. Der Regent spaltet sein Machtgebiet nicht vom Reich ab, sondern regiert formal im Auftrag des Kaisers.¹⁵⁰

I substantially agree with this formulation by Udo HARTMANN. My interpretation of this phenomenon differs from his, as the German scholar maintains that the Palmyrene 'Teilreich' started precisely during the *Soldatenkaiserzeit*, while in my opinion Armenia had represented a 'Teilreich' ever since Nero's time, as I have shown above, while Palmyra always had a *privata sors* between the two empires.¹⁵¹ What changed during the 3rd cen-

¹⁴⁸ BRAUND 1984, 29.

¹⁴⁹ LEMOSSE 1967, cf. *supra*.

¹⁵⁰ HARTMANN 2001, 10.

¹⁵¹ Argumentations about this are widely expressed in GNOLI 2000. I am less confident than HARTMANN in the evaluation of loyalty in the relations between 'Teilreich' and *imperium*: power balances existing in various actual single situations must have produced very different results.

ture was the emergence of the family of Odainath and the disintegration of the Roman state in the East.

The situation was the following: the relationships between Rome and the autonomous local powers in the Near East were the result of an extremely inconstant alchemy, as always happens when it is a question of relations between non equals not guaranteed by stable rules under external control. The autonomy of the local powers depended on the good will of Rome to respect treaties on the one hand and on the capability of the Parthian neighbours to compel Rome to respect the agreements on the other hand. The stronger the Parthians the more Rome was compelled to grant autonomy to buffer states at the borders between the two empires, thus any derogation from the formal autonomy granted by Rome to these countries was liable to provoke an outbreak of conflicts between the two empires. On the contrary when the Parthians were in trouble either because of dynastic matters or because of the eastern regions of their empire, then Rome almost always became more aggressive against the small eastern local powers, whose autonomy was thus restricted both formally and substantially.

Rome possessed limited conceptual devices to approach the problem of the 'client kings,' and so it could only equate them with the highest Roman authorities from a formal point of view, and this had been the case since republican times. BRAUND has shown how the relationship between consular insignia and those of the kings were very close and dated back to the dawn of the Republic.¹⁵² Thus from a formal point of view kings who were friends and allies of Rome were granted the insignia due to praetors and in the most important cases even those due to consuls. Vologeses was in a position to demand that his brother were given no meaningless *ornamenta* but the true substance of consulship, its effective powers, i.e. the *hypateia*. His brother Tiridates was thus at the same level as the *legati Augusti pro praetore* next to him, i.e. he was attributed a *hypateia* just like theirs.

As for Rome, it recognized this *hypateia*, but the emperor always preserved the right to consider the kings of Armenia, Edessa and even the people and senate of Palmyra and its chief like any other 'friendly king' and thus to limit or even revoke at will their powers and functions. It is no coin-

¹⁵² BRAUND 1984. The bibliography on this theme is endless, let me recall two works that should have appeared in BRAUND's bibliography: DE FRANCISCI 1947; DE MARTINO 1972.

vidence that during the Severian era, when the Parthian empire started to break up under the attacks by the legions of Septimius Severus and of the Sassanian rebels the principedom of Edessa was progressively absorbed by Rome and its autonomy was only periodically guaranteed.¹⁵³

As far as we know, Rome never fully codified the *hypateia* it was ready to grant to the local powers in the Roman Near East, although this may be the result merely of our lack of documentation. It is actually possible to maintain that some degree of formalization of the concept actually did exist: in an official document written in Greek a *hypateia* is mentioned, the *hypateia* of Edessa, which had been attributed to three equestrian officials.¹⁵⁴ More or less simultaneously in the Near East a strange compound appears which designates sites of particular relevance from an administrative point of view: *μητροκωλονεία, μητροκωμία*, where next to Greek-Roman administrative terms the first element of the compounds, *μητρο-*, can perhaps be traced back to an ancient Semitic use.¹⁵⁵ It is possible that in Severian times the great law school of Berytus attempted to set a rule governing these aspects of interstatal relationships. This way a transition was achieved from a first phase, in which the *ornamenta consularia* in themselves were sufficient to define to some extent the granting of autonomy to client kings, to a second phase, in which the effective contents of those autonomies were hypostasized into a concept, that of *hypateia*, which became an ontologically and conceptually defined function to be granted to kings.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ LUTHER 1999; GNOLI 2000; ROSS 2001.

¹⁵⁴ I am talking about PEuphr. about which cf. GNOLI 2000, *passim*.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. also, e. g., P2 cited *supra*, p. 1. On the Roman colonies in the Near East: MILLAR 1990. On the *metrokomiai* SARTRE 1999; SARTRE 2001, 739, 776-779. On the Semitic origin of the concept of metrocolony cf. NEHMÉ, VILLENEUVE 1999, 36.

¹⁵⁶ On the assumption of the royal title by Odainath and his sons, cf. *infra*.

