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PALMYRA AND ROME: ODAENATHUS' TITULATURE AND THE USE OF THE
IMPERIUM MAIUS

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The year 260 AD was not a good one for P. Licinius Egnatius Gallienus. Sometime in the early summer, Sapor I of Persia captured his father, and co-emperor, in a battle outside of Edessa. Sapor went on to ravage considerable portions of Cilicia and Cappadocia before his over-extended forces were attacked by the remnants of the Roman army under the command of officers named Callistus and Macrianus. Sapor was further humiliated when Odaenathus, lord of Palmyra, attacked him as he was drawing his forces back towards his own country. These victories did little to help Gallienus, who also lost a son in a revolt that broke out on the Rhine shortly after the capture of his father. Macrianus celebrated his victory by proclaiming his own two sons emperor, and he appears to have been assisted in this by both Callistus and Odaenathus.

Two years later Macrianus and one of his sons took an army into the Balkans to wrest the throne from Gallienus. They failed in the attempt and Odaenathus, who appears to have been a person of considerable political acumen, decided to attack their surviving supporters at Emesa. At this point we are told that Gallienus made Odaenathus *στρατηγός* of the whole east, and the contemporary author of an oracular text observes: ἄρξει Ῥωμαίων, Πέρσαι δ' ἕκοντ' ἀλαπαδνοί.¹

The issue is of Odaenathus' position after 262 is of importance for several reasons. The first is as an example of the way that power was distributed in the empire. Diocletian's decision to create a college of *Augusti* and *Caesares* stands at the end of a long history of power sharing that was defined in different ways. In the case of Odaenathus, it is of some importance to know whether or not Gallienus effectively gave executive authority to a local aristocrat in an important region of the empire, and how such an arrangement might work. A second issue is the Palmyrene understanding of their relationship with the government at Rome, and the role of this understanding (or lack of it) in relations between Odaenathus' successors and those of Gallienus. The third issue is the way that Palmyrene aristocrats understood the structure of power within the empire, and the extent to which there was a coherent structure to be understood in the third century.

Odaenathus is a figure of importance both for the history of the Roman imperial government, and for the history of Syria. Consequently his actions must be examined from two different perspectives. The first is Roman. Was it conceivable for an emperor to delegate broad administrative authority to a person who was not a member of the imperial household? The evidence will suggest that it was. The second perspective is Palmyrene. Is it necessary to think that a Palmyrene would understand the symbolism and reality of power in the Roman world the same way that a Roman would? The evidence in this case will suggest that this is not so. I will argue that Odaenathus and his closest Palmyrene supporters interpreted the Roman office that he received from a distinctively Syrian perspective.

¹ *Orac. Sib.* 13. 171; *Zon.* 12.24 ἐφ' οὗς Γαλιήνος Ὀδέναθον ἔπεμψεν, ἡγεμονεύοντα τῶν Παλμυρηνῶν. --- Ὀδέναθον δὲ τῆς ἀνδραγαθίας ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀμειβόμενος πάσης ἀνατολῆς αὐτὸν προεχειρίσατο στρατηγόν. S. Swain, *GRBS* 33 (1993) has suggested that *Orac. Sib.* 13.171 is prospective rather than descriptive, and seems to assume that it was written to influence Odaenathus' conduct. The content of the oracle is otherwise descriptive, which is generally characteristic of Sibylline verse that describes historical events. Swain misunderstands the passage from Zonaras (*ZPE* 99 [1993] 162-3), "...it would be reasonable to suggest, if we believe Zonaras, that αὐτοκράτωρ had already been given to Odaenathus himself at the time of his Persian wars." The word that Zonaras is using, *στρατηγός*, indicates an official position rather than an imperial title (which, at this period would de facto mean recognition of Odaenathus as co-emperor). It is the precision of Zonaras' language (contrast *HA V. Gall.* 3.3: *totius propre igitur orientis factus est Odaenathus imperator*; 12.1: *Odenatum participato imperio Augustum vocavit*, which Swain wrongly cites as if it were saying the same thing as Zonaras) that sets this account apart. For the value of Zonaras see D.S. Potter, *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire. A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford 1990) 360-63.

1. Odaenathus as king of kings and corrector totius orientis

The question of Odaenathus' status has been complicated by an inscription from Palmyra (CIS II 3946) that commemorates Odaenathus as *mlk mlk' wmtqnn' dy mdnh' klh*. This phrase has been taken to mean either "king of kings and *corrector* of the whole region" or "king of kings who sets the whole region in order." The key word here is *mtqnn'* which connected with the verb *tqn*: "to arrange," "set right," or "set in order."² The range of meaning for the verb has led to discussion as to whether *mtqnn'* should be translated *restitutor* rather than *corrector*, the former being an honorific title, the latter representing a real position in the imperial hierarchy (J. Cantineau, *JA* 222 [1923] 223).

The view that *mtqnn'* should be understood to mean *restitutor* is allegedly supported by a text honoring Odaenathus' son Vaballathus as *mlk mlk' w' pnrtht' dy mdnh' klh* where *pnrtht'* is a transliteration of ἑπανορθωτής (CIS II 3971), i.e. *corrector*.³ The fact that a different word was used to describe Odaenathus' position has been taken as proving that he had a different title (i.e. *restitutor*). In 1990, however, I argued for three points in connection with these texts (none of them original). These were that the phrase *wmtqnn' dy mdnh' klh* in Odaenathus' inscription should be translated as "*corrector* of the entire region," that the Palmyrene phrase should be taken as a description of the effective power of Odaenathus (which is not the same thing as saying that it must be translated as *corrector*), and that Odaenathus held a supra-provincial command, a point derived from evidence other than this inscription (Potter [n. 1] 390-4). I further argued that the difference between the titles of Odaenathus and Vaballathus was to be explained by a lack of precision in the rendering of Roman imperial administrative terms in Palmyrene, making it conceivable that two words could be used to represent the same idea. The question has been reopened in a recent article by Simon Swain, who argues in the contrary that the expression should mean "restorer of the whole east," and that it therefore cannot be taken as suggesting that Odaenathus had a formal position within the Roman hierarchy.⁴

Before preceding any further, there are several technical points that need to be clarified. The first is obviously that *mtqnn'* means "the person who sets things right." It is a description of Odaenathus' power as it appeared to the Palmyrenes and arguments about whether or not it really means *corrector* obscure the important issue: is this description based upon an appointment made by Gallienus? The reason for translating the word as *corrector* is simply to confirm an argument from other sources that Odaenathus held such a position, the reason to translate it in another way is to deny the validity of those sources. In this case, we are explicitly told by one text that Odaenathus was given an official position by Gallienus, and this text seems to be reporting the account of a roughly contemporary historian with some accuracy. We are implicitly told the same thing by a contemporary source, and it is pointless to argue that this evidence is invalidated by a Palmyrene text whose meaning can support it (note 1 above). I would therefore maintain the view that *mtqnn' dy mdnh' klh* is a Palmyrene description of Odaenathus' position within the Roman hierarchy. Two further points need to be made in connection with the nature and description of the appointment. One is connected with the appointment of governors to provinces that would naturally fall under the jurisdiction of a *corrector totius orientis*. In a careful study of the governors of Arabia throughout these years, H.G. Pflaum showed that they continued to be appointed by Gallienus (*Syria* 29 [1953] 307-330). This is typical of other cases where a person held superior *imperium* under the emperor. The holder of *imperium* could instruct these officials within the parameters set by *mandata* that he had received from the emperor, but he did not have the power to select them. The second is that the Roman government itself did not have a consistent vocabulary to describe such positions. I will return to this point in the next section of this article.

² C. Clermont-Ganneau, *RB* 29 (1920) 387-8; I am indebted to Professor B. Schmidt of the University of Michigan for discussion of this verb's semantic range.

³ See H.J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions*, ASP 13 (Toronto 1974) 442.

⁴ Swain, *ZPE* 99 (1993) 162-63. The view that Odaenathus did not have an official position is also restated (with much more caution) in F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC- AD 337* (Cambridge 1993), 170.

The thrust of S. Swain's argument to the contrary is to postulate a great consistency in the translation of Latin and Greek administrative terms into Palmyrene. If so, then the Palmyrenes had a more accurate way of rendering an official position such as *corrector totius orientis* into their language by simply transliterating its Greek equivalent, as they did in the inscription for Vaballathus. Thus they should have used the same transliteration of the Greek in the text honoring Odaenathus (Swain, *ZPE* 99 [1993] 160). There are several points of interest here. The first, is that there is indeed a great deal of consistency in the rendering of the terminology of civic government into Palmyrene. Unfortunately, local offices are not the same as imperial offices, and the terms of local cults, where similar consistency is demonstrable, are also not the same thing. It is precisely in the area of imperial government that we find inconsistencies. The titles of Roman governors are reduced to a simple "governor," *hgmwn'*, vexillation appears as *lgyny'* (legion), and a text that specifies, in Latin, *legio Cyrenaica* comes across as "the legion at Bostra," *c]oh. I Gebasis / #VPAVI [qui agun]t (?) Hieropoli* as "the legion at Arbata". In the case of the praetorian prefect, we get *dy sp'*, which may either be "the man in charge of the supplies," or "the man in the courtyard."⁵ The case for the first interpretation is based upon the meaning of *sp'* in Aramaic; the second interpretation is based upon a fifth century Syriac translation of *Matthew*, where the word is used to translate *πραϊτώριον* and the assumption (admittedly speculative) that the person who carved the Palmyrene text was a native speaker of Greek who had left out the word for prefect, and, further that he would have used an Aramaic word instead of a transliteration for *praetorio* (Chabot [n. 5] 109-113). I would now agree that the second explanation is preferable to the first. In either case the rendering of the title is imprecise.

The point remains that there are different patterns in the way that terms are rendered into Palmyrene, with greater consistency in the case of institutions that are more familiar. On any argument, the position of Odaenathus was extraordinary, and therefore we should not necessarily expect consistency. This point may be strengthened by the fact that in the cases of Vaballathus and Odaenathus, we are dealing with very different sorts of document. The Vaballathus text is a bilingual milestone. The Odaenathus text (as S. Swain notes) is one in which "conspicuously native titles" are used. S. Swain suggests that, "this again advises against taking *mtqnn'* as a translation of *ἐπανορθωτής*" (*ZPE* 99 [1993] 162). Precisely the opposite conclusion would seem to be more logical: the transliteration of a Greek term is specifically avoided in such a context.

In all discussions of Odaenathus' position, there is a tendency to play down the importance of a broken text that mentions some kind of celebration of a Palmyrene victory in such a way as to indicate that the Palmyrenes claimed control over all of Syria.⁶ The text reads as follows [β]ασιλει βασιλέων πρὸς [᾽Ορ]όντη [--- βα]σιλείας τὴν κατὰ [Π]ε[ρ]σῶν νείκην ἀναδησαμένω Σεπ[τιμίω Ἡρωδι]ανῶ, Ἰούλιος Αὐρήλιος [Σεπτι]μιος Ο[ὐ]ρ[ω]δῆς [καὶ Ἰούλιος Αὐρήλιος --- ἐπίτροπος τῆς δ]ε[κ]π[ο]λί- νης κεντηνάριος ἀμφοτέροι στρα[τηγοὶ τῆς λαμ]προτάτης [κ]ολων[ε]ίας. The first significant point is the phrase β]ασιλει βασιλέων πρὸς [᾽Ορ]όντη should be taken to mean "the king of kings on the Orontes."⁷ Septimius Herodes, who appears to have "won the crown of kingship" because of a victory over the Persians is the eldest son of Odaenathus.⁸ Since Herodes died before Odaenathus, we therefore have a Palmyrene claim to kingship in Syria during Odaenathus' lifetime. The second significant point is the phrase ἐπίτροπος τῆς δ]ε[κ]π[ο]λί- νης κεντηνάριος: the restoration of ἐπίτροπος is secured by κεντηνάριος, and we therefore have evidence of the adoption of imperial household style with reference

⁵ Swain, *ZPE* 99 (1993) 160 states my preference for the first meaning is "a mistranslation"; in doing so he misrepresents the force of Chabot's case for the second meaning in *CRAI* (1941) 109-113.

⁶ For the text see D. Schlumberger, *Bulletin des études orientales* 11 (1942-3) 36-50; Millar (n. 4) 170 n. 44; Swain, *ZPE* 99 (1993) 161 n. 23 for a standard lack of interest in the text.

⁷ Compare *SEG* 7. 341: Θεῶ πατρῷ | Διὶ Βετύλω | τῶν πρὸς τῷ ᾽Ορόντη Αὐρ. | Διφιλιανὸς στρα. | λεγ. Δ' Κυ. Αντ. | εὐξάμενος | ἀνέθηκεν .

⁸ The usage of ἀναδέω here is paralleled in an agonistic context in *Epigr. Graec.* 873.4.

to Zenobia, also in the lifetime of Odaenathus. This practice is paralleled in the case of Julius Aurelius Septimius Vorodes, whose inscriptions combine local and imperial office during this same period.

Properly interpreted, the text relating to Herodes reveals a Palmyrene claim to control over Syria. The question of whether or not the imperial government agreed with this position during Odaenathus' lifetime is a separate one, but, as we have seen, there is no good reason to think otherwise. The best interpretation of the situation is that Odaenathus was given power over several eastern provinces within guidelines set by Gallienus, who also retained the right to appoint subordinate governors.

2. *Imperium Maius* and Multi-Provincial Commands in the Roman Empire

A decision to grant special *imperium* to Odaenathus, *imperium* that would give him administrative superiority over several provinces, would not be unparalleled. From the reign of Augustus to the reign of Diocletian there were a number of occasions when an individual received a grant of *imperium* over more than one province. In some cases this involved the combination of two or more provinces into a "joint province" that was governed by one man, in others it involved a grant of superior *imperium* to an individual so that he could give orders to provincial governors within a specified region. The terms in which these arrangements were described seem to have changed over time as the Republican precedents for imperial government became less relevant.⁹ In the Julio-Claudian period, the term *imperium maius* is usual. It is under Marcus that we first find the term *corrector* used in this context. Under Philip, Julius Priscus is described both as corrector and as διασημοτάτος ἐπάρχος Με(σοποταμίας) διέπων τὴν ὑπατείαν (see n. 9), a variant of the phrase that might be used to describe the authority of contemporary governors, where formulations based upon ὑπατεία appear to have become standard to represent the concept of authority.¹⁰

⁹ Perhaps the clearest example of Augustan stress on Republican forms and the necessity of sanctioning grants of *imperium maius* through a *lex* appears in *P. Köln* 249, 7-14: καὶ εἰς{c} ἄς δῆποτέ σε ὑπαρχείας τὰ κοινὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐφέλκοιτο, μηθενὸς ἐν ἐκείναις ἐξουσίαν <εἶναι> μείζω τῆς ἑῆς ἐν ἰ νόμῳ ἐκυρώθη· ἀλλὰ εὖ εἰς πλείστον ἵψους καὶ ἡμετέρας [c]πουδῆ καὶ ἀρεταῖς ἰδίαις {ἰδίαις} κά[θ'] ὁμοφροσύνην συμπάντων ἀνθρώπων δια{ι}ράμενος [--- (Agrippa, for what is meant here see L. Koenen, *ZPE* 5 (1970) 217-83. Questions raised about the interpretation of μηθενὸς ἐν ἐκείναις ἐξουσίαν <εἶναι> μείζω τῆς ἑῆς ἐν ἰ νόμῳ ἐκυρώθη would appear to be put to rest by the very similar language in the *senatus consultum de Pisone patre: et ei co(n)s(ule) de quo lex ad populum lata esset, ut in quamcumq(ue) provinciam venisset, maius ei imperium quam ei qui eam provinciam proco(n)s(ul) optineret esset* (W. Eck, *Cahiers du Centre G. Glotz* 4 [1993] 195). For the distinction between *imperium maius* and *imperium proconsulare* see Dio 55. 10. 18: ἀνάγκη δ' ἐπικειμένης τὸν Γάιον εἴλατο, καὶ τὴν τε ἐξουσίαν αὐτῷ τὴν ἀνθύπατον καὶ γυναικὰ ἔδωκεν (Gaius Caesar); Tac. *Ann.* 1. 14.3: *at Germanici Caesari proconsulare imperium petivit*. The award of *imperium proconsulare* for the German war in 14 AD effectively gave Germanicus superior authority to governors who were technically *legati pro praetore*; a grant of *imperium maius* may have been necessitated for the eastern command on technical grounds by the presence of a proconsular governor of Asia. Suet. *Tib.* 21.1: *ac multo post lege per consules lata, ut provincias cum Augusto communiter administraret*; Vel. Pat. 2.121.1: *senatus populusque Romanus postulante patre eius ut aequum ei ius in omnibus provinciis exercitusque esset quam erat ipsi, decreto complexus est* are equally clear on the technical process with respect to Tiberius in 13 AD. For the language of the third century see *P. Mes.* 1.3 Ἰουλίῳ Πρεῖσκῳ τῷ διασημοτάτῳ ἐπάρχῳ Μεσοποταμίας, διέποντι τὴν ὑπατείαν... and 19-20: ὑπογραφή Ἰουλίου Πρεῖσκου τοῦ διασημο(τάτου) ἐπάρχου Με(σοποταμίας) διέποντος τὴν ὑπατείαν. By this time the linguistic niceties of the Augustan period had become redundant, though in practical terms, the power is similar. See also next n.

¹⁰ See W. Eck, *ZPE* 90 (1992) 199: ὑπατεύ[ον]τος τῆς ἐπαρχίας τοῦ λαμπριότατου ὑπατικοῦ Γ. Ἰουλίου Ὀκταουίλου Οὐλοουεῖνα Ῥογατιανῶ κτλ. On p. 201 Eck argues that the titlature of Rogatianus indicates that the terminology used to describe Priscus shows only that he was a temporary governor of a *provincia Caesaris*, i.e. Coele Syria. If Coele Syria was meant in Priscus' case, then it is more likely that he would have been described as governor of Syria. The need to identify him as a "temporary governor" stems from the fact that Priscus was dispensing justice in Antioch. I would maintain that it is easier to explain Priscus' presence and titlature on the grounds that he was governor of Mesopotamia and *corrector*. The combination of a provincial governorship and superior *imperium* over other provinces appears in a number of cases in my second table (pp. 277f.). Eck's further point that ὠπατικός is used to describe contemporary governors who are not, strictly speaking, consulars is an important example of the change in administrative terminology in precisely this period. For another example see *AE* 1991 n. 1513: ἀγαθῆ τύχῃ | τὸνλαμπρότα[ον] | ὑπατικὸν Κυ[ίν]τον Φάβιον Κλώδιον Ἀγριπιανὸν | Κελεῖνον | ἡγεμόνα Φρυγία[ς] | καὶ Καρία[ς].

Previous studies of extraordinary governorships have tended to group governors of "double provinces" with holders of *imperium* who were empowered to give instructions in provinces that had regularly appointed governors of their own. I have separated the two groups, as I believe that the two phenomena are distinct.¹¹ I have also excluded individuals if they are not attested by documentary evidence, or an explicit statement to this effect in the literary sources that can be regarded as reliable, a decision that somewhat reduces the third century examples in my second category.¹² I also exclude all governors of *Daciae tres* who are firmly attested after the death of Marcus Aurelius, as the provinces seem to have been permanently placed under the command of a consular governor by that point. The inclusion of these officials would serve only to lengthen the list without changing the point.¹³

a) Governors of Multiple Provinces from Tiberius to Marcus Aurelius

name	provinces	period	principal sources
1. P. Memmius Regulus	Moesia, Achaea, Macedonia	35-41 (44?)	Dio 58.28.5; <i>PIR</i> ² M 468
2. Cn. Domitius Corbulo	Galatia, Cappadocia	55-60	<i>ILS</i> 232; 9108; Plin. <i>Hist. Nat.</i> 2.180; Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 13.8; <i>PIR</i> ² D 142 Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 14.26.2 ¹⁴
	Galatia, Cappadocia, Syria	61	
3. L. Iunius Caesennius Paetus	Galatia, Cappadocia	61-63	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 15.6; <i>PIR</i> ² C 173
4. L. Nonius Calpurnius Asprenas	Galatia, Pamphylia	69/70	Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 2.9.1; <i>IRT</i> n. 346; <i>PIR</i> ² N 132 ¹⁵
5. Cn. Pompeius Collega	Galatia, Cappadocia	76	<i>ILS</i> 8904
6. M. Hirrius Fronto Neratius Pansa	Galatia, Cappadocia	79	<i>IGR</i> 3, 125; <i>AE</i> 1968, 145; <i>PIR</i> ² N 56
7. A. Caesennius Gallus	Galatia, Cappadocia	80-82	<i>CIL</i> 3, 12218; <i>ILS</i> 263; 228; <i>PIR</i> ² C170
8. L. Antistius Rusticus	Galatia, Cappadocia	90-93	<i>AE</i> 1925, 126; <i>PIR</i> ² A 765

¹¹ K. Dietz, *Chiron* 19 (1989) 443-447 is the most recent that I know of.

¹² The first questionable case is Decius' command in 249, on which see Zos. 1. 21. 2 παρακάλει τούτων τὸν Δέκιον τῶν ἐν Μυσία καὶ Παιονία ταγμάτων ἀναδέξασθαι τὴν ἀρχήν with A. Stein, *Die Legaten von Moesien* (Budapest 1940), 57-58: Decius had been legate of lower Moesia in the reign of Alexander Severus (*PIR*² M 520). I am not convinced that Pacatianus took charge of these provinces after Severianus (as suggested by Stein, *Die Legaten*, 56 on the basis of Zos. 1.20.2 τὰ δὲ Μυσῶν τάγματα καὶ Παϊόνων Μαρίνων). My skepticism is based upon the fact that while Pacatianus is well attested at Viminacium, Decius was able to defeat him very quickly in 249. This suggests that he did not have full control over the Pannonian legions. I am similarly skeptical of efforts to create the same supra-provincial command for Aemilianus in 252 (Potter [n. 1], 319 n. 328), as well as for Ingennus and Regilianus later, though in both cases I would concede that these views are not impossible. The evidence used to support the claim of such a command Varius Macrinus in the reign of Alexander Severus is simply *HA*, *V. Alex.* 58.1 *actae sunt res feliciter et in Mauretania Tingitana per Fufium Celsum et in Illyrico per Varium Macrinum adfinem eius et in Armenia per Iunium Palmatum. atque ex omnibus locis ei tabellae laureatae sunt delatae*. For the value of this passage see R. Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta* (Oxford 1968), 46, "'Varius Macrinus', kinsman of the emperor, is neither authenticated nor plausible; and any characters designated as 'Furius Celsus' and 'Iunius Palmatus' inspire a positive distrust." There are twelve Celsi in the *HA*, only one of whom is attested, while Junius Palmatus looks like a standard fabrication on the part of the author (see Syme, *Ammianus and the Historia Augusta*, 58-9 and 172).

¹³ For a list see B Thomasson, *Laterculi praesidium* 1 (Göteborg 1984) col. 154-160.

¹⁴ *Corbulo in Syriam abscessit, morte Ummidii legati vacuum ac sibi permissam*. R.K. Sherk, "Roman Galatia: the Governors from 25 B.C. to A.D. 114", in *ANRW* II 7.2 (1980) 987 argues convincingly that Corbulo retained Galatia-Cappadocia until the arrival of a new governor for that province in 62 (at Corbulo's request, Tac. *Ann.* 15.3.1 *scripseratque Caesari proprio duce opus esse, qui Armeniam defenderet; 15.6.3 nam, ut rettuli, proprium ducum tuendae Armeniae poposcerat*).

¹⁵ For the chronology see W. Eck, *Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian: Prosopographische Untersuchungen mit Einschluss der Jahres- und Provinzialfasten der Statthalter* (Munich 1970) 113.

name	provinces	period	principal sources
9. T. Pomponius Bassus	Galatia, Cappadocia	95/100	<i>CIL</i> 3, 6896
10. Q. Orfitasius Aufidius Umbrus	Galatia, Cappadocia	101/102	<i>AE</i> 1979, 620; <i>PIR</i> ² A 1395
11. P. Calvisius Ruso Iulius Frontinus	Galatia, Cappadocia	105/106	<i>AE</i> 1914, 267; <i>MAMA</i> 7, 193; 8, 21; <i>PIR</i> ² C. 350
12. C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus	Galatia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Armenia Minor	107-ca. 111	<i>AE</i> 1934, 176; <i>PIR</i> ² I 508 ¹⁶
13. L. Catilius Severus Iulianus Claudius Reginus	Cappadocia, Armenia Maior, Armenia Minor	114-117	<i>ILS</i> 1041; <i>PIR</i> ² C 558 ¹⁷
14. C. Julius Quadratus Bassus	Syria, Phoenicia, Commagene	115-117	<i>AE</i> 1934, 176; W.Eck, <i>RE suppl.</i> 14, col. 211
15. Q. Marcius Turbo Fronto Publicius Severus	Pannonia Inferior, Dacia	118	<i>AE</i> 1973, 459; <i>HA v. Hadr.</i> 6,7; 7, 3; <i>PIR</i> ² M 249; Thomasson (n. 13), col. 149
16. M. Claudius Fronto	Moesia Superior, Dacia Apulensis Daciae tres, Moesia Superior	168/9 170	<i>ILS</i> 1098; <i>PIR</i> ² C. 874 <i>ILS</i> 1097 ¹⁸
17. Sex. Cornelius Clemens	Daciae tres	170(?)-172	<i>CIL</i> 8, 20994; Piso (n. 18), 103-5
18. C. Aufidius Victorinus	Hispania Citerior, Baetica	c. 172	<i>AE</i> 1957, 221; <i>PIR</i> ² A 1393
19. "Caerellius Priscus"	Germania Superior, Raetia	172-74?	<i>CIL</i> 13, 6806; Dietz, (n. 11) 443-447
20. L. Aemilius Carus	Daciae tres	173(?)-175(?)	<i>CIL</i> 3, 1153; 1415; 7771 [<i>ILS</i> 4398]; Piso (n.18) 105-6
21. C. Arrius Antoninus	Daciae tres	175 (?)-177	<i>AE</i> 1931, 122; Piso (n. 18), 106-117
22. P. Helvius Pertinax	Moesia Inferior and Moesia Superior; Moesia Inferior; Moesia Superior and Daciae tres	177 177-180 (?)	<i>HA V. Pert.</i> 2.10 <i>AE</i> 1957, 333; 1987, 843; <i>ILS</i> 7139 ¹⁹

¹⁶ He may not have been the last governor of the united provinces, for the governorship of M. Iunius Homullus, see *PIR*² I 760.

¹⁷ For this arrangement see also Sherk (n. 14), 1027.

¹⁸ For discussion of his governorship see I. Piso, *Fasti Provinciae Daciae: die senatorischen Amtsträger* (Bonn 1993), 94-102.

¹⁹ See Piso (n. 18), 117-130; G. Alföldy, *Situla* 14/15 (1974) 209 [*Römische Heeresgeschichte: Beiträge 1962-1985* (Amsterdam 1987) 336].

b) Governors with Supra-Provincial *Imperium* or Holders of *Imperium Maius* and Individuals Referred to as Commanders with Special *Imperium* for a War from Tiberius to Philip the Arab

name	province	governors in provinces under his control, or governors with lesser <i>imperium</i>	period	principal sources
1. Germanicus Caesar	Germania Superior Germania Inferior <i>provinciae transmarinae</i>	C. Silius A. Caecina Largus, <i>PIR</i> S 507 (Germania Superior) A. Caecina Severus <i>PIR</i> ² C 106 (Germania Inferior) Cn. Calpurnius Piso (Syria) Q. Veranius (Commagene) Q. Servaeus (Cappadocia)	14-16 17-19	Tac. <i>Ann</i> 1.14.3. Tac. <i>Ann</i> 2.423.1; <i>Tab. Siar</i> col. 1, 15-16; Eck (n. 9), 195.
2. Drusus Caesar	Pannonia		17-19	<i>AE</i> 1964 no. 228; Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 2.53.1
3. C. Poppaeus Sabinus	Moesia, Achaëa, Macedonia	Latinius Pandusa: <i>PIR</i> ² L 125 (in 17-18) ²⁰ L. Pomponius Flaccus: <i>PIR</i> P 538 (in 18) ²¹ P. Vellaeus: <i>PIR</i> V 231 (in 21) ²² Pomponius Labeo: <i>PIR</i> P 546 (25-33) ²³	15-35	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 1.80.1; 5.10.2; 6.39.3; Dio 58.25.4; <i>PIR</i> P 627 ²⁴
4. Lucius Vitellius	Syria and <i>cuncta quae apud Orientem parabantur</i>		35-36	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 6.32.3; Jos. <i>AJ</i> 18.124 <i>PIR</i> V500 ²⁵

²⁰ Stein (n. 12), 19; Tac. *Ann.* 2.66.1 *eas litteras Latinius Pandus<a> pro praetore Mosiae cum militibus, quis Cotys traderetur, in Thraeciam misit.*

²¹ Stein (n. 12), 19; Tac. *Ann.* 2.66.2 *sed defuncto Pa<n>dusa, quem sibi infensum Rhescuporis arguebat, Pomponium Flaccum, veterem stipendiis et arta cum rege amicitia eoque accommodatiorem ad fallendum, ob id maxime Moesiae praefecit.*

²² Stein (n. 12); Tac. *Ann.* 3. 39 *quae ubi cognita P. Vellaeo (is proximum exercitum praesidebat), alios equites ac leves cohortium mittit in eos...* (the event is a Thracian attack on Macedonia).

²³ Stein (n. 12), 19; note esp. Tac. *Ann.* 4.47.1 (next n.); Tac. *Ann.* 6.29.1 *at Romae caede continua Pomponius Labeo, quem praefuisse Moesiae retulli, per abruptas venas sanguinem effudit;* Dio 58.24.3 ἄλλοι τε οὖν, οἱ μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν δημίῳν, οἱ δὲ καὶ ὑφ' ἑαυτῶν ἀπέθανον καὶ Πομπώνιος Λαβεόν. καὶ οὗτος μὲν τῆς τε Μυσίας ποτὲ ὀκτῶ ἔτεσι μετὰ τὴν στρατηγίαν ἄρξας καὶ δώρων μετὰ τῆς γυναικὸς γραφεὶς ...

²⁴ Stein (n. 12), 18-21, note esp. Tac. *Ann.* 1.10.1 *prorogatur Poppaeo Sabino provincia Moesia additis Achaia ac Macedonia;* 4.46.1 *Lentulo Gaetulico C. Calvisio consulibus decreta triumphii insignia Poppaeo Sabino contusis Thraecum gentibus, qui montium editis incultu atque eo ferocius agitabant;* 4.47.1 *at Sabinus, donec exercitum in unum conduceret, datis militibus responsis, <post>quam Pomponius Labeo e Moesia cum legione...;* 5.10.2 *cum auditum id Poppaeo Sabino: is Macedoniae tum intentus Achaia quoque curabat;* 6.39.3 *fine anni Poppaeus Sabinus concessit vita, modicus originis, principum amicitia consulatum ac triumphale decus adeptus maximisque provinciis per quattuor et viginti annos impositus;* Dio 58.25.4 Ποππαῖος δὲ Σαβίνος τῆς τε Μυσίας ἑκατέρας καὶ προσέτι καὶ τῆς Μακεδονίας Ἰᾶ ἐκεῖνο τοῦ χρόνου παρὰ πᾶσαν ὡς εἰπεῖν τὴν τοῦ Τιβερίου ἀρχὴν ἡγεμονεύσας.

²⁵ The meaning of Tac. *Ann.* 6.32.3 *et cunctis, quae apud Orientem parabantur, L. Vitellium praefecit,* seems to be that Vitellius was placed in charge of all operations connected with the effort to restore Pharasmanes to the Parthian throne. Tacitus' language implies that this involved greater authority than that usually wielded by the governor of Syria. Jos. *AJ*

name	province	governors in provinces under his control, or governors with lesser <i>imperium</i>	period	principal sources
5. Aulus Plautius	Britain		43-47	Dio 60.19-20 ²⁶
6. Cn. Domitius Corbulo	<i>Bellum Armeniacum imperium maius</i> (63)	Ummidius Quadratus Caesennius Paetus	55-63 63-66	Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 13.9.3 Tac. <i>Ann.</i> 15.25.3; Mommsen (n. 25) II 655 n. 1; 853
7. T. Flavius Vespasianus	<i>Bellum Judaicum</i>	Licinius Mucianus	67-69	Tac. <i>Hist.</i> 1.10; Suet. <i>Vesp.</i> 4.5
8. L. Aelius Caesar	Pannonia Superior Pannonia Inferior		136/1 37	<i>ILS</i> 319; <i>IGR</i> 4, 862; <i>HA V. Hadr.</i> 23.13; <i>HA V. Ael.</i> 3.2; <i>PIR</i> ² C 605 ²⁷
9. C. Avidius Cassius	The East		170- 75	Dio 71.3.1; Phil. V. <i>Soph.</i> 563.
10. Theocritus	<i>bellum Armeniacum</i> (?)		215	<i>HA V. Car.</i> 6.1; Dio 77.21. ²⁸
11. Iulius Priscus	The East		247-9	Zos. 1.20, 2; <i>P. Mes.</i> 1.3. 19-20; <i>ILS</i> 9005. ²⁹
12. Severianus	Danubian provinces	Prastina Messallinus ³⁰	244- 48?	Zos. 1. 19.2: Stein (n. 12), 56; 102 ³¹

The reign of Tiberius was remarkable for the number and variety of special administrative dispensations. Germanicus received *imperium proconsulare* in 14 AD when he was retained in command of the war to avenge the disaster of 9 AD, and *imperium maius* when he was sent east to deal with the Parthians. In both cases, Tiberius sought the passage of a *lex* to confirm a *senatus consultum*.³² We do not know what procedure lay behind the extensive command granted to Poppaeus Sabinus, but the view expressed in a standard reference work that the tenure of command in an imperial province depended upon the emperor is, at least in part, insufficient (E. Koestermann, ad *Ann.* 1.80.1). Tacitus' language: *prorogatur Poppaeo Sabino provincia Moesia additis Achaia ac Macedonia* suggests that specific

18.124 ἀνεκάλει δὲ καὶ τὸ στράτευμα ἐπὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα ἐκάστου χειμαδιῶν πόλεμον ἐκφέρειν οὐκέθ' ὁμοίως δυνάμενος διὰ τὸ εἰς Γάιον μεταπεπρωκέναι τὰ πράγματα makes it plain that he held special powers that lapsed with the death of Tiberius. In general see Th. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* (Berlin 1887) 2, 853.

²⁶ Aulus Plautius was in command of an army with the capacity to give orders to other governors prior to the invasion of Britain, hence his position seems analogous to those of L. Vitellius under Tiberius and Domitius Corbulo under Nero (see previous n.).

²⁷ He governed the two provinces by virtue of *imperium proconsulare*, see Dessau's note on *ILS* 319; *IGR* 4, 862 commemorates a citizen of Laodicea ad Lycum who undertook two embassies to L. Aelius Caesar at his own expense.

²⁸ *HA V. Car.* 6.1 *post hoc ad bellum Armeniacum Parthicumque conversus ducem bellicum, qui suis competeat*. For Caracalla's movements at this time see H. Halfmann, *Itinera principum. Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich* (Stuttgart 1986), 225; I am indebted to Dr. Michael Meckler for drawing this to my attention.

²⁹ *P. Mes.* 1.3.19-20 ὑπογραφή Ἰουλίου Πρεῖσκου τοῦ διασημο(τάτου) ἐπάρχου Με(σοποταμίας) διέποντος τὴν ὑπατεῖαν; *ILS* 9005 *rectoriq(ue) Orientis* (n. 10).

³⁰ Stein (n. 12), 102; for doubts see Thomasson (n. 13), 145.

³¹ Zos. I.19.2 Σεβηριανῶ δὲ τῷ κηδετῇ τὰς ἐν Μυσία καὶ Μακεδονία δυνάμεις ἐπίστευεν.

³² Tac. *Ann.* 1. 14.3 (see n. 9 above); Tac. *Ann.* 2.43.1 *tunc decreto patrum permissae Germanico provinciae, quae mari dividuntur, maiusque imperium, quoquo adisset, quam iis qui sorte aut missa principis obtinerent* again reflects a part of the process that is revealed in its entirety by the s.c. de Pisone patre (see n. 9 above).

legislation was involved. Moreover, this passage, like the earlier observation that the provinces of Achaia and Macedonia requested that they be placed under a governor appointed by the emperor occurs in the context of other senatorial business in 15 AD. We cannot now recover the terms of this legislation, but the appearance of *legati pro praetore* in Moesia (nn. 20-23) must raise the suspicion that the *imperium* of Poppaeus was proconsular, and the reason for this may have been that it would enable Sabinus to give instructions to governors whose *imperium* was praetorian.

The case of Vitellius at the end of Tiberius' reign was different. He was simply *legatus pro praetore provinciae Syriae*, but the sources are explicit on the point that he possessed *mandata* from Tiberius that gave him authority beyond the *finis* of the province (see n. 25). It would therefore appear that there were at least two models for the structure of an extraordinary command, one stemming from legislation, the other deriving from the *mandata* that the emperor was entitled to issue to all provincial governors by virtue of his superior *imperium*. (F. Millar, *JRS* 56 [1966] 156-166). If the explanation of these positions that is offered here appears to be somewhat legalistic, the reason is that Tacitus, and, in the case of Vitellius, Josephus, as well as both the *tabula Siarensis* and the *senatus consultum de Pisone patre* all stress the formal aspects of the commands.

It is unfortunate that we know so little about circumstances surrounding Aulus Plautius' appointment to the command of the British invasion. Our sole evidence on this point comes from Cassius Dio, and he does not seem to have been as interested in the formal vocabulary as Tacitus, a point that may be connected with a change in the significance of this language in the early third century AD. But with Corbulo, we have Tacitus, and with Tacitus, further evidence of a stress on legal formalities. Tacitus places Corbulo's appointment in the context of senatorial business, and defines his appointment in terms that suggest the vocabulary of a *senatus consultum*: *Domitium Corbulonem retinendae Armeniae praeposuerat* (*Ann.* 13.8.1). He also makes it clear that, although Corbulo was governor of Cappadocia, he had authority to command troops in Syria. Corbulo landed at Aegeae, and Tacitus suggests that Ummidius Quadratus was concerned lest Corbulo take immediate command of his legions.³⁴ After the death of Ummidius Quadratus, Syria was added to the territory under his direct control, while Caesennius Paetus was appointed to Cappadocia/Galatia.³⁵ Further public action in the case of Corbulo is reflected in the description of the events following upon the defeat of Paetus: *scribitur tetrarchis ac regibus praefectisque et procuratoribus et qui praetorum finitimas provincias regebant, iussis Corbulonis obsequi, in tantum ferme modum aucta potestate, quem populus Romanus Cn. Pompeio bellum piraticum gesturo dederat* (*Ann.* 15.25.3). The overt archaism of *quem populus Romanus Cn. Pompeio bellum piraticum gesturo dederat* looks very much as if it should be a reflection of the document conferring this authority on the general.

By following Tacitus, it is possible to gain some impression of the methods of defining extraordinary powers in the Julio-Claudian age. The ostensible respect for Republican precedent may mimic the practice of Augustus, and reflect the feeling that definable processes were involved. When we lose Tacitus

³³ Tac. *Ann.* 1.76.2: *Achiam et Macedoniam onera deprecantes levare in praesens proconsulari imperio tradique Caesari placuit.*

³⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 13.8.3: *itinere propere confecto apud Aegeas civitatem Ciliciae obvium Quadratum habuit, illuc progressum, ne, si ad accipiendas copias Syriam intravisset Corbulo, omnium ora in se verteret ...* See also Tac. *Ann.* 13. 9.3 *unde discordia inter duces, querente Ummidio praerepta quae suis consiliis patravisset, testante contra Corbulone non prius conversum regem ad offerendos obsides, quam ipse dux bello delectus spes ad metum mutaret.* The point at issue is not Corbulo's superior *imperium*, but rather the chronology: Ummidius hoped to show that the hostages were offered before news of Corbulo's arrival had arrived so that he could take credit. The point appears to have been conceded by Nero as Tacitus says: *Nero quo componeret diversos, sic evulgari iussit: ob res a Quadrato et Corbulone prospere gestas laurum fascibus imperatoris addi* (*Ann.* 13.9.3).

³⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 14.26.2: *Corbulo in Syriam abscessit, morte Ummidii legati vacuum et sibi permissam.* The point here is that although he had superior *imperium* to Ummidius as *dux bellicus*, he was not actually governor of the province. Tac. *Ann.* 15.6.4 makes it clear that Paetus was supposed to be subordinate to Corbulo (*et Paetus, cui satis ad gloriam erat, si proximus haberetur*).

tus we not only lose evidence of this sort, but face the real possibility that, at some point, during or not long after his lifetime, the desire to discuss Pompey's *imperium* in the *bellum piraticum* also ceased to be relevant. One factor here may be the Flavian combination of Galatia-Cappadocia. The creation of the command appears to have stemmed from Vespasian's appreciation of the dual threats to the security of the region, from Armenia and the Caucasian tribes, and the limited number of troops available to control the area. A division of the command would have been an administrative nightmare if a governor of Galatia could not readily call upon the legion based at Melitene as well as that at Satala; but Vespasian may also have desired to avoid creating an office with greater formal power than a provincial governorship. This may explain why the praetorian legates who assisted the governor of Galatia-Cappadocia were directly appointed by the emperor.

The combination of the Dacias under Marcus Aurelius, and the appointment of Avidius Cassius to superior *imperium* in the east may be connected with the military difficulties that coincidentally followed upon the death of Lucius Verus. In these cases, appeals to Republican precedent appear to have been avoided: it is significant that Avidius Cassius' titlature bore no relationship to that of the Julio-Claudian era, even though the range of his authority resembled that of Corbulo. It is also significant that Marcus would appear to have used two different formulas for creating extraordinary commands. The one that Avidius Cassius received involved the governorship of a single province and authority over neighboring governors. In other cases Marcus used the model of the "double" province, which was granted to an experienced general.

The career of M. Claudius Fronto, is an important case in point. He had held a senior command under Verus in the Parthian war, leading the expedition into Armenia, Osrhoene and Anthemusia in 163/4. In 168, while Fronto was governor of Moesia Superior, the Quadi, Marcommani and "other peoples" burst across the Danube into Pannonia and Raetia. He was subsequently governor of Moesia Superior and Dacia Apulensis (168-9), of the three Dacias (169), and of the three Dacias and Moesia Superior (169-70).³⁶ Fronto was thus appointed to an extraordinary command precisely in the area where a threat might materialize, but removed from that where the emperor was campaigning. As a proven commander of large forces, with experience in the region, he may have been an obvious choice. It is precisely at the time of Fronto's appointment to the three Dacias and Moesia Superior that Marcus elevated Avidius Cassius to the post of *corrector* in the east. These two men should therefore be seen as virtual deputy emperors in sensitive regions while the emperor was busy elsewhere. The appointment of Caerullius Priscus (if that is the correct name) to a double province appears to have been made as Marcus was concluding his operations against the Quadi and Marcomanni. He was at Sirmium from 173-75.³⁷

From Tiberius to Marcus Aurelius, there is notable consistency in the imperial government's response to extraordinary situations, the creation of an extraordinary command, but considerable variation in the language used to define these positions. Philip the Arab's appointments of Priscus and Servianus, both in areas where changes in policy towards Rome's neighbors were being set in motion, may well be compared to those of Marcus. The mentality of the emperors (and their advisers) in the second quarter of the third century appears very much to have been that of the late second and early third centuries (Potter [n. 1] 49). There is no reason to think that Philip was unaware of Marcus' methods. Valerian, the father of Gallienus, born in the reign of Severus, was established in a senatorial career by 238. Like Marcus, he appointed a co-emperor as soon as he took the throne. Furthermore, Gallienus had two sons by Cornelia Salonina who were at times associated with his father and himself in the imperial dignity. The eldest of these was P. Licinius Valerianus (*PIR2 L* 184), Caesar in 254, Augustus in 256. He died

³⁶ Halfmann (n. 28), 213; see M. Stahl, *Chiron* 19 (1989) 301, for chronology of the invasions. For Fronto see Piso (n. 18), 94-102.

³⁷ Halfmann (n. 28), 213; Stahl (n. 36), 302-5; for the treaty of 172 with the Marcomanni see Stahl (n. 36), 303.

on the Danube (probably) in 258. The younger, P. Licinius Cornelius Saloninus Valerianus became Caesar during 258 and was murdered at Moguntiacum at the beginning of Postumus' revolt in 260.³⁸

Fergus Millar has recently stressed the point that no emperor between Augustus and Trajan spend any significant amount of time in the eastern provinces (Millar [n. 4], 99-100). The point that also needs to be stressed is that this was not a sign that emperors were unaware of the fact that the empire was too large to be governed effectively from Rome, or felt that the east was less important. Rather, it is a sign of the fact that the emperors of the first century felt that they could use grants of the *imperium maius* in situations where a single provincial governor might not be expected to be able to deal with a complicated situation; and that they were either too old, or inexperienced, to do the job themselves. In such cases, the holder of the command would be equipped with general guidelines within which he was to act.³⁹ In the case of Corbulo, this grant was combined with the governorship of a specific province (and a specific Republican reference). In the second century, Avidius Cassius combined what was effectively the *imperium maius* with the governorship of Syria; and Julius Priscus was governor of Mesopotamia at the same time as he exercised "the highest power," as *rector orientis*.

The Palmyrene claim to control of Syria, as well as the statement that Odaenathus was "*strategos* of the whole east," suggests very strongly that Odaenathus' position was, in Gallienus' eyes, similar to that of Priscus or Avidius Cassius. Given the fact that Palmyrenes appear to have claimed control over Syria in his lifetime, he may even have been a provincial governor with superior *imperium*.⁴⁰ His appointment therefore fits a pattern of response to situations that were considered to be especially perilous. Odaenathus' campaigns against Rome's enemies in Mesopotamia and, it seems, Cappadocia, can therefore be explained as being in keeping with his brief from Gallienus.⁴¹

3. Palmyra and Rome

Roman governors of Syria did not ordinarily describe themselves as "king of kings," and visitors did not ordinarily confuse their wives with the "wife of Caesar," as it seems Manichaean missionaries to Palmyra did in the case of Zenobia.⁴² Roman governors also did not regard their offices as hereditary, but Zenobia appears to have held that Palmyra's superior position in the east did not end with her husband's death, a point that would help explain the break with Rome (Potter [n. 1] 58-59).

The diverse aspects of Palmyrene titulature point to a profound problem in the way that the Palmyrenes saw their relationship with Rome after 262. Although their city was a Roman *colonia*, the Palmyrenes of Odaenathus' day plainly derived their methods of describing the idea of power from more than one source.⁴³ The title "king of kings" is manifestly derived from Persia, and it is not the only

³⁸ *PIR2* L 183; for the circumstances of his death see I. König, *Die Gallischen Usurpatoren von Postumus bis Tetricus* (Munich 1981), 43-51; J.F. Drinkwater, *The Gallic Empire. Separatism and Continuity in the North-Western Provinces of the Roman Empire A.D. 260-272* (Stuttgart 1987), 23-26.

³⁹ See Tac. *Ann.* 1.24.1 *nullis satis certis mandatis*, with reference to Drusus' mission to the Pannonian legions (the obscurity was deliberate, see *Ann.* 1.26.1); Eck (n. 9), 196 reports that the *s.c. de Pisone patre* specified that Piso had contravened the *mandata* of Tiberius and *epistulae* of Germanicus, this is a clear statement that Tiberius had equipped Germanicus with general guidelines for the operation. I discuss this issue more fully in "Emperors, their borders and their neighbors: the scope of imperial *mandata*," in D. Kennedy (ed.), *The Defense of the Roman East* (Ann Arbor 1996)

⁴⁰ Given the fact that Palmyra was in Syria Phoenice and Antioch in Syria Coele, it is possible that this was a double province. In light of the evidence discussed on p. 273, I cannot agree with F. Millar, *JRS* 61 (1971) 1-17 that there was no official Palmyrene control over Antioch.

⁴¹ For the Mesopotamian operations see Zos. 1.39.1-2; *HA V. Gall.* 10.1-3; 12.1 (with consular dates); George p. 716 (Mosshammer p. 467); for the intervention in Cappadocia see George p. 717 (Mosshammer, p. 467).

⁴² W. Sundermann, *Mitteliranische manichäische Texte kirchengeschichtlichen Inhalts* (Berlin 1981), 42 fr. 3.3; she is also called "Queen of Tadmor."

⁴³ The implication of the title had changed in important ways by the third century, indicating that a city was important rather than that it had a settlement of Roman citizens, see F. Millar, *The Roman Coloniae of the Near East: a Study of Cultural relations*, in H. Solin and M. Kajava (edd.), *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History* (Helsinki

Persian title attested amongst the high officials of Palmyra after the victories of the early 260s (J. Cantineau, *Inventaire* 3, 9). Furthermore, there was obviously some difficulty with the actual understanding of the trappings of imperial power at this period, a tendency to separate the symbols used to express the idea of power from the actual office. This is not only true in Palmyra, and, significantly, much of our evidence is concentrated in the third century.

In the reign of Alexander Severus, two "usurpers" named Uranius and Taurinus appeared on the eastern frontier. Uranius was evidently connected with Edessa, we don't know where Taurinus operated, but coincidental evidence suggests that it was on the Euphrates (Potter [n. 1] 20-21 n. 55). Their rise may be coincidental the crisis that ensued upon Ardashir's victory over the Arsacids, and the death of the governor of Mesopotamia in a mutiny (Dio 80.3.4). In 253, Uranius Antoninus of Emesa took it upon himself to lead the defense of his part of Syria against a renewed Persian invasion.⁴⁴ As Sapor destroyed a large Roman army at the battle of Barbalissos and captured all the legionary bases in Syria during 252, it is unlikely that there was any significant Roman force left the area. What makes his activity particularly interesting is that he decided to issue coins with his image on them, imitating Roman forms, but not in a way to suggest that he claimed the throne.⁴⁵ Indeed, he does not seem to have tried to assert control outside his civic territory. None of these people appears to have been a commander in the regular army. All three appear to have asserted themselves when the local imperial administration was in a state of disarray.

Similar conduct seems to be attested in the case of Flavius Jotopianus who led a revolt in the reign of Philip, and issued coins with his portrait on them.⁴⁶ Jotopianus' coinage may be explained as the result of a decision on his part to emphasize his importance in the eyes of his supporters. If all he needed was money, he could simply have used whatever he took from the Romans. It is also interesting that his moneyers did not aim at close reproduction of imperial detail: the legends, although in Latin, exhibit some confusion in giving his titulature. One explanation for this, as is also the case with similar problems in the coinage of Uranius Antoninus, is that the people who made these coins were not very familiar with the technical significance of the symbols they were borrowing. It appears, that in their view, Latin was the language of power and the language in which such expressions should be couched even if they were not quite sure about what they were doing.

The conduct of Jotopianus appears to have been very much more like that of the ex-slave Simon who had donned the diadem while leading a social revolution in Peraea during 4 B.C. than even that of Simon Bar Kokba in 132-135.⁴⁷ Simon the freedman's actions were paralleled by his contemporary Athrongaeus who not only wore a diadem, but also sent out his four brothers "as generals and satraps for his raids, while he himself, like a king, handled matters of greater moment." In dressing up as they did

1990), 42-46 on Palmyra, and p. 57 for a general summary of the argument that colonial status did not imply a profoundly Roman culture in most cases.

⁴⁴ The basic study of this man is H.R. Baldus *Uranius Antoninus*. (Bonn 1971). For the chronology see Potter (n. 1), 290-97; 323-6. K. Strobel, *Das Imperium Romanum im 3. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart 1993) attempts to dispute this. The point is demonstrated, independently, by J.-C. Balty, *CRAI* (1987) 213-42; see part. 229-31.

⁴⁵ Cf. Baldus (n. 44), 75-181; see esp. p. 141-42 where he rightly observes that Uranius does not himself lay claim to imperial titles on his gold coins; see also J.D. Breckenridge's review of Baldus, *Uranius Antoninus*, *AJA* 79 (1975) 396-7 on some features of the coinage that suggest that the mint workers did not understand Latin.

⁴⁶ *RIC* IV, 3, p.105 for his coinage. For the minting of coins as the mark of a claim to the throne see *HA Tyr. Trig.* 26.2 *quem alii archipiratam vocassent, ipse se imperatorem appellavit. monetam etiam cudi iussit*; 31.3 *cusi sunt eius nummi aerei, aurei et argentei, quorum hodieque forma exstat apud Treviros*; *HA Quad. Tyr.* 2.1 *cum ille diceret Firmum, qui Aureliani temporibus Aegyptum occupaverat, latrunculum fuisse, non principem, contra ego mecumque Rufius Celsus et Ceionius Iulianus et Fabius Sossianus contenderent dicentes illum et purpura usum et percussa moneta Augustum esse vocitatum, cum etiam nummos eius Severus Archontius protulit, de Graecis autem Aegyptiisque libris convicit illum ἀὐτοκράτορα in edictis suis esse vocatum.*

⁴⁷ For details see E. Schürer (ed. F.G. Millar and G. Vermes), *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ I* (Edinburgh² 1973), 535-57.

the activity of these two men recalls that of yet another native of the region, the slave Eunus, who assumed the name Antiochus while leading the Sicilian slave rebellion in 136 B.C..⁴⁸

By the time of Alexander Severus, Roman control over Mesopotamia was neither long established or very well rooted. Even though they no longer held royal titles, the descendants of the traditional dynastic families retained great influence in their old cities. Among the marks of distinction borne by these old families when they had retained their thrones, were senatorial insignia and control of their own coinage.⁴⁹ The continued use of the *ornamenta* by members of the house of Edessa into the third century now seems to be confirmed by a recently discovered papyrus. Aelius Septimius Abgar (Abgar IX) is described as *mlk' dmyqr bhpty' b' rhy*, "King who was honored with ὑπατεία at Urhai" (Edessa).⁵⁰ The qualification *dmyqr b' rhy*, "who was honored at Edessa", in his Roman title suggests that it had only local importance, and one explanation of this curious phrase is that he was given the *ornamenta consularia* rather than a position within the imperial government. The same conclusion can be drawn about the description of Odaenathus as λαμπρότατος ὑπατικός on three inscriptions from the grand colonnade at Palmyra and one from the temple of Baalshashamîn.⁵¹ In this connection it may also be significant that he styled himself "Lord of Palmyra."⁵² In 1937 Henri Seyrig drew another link between the house of Odaenathus and the royal house at Edessa, when he observed that the attire of Palmyrene princes on tokens resembled that of Edessene kings.⁵³

Assumption of the outward symbols of power was the first and most essential feature of any claim to superiority over one's fellows. Thus, in the case concerning the priesthood of the temple of Dmeir, Caracalla was told, "there is a sanctuary of Zeus among us that is famous, and thus is visited by all of the people in the surrounding countryside, they go there and participate in sacred processions. Here is the first crime of our adversary. He claims to be immune from liturgies and wears a gold crown, he holds a scepter in his hand and proclaims himself a priest of Zeus. Can he be judged worthy of such a privilege?"⁵⁴ Some years later, when members of the Christian community at Antioch wrote to Aurelian about Paul of Samosata, they said, "... he sets his mind on higher things, clothing himself with worldly honors and wishing to be called *ducenarius* rather than bishop he parades about the *agora* dictating letters as he walks, attended by a large bodyguard that goes before and behind him... He astonished the simple by preparing a lofty throne and tribunal for himself and he has a *secretum* after the fashion of the

⁴⁸ Cf. Jos. *BJ* 2, 57-9 (Simeon); 2, 61 (Athrongaeus); Diod. 34/5, 2, 41 (Eunus as Antiochus).

⁴⁹ D.C. Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King* (London 1984), 123-8; part. 126.

⁵⁰ J. Teixidor, *ZPE* 76 (1989) 220-221. S.K. Ross, *ZPE* 97 (1993) 190 points out that the assumption of royal insignia by Abgar may have taken place while the imperial regime was in disarray. This is possible, but it is significant that his year 1, if, as seems likely, he was using a count based on the Seleucid year, cannot have begun before October 1, 239 (his year 2 is attested on a document dated to December 240, and I do not understand why Ross (p. 196) thinks that his year 1 can begin as early as December 238, especially as he provides a convincing demonstration (p. 202-3) that the Seleucid year began in October). This is more than a year after the Persian invasion of 238. Ross (p. 191) translates the passage in question as "who was honored with the consulship at Orhai", and then argues (p. 200) that the text is really a parallel for *δέπων τὴν ὑπατείαν* in *P. Mes.* 1.3, implicitly arguing that the proper translation is "king who was honored with the highest power", an intriguing suggestion which would, if correct provide a further illustration of the integration of Roman and Semitic terminology to form a local "dialect of power". This may also be seen in the description of Edessa as "the baris city which is the grandmother of all the cities of Mesopotamia", on which see Ross (p. 199).

⁵¹ Gawlikowski, "Les Princes de Palmyre" 254-55, three of these texts are dated to 257/8.

⁵² For the position of Odaenathus' family in Palmyra see Potter (n.1), 381-90. Swain, *ZPE* 99 (1993) 164, questions the relevance of the description of Odaenathus as "our lord" on *CIS* II.3945 on the grounds that it is simply an honorific title used by a guild in honoring Odaenathus. He ignores the parallel offered by *CIS* II 3944 and the fact that the language is atypical of Palmyrene honorific decrees.

⁵³ H. Seyrig, *Syria* 15 (1937) 3 and pl. VI n. 1-3. Palmyrene art shows some interesting variation in the representation of Gods between Roman and Native styles, again suggesting that both images remained acceptable; see esp. M. Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra* (London 1976) 46 and 51.

⁵⁴ P. Roussel and F. de Visscher, *Syria* 23 (1942) 173-194; for a parallel case a century and a half earlier cf. C. Clermont-Ganneau, "Un edit du rois Agrippa II", *RAO* 7 (Paris, 1906), 54-76.

rulers of the world and styles himself after them."⁵⁵ In another case, Malalas' story about Uranius, it is said that the hero went out to meet Sapor in his priestly garb and that Sapor was so impressed by his appearance that he agreed to a conference.⁵⁶ If a man wore the proper clothes, he could command respect.

The prominent position given to outward appearance in these stories is surely indicative of the importance of self display in the minds of their reporters. The Antiochene Christians in fact emphasize that just by looking like a Roman magistrate (not claiming to be one) Paul could "astonish the simple."

Paul of Samosata was not charged with usurping the functions of an imperial official but with seeking the respect due to one. This seems, on a very much larger scale, what Uranius had done. His claim to be emperor of Rome is nowhere clearly expressed. Imperial titulature is avoided on his bronze and silver coinage, there is much ambiguity on his gold which seems to be the result of the somewhat uncomprehending copying of the designs for them from other issues. He fought the Persians successfully and then adopted the outward appearance of the sort of people who did this. Odaenathus came from a city which, though allied to Rome, was still closely connected with the cultural life of Iranian dominated Mesopotamia. Persian forms of authority were as familiar and meaningful as Roman ones.⁵⁷ Thus they might be (and were) adopted as easily as those of Rome by a man who wished to express his new won glory. The activities of Uranius and Paul of Samosata, serve to illustrate the importance of visual media for conditioning people's attitudes towards authority. This may be seen equally clearly in the case of a few freaks. The one false Nero who is described in Tacitus' *Histories* does not seem to have borne a close physical resemblance to the emperor, but he knew enough to mimic the public image of that ruler best known in the Greek East—that of a man skilled at singing and playing the lyre.⁵⁸ The same attributes were assumed a few decades later by Terentius Maximus (Suet. *Nero* 57, 3). In 221 a pseudo-Alexander appeared on the Danube and traveled as far as Chalcedon. He seems to have learned how to act like Alexander (and Dionysus) from observing Caracalla on his march east.⁵⁹ These characters suggest that the concrete images of Rome's rule came in other circumstances to provide the symbols with which abstract notions of power and influence were given expression in very different ways.

The appointment of Odaenathus can be seen from the perspective of the central government as conforming to an established pattern of crisis management. The Palmyrene response to this appointment, and, indeed, to the remarkable successes that they obtained on the battlefield, however, seems to conform to a very different, Syrian, pattern of expressing authority, borrowing the symbols that were associated with the idea of authority from the central government.

4. Perception of the Central Government

In the first century AD Pliny the Elder described Palmyra as a rich city with a destiny of its own between two mighty empires; but in the 260s it is fair to say that Palmyra was, in the eyes of its inhabitants and other Syrians, the center of the world, a power before which both Rome and Persia had to give way.⁶⁰ Understanding of Palmyra's position at this time needs therefore to proceed from two directions, from Rome and from Palmyra itself. Roman policy between 262 and 268 is readily explicable in terms

⁵⁵ Eus. *HE* 7.30. 8-9. The charge against Paul could technically have been construed as *maiestas*, see *D.* 48.4.3 *quive privatus pro potestate magistrature quid sciens dolo malo gesserit*. It is therefore of some interest that Aurelian did not decide to take it that way and told the leaders of the church in Syria to submit the case to the arbitration of the bishops of Italy.

⁵⁶ Mal. p. 296 καὶ ἐξεληθὼν ὁ ἱερεὺς τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ὀνόματι Καμνιγέραμος μετὰ βοθησίας ἀγροικικῆς καὶ πενδύβωλον ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ καὶ προσερχηκῶς ὁ Καπώρης, βασιλεὺς Περσῶν, ἱερατικὸν σχῆμα, παρήγγειλε τῷ στρατῷ τῷ ἰδίῳ μὴ τοξεῦσαι κατ' αὐτῶν μητὲ ἐπελθεῖν αὐτοῖς μητὲ πολεμῆσαι αὐτοῖς εἰς πρεσβείαν δεχόμενος τὸν ἱερέα.

⁵⁷ Millar (n. 3), 319-36 for the ambiguities of Palmyrene culture.

⁵⁸ *T. Hist.* 2.8-9; cf. G. Chilver, *An Historical Commentary on Tacitus Historiae I- II ad loc.*

⁵⁹ Dio 77, 18; cf. F.G. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford 1964), 214-18.

⁶⁰ Plin. *Maiores NH* 5.88 *Palmyra urbs nobilis situ, divitiis soli et aquis amoenis, vasto undique harenis includit agros, ac velut terris exempta a rerum natura, privata sorte inter duo imperia summa Romanorum Parthorumque, et prima in discordia semper utrimque cura.*

of Roman practice, and the Palmyrene response must be seen in terms of the cultural matrix of Syria. The question of Odaenathus' titulature is an epiphenomenon of this problem, and of the deeper question that must pervade the history of this period: the meaning of Romanization.

Fergus Millar has recently noted that by the Roman Near East presented an extraordinarily heterogeneous picture at the beginning of the fourth century AD. There were isolated pockets of profoundly Roman culture, others profoundly Hellenic, and yet more that remained distinctively Semitic (Millar [n. 4] 521-32). The language that enabled these different groups to speak to each other was Greek. The central government built roads, collected taxes, administered justice, and provided protection from outsiders. When the state failed in this fourth purpose, it would appear that in Syria, at least, there was a profound ambivalence to the relevance of Roman authority and its traditions. At the beginning of the third century, Hippolytus of Rome wrote in his note on *Daniel* 4 that "as a matter of fact the currently ruling beast is not one race, but it assembles and equips power for itself in preparation for war from all tongues and all races, they are all called Romans, but they are not all from one country." A similar failure to perceive the empire as a union, rather than an assemblage of different peoples under the control of distant emperors is evident in the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, and the consequences of this are evident in the actions of Odaenathus' successors.⁶¹ The veneer of cultural Hellenism that enabled the diverse inhabitants of the empire to speak to each other did not mean that they necessarily shared a single vision of their world, or similar understanding of the power that ruled them.

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⁶¹ Hipp. *In Dan.* 4.8: νυνὶ δὲ τὸ νῦν κρατοῦν θηρίον οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἔθνος, ἀλλ' ἐκ πασῶν τῶν γλωσσῶν καὶ ἐκ παντὸς γένους ἀνθρώπων συνάγει ἐαυτῷ καὶ παρασκευάζει δύναμιν εἰς παράταξιν πολέμου. For *Orac. Sib.* 13 see Potter (n. 1), 153-54.