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THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE BRONZE HERAKLES FROM MESENE: VOLOGESES IV'S WAR WITH ROME AND THE DATE OF TACITUS' *ANNALES*

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THE INSCRIPTIONS ON THE BRONZE HERAKLES FROM MESENE: VOLOGESES IV'S WAR WITH ROME AND THE DATE OF TACITUS' *ANNALES*[*]

A recently published inscription from Seleucia on the Tigris provides valuable new information on the status of lower Mesopotamia in the first half of the second century AD. This has important consequences for our understanding of several quite distinct problems: the nature of Hadrian's settlement with Parthia, the background of Marcus Aurelius' Parthian war, and the date of Cornelius Tacitus' *Annales*. In the first instance, it suggests that Parthia could not reassert control over the vital kingdom of Mesene in the years after Hadrian's withdrawal and that this state remained allied to Rome. The status of Mesene in these years not only helps us to a better understanding of the situation in Mesopotamia, where the departure of Roman armies did not mean that Rome ceased to exercise considerable influence, but also casts light upon an important point for our understanding of the literary career of Tacitus, whose *Annales* have traditionally been dated on the basis of references to the general state of affairs in the east during his own time. Finally, the inscription provides new insight into the career and policy of Vologeses IV (plate VII B 5a). He emerged as the sole ruler of Parthia in 147/8 after a period of chaos in Parthian politics that the Romans appear to have nurtured carefully for several decades after Hadrian withdrew his armies, and restored the power of Parthia to such an extent that he felt able to invade the Roman empire in 161. The invasion of Mesene now appears to have been the first step in his program.

In the spring of 1984 the Iraq Museum acquired the inscribed bronze copy of Lysippos' "Weary Herakles," recently found by chance in the ruins of Seleucia. On the right thigh there is a complete Greek inscription recording Vologeses IV's removal of the statue from Mesene in 151 to the temple of Apollo τοῦ χαλκῆς πύλης προκαθημένου at Seleucia. The left thigh has a damaged inscription in Parthian providing the same information, with some minor variations.[1] The first full publication of the text, by Fabrizio Pennachietti, appeared in *Meso-*

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[*] I attended the conference at Turin where this text was first presented, and I am deeply grateful to Roberta Venco Ricciardi, Anny Allara and Fabrizio Pennachietti for their hospitality on that occasion. I am also grateful to Dr. J.F. Matthews and the editorial board of the *Journal of Roman Studies* for permission to reproduce the map that is figure 1, to the Kelsey Museum at the University of Michigan for plate VII B 6, to the Ashmolean Museum for plate VII B 2-5 (and especially to Dr. C.J. Howgego for his speedy provision of them), and to the American Numismatic Society for plate VII B 1. I owe a further debt to Dr. P. Stylianou for advice and for locating items not in the University of Michigan library, and to Dr. E.A. Bauerle and to Professor John Dillery for their comments on earlier drafts.

[1] The precise details of the discovery are not recorded. In 1985 the Iraq museum loaned the statue to the exhibition entitled "La terre tra i due Fuimi," which opened at Turin on April 23 of that year. A preliminary transcription of the Aramaic text by Antonio Invernizzi (who had worked from photographs) was published in the excellent catalog of that exhibit, *La Terra tra i due Fiumi* (Turin 1985) 420-22. An account of the discovery is given by W.I. Al-Salihi, "The Weary Hercules of Mesene,"*Mesopotamia* 22 (1987) 159-67. G.W. Bowersock, "La Mésène (Maisan) Antonine" in *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel. Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg, 24-27 juin 1987* (ed. T. Fahd; Université des sciences humaines de Stras-

potamia 22 (1987) together with an excellent photograph of the statue (figure 65).[2] The text printed here is his, with the exception of E. Morano's reading of line 11, as well as minor editorial changes in the Greek[3]

The inscription

Bronze copy of Lysippus' "Weary Herakles" 85.5 cm x 21 cm (at shoulder 16 cm at waist). Inscribed on both thighs, Greek on the left; Parthian on the right in a variation of the eastern Aramaic alphabet. The Parthian inscription is damaged at the top.

ἔτους τοῦ
καθ' Ἕλληνας
βξυ΄ βασιλεὺς
βασιλέων Ἀρ-
σάκης Ὀλόγασος
υἱὸς Μιραδάτου βα-
{βα}σιλέως ἐπεστρα-
τεύσατο Μεσσήνηι
κατὰ Μιραδάτου βασι-
λέως υἱοῦ Πακόρου τοῦ
προβασιλεύσαντος καὶ
τὸν Μιραδάτην βασιλέ-
α ἐγδιώξας τῆς Μεσήνης,
ἐγένετο ἐνκρατὴς ὅλης
τῆς Μεσήνης καὶ εἰκόνα
ταύτην χαλκῆν Ἡρακλέ-
ους θεοῦ, τὴν μετενεχθεῖ-
σαν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς Μεσή-
νης, ἀνέθηκεν ἐν ἱερῶι τῶ-
δε θεοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ
χαλκῆς πύλης προκα-
θεμένου.

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bourg, *Traveaux du centre de recherche sur le proche-orient et la grèce antiques* 10 [Leiden 1989]) 59-168 was based on Invernizzi's transcription as Pennachietti's edition was not available. J. Black, "The History of Parthia and Characene in the Second Century A.D.," *Sumer* 43 (1984) 230-34 is based upon Black's transcription of the Greek text alone. For the inscription of an object in this manner, an old mesopotamian custom, see P. Bernard "Vicissitudes au gré de l'histoire d'une statue en bronze d'Héraclès entre Séleucie de Tigre et la Mésène," *JS* (1990) 23.

[2] F.A. Pennachietti, "L'Iscrizione bilingue greco-parthica dell' Eracle di Seleucia," *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987) 169-185.

[3] Morano's work is reported by A. Invernizzi, "Héraclès a Séleucie du Tigre,"*Rev. Arch* (1989) 65-77. Morano's own publication of this material is not yet available (for details see Invernizzi, 65 n. 2). I am indebted to Professor G. Windfuhr for advice on this matter. He observes that, "...the reading '17' in the disputed passage is less likely than *bgny*, as is clearly visible on both photographs, there is a well cut 'integral' shape of an 'n' followed by a small boomerang of a 'y' (𐭩𐭤 > 𐭲). What is interesting is the relatively large spaces between the four leters of the word (personal communication)."

1	*[– – –]*	[...]
	YZ[...] '[RŠ]K	YZ.....Arsaces
	WLGŠY MLKYN MLK'	Vologeses, King of Kings
4	*BRY MTRDT ML[K' KT]ŠW*	son of King Mithridates, fought
	'L MYŠN BR' MTRDT MLK'	in Maishan against king Mithridates
	BRY PKWR MLKYN MLK' MTRDT	son of Pakoros, King of Kings. Mithridates
	MLK' MN TMH MRDPW / ḤMK	the king, he expelled from the land. All
8	*MYŠN 'ḤDW / ZNH PTKR*	Maishan he conquered. This statue
	WRTRGN 'LḤ' MH MN	of the god Verethraghna, which he
	MYŠN ḤYTT NYKNDN B	carried away from Maishan, he installs as an
	TYRY BGNY ḤQ 'YMW	offering in the temple of Tiri.

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The kingdom of Mesene (also known as Characene in Greek, Maišan in Aramaic)[4] occupied the lower portion of Mesopotamia from the middle of the second century BC to the early third century AD. The first ruler of independent Mesene appears to have been a satrap of Antiochus IV named Hyspaosines who had been appointed to the *eparchia* of the Erythraean Sea (roughly the area of the later kingdom), and it is fair to assume that he simply declared himself king, instead of satrap, as the Seleucid regime in the East collapsed.[5] Coins attest an independent royal house and may suggest a complex relationship between that house and the Parthians, henceforth until c. 220 AD. The end of the independent coinage and the royal house seem to have been a consequence of the Sassanian revolution, and the kingdom was subsequently given to a member of the Sassanian family: Sapor, son of Sapor I, appears as "king of Mesene" on Sapor I's great inscription at Nagsh-e Rustam.[6]

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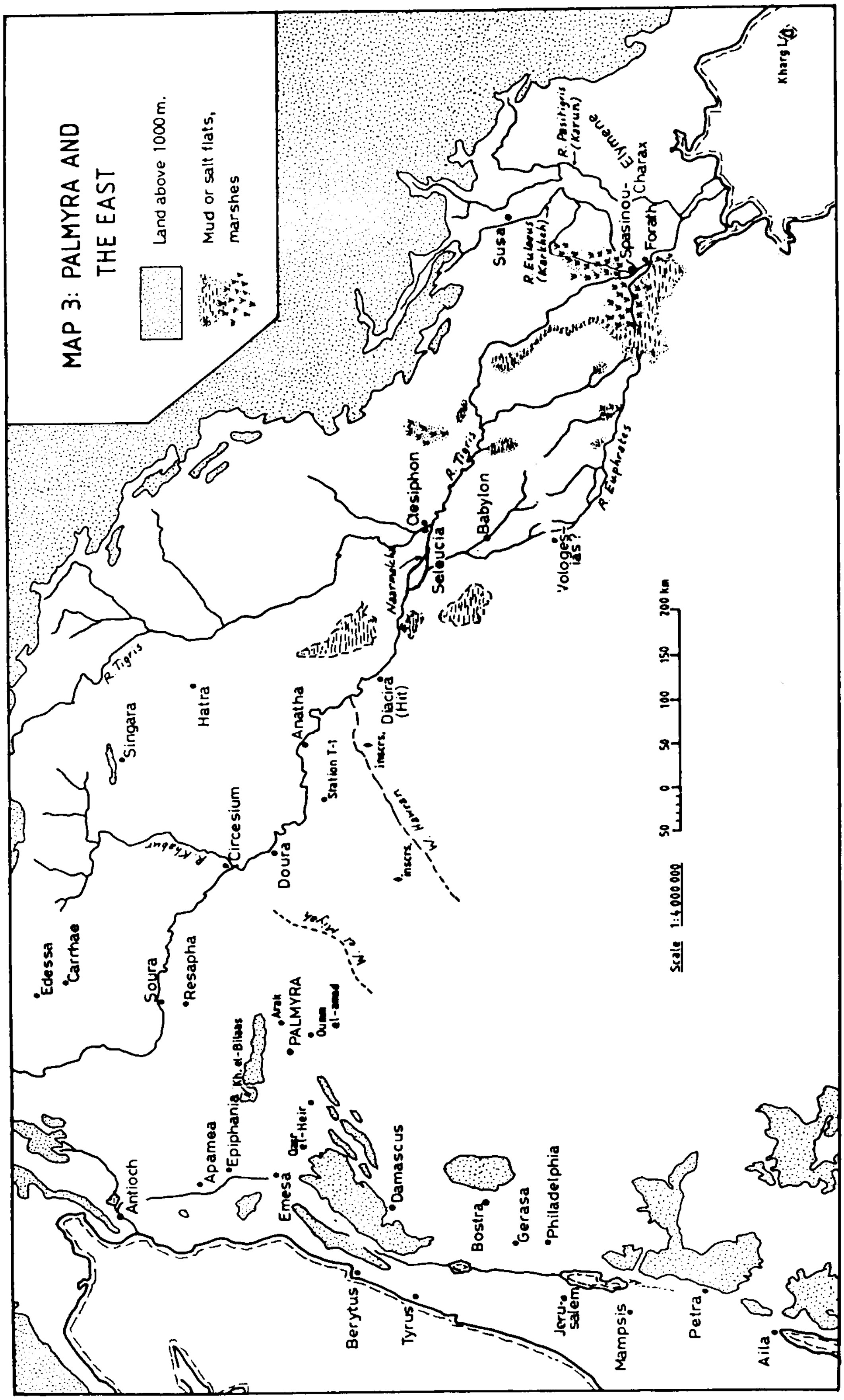
[4] The present text, as well as the *Res Gestae* of Sapor and the Paikuli inscription of Narses (see n. 6) show that Mesene is the proper name for this political entity, and that the old view, that Characene was used to describe the kingdom, and Mesene to describe the region is incorrect (this was proposed by F. Weissbach, "Charakene,"*RE* 3 2117; idem, "Mesene,"*RE* 15 1087; see also S.A. Nodelman, "A Preliminary History of Characene," *Berytus* 13 (1960) 84, J. Obermeyer, *Die Landschaft Babylonien im Zeitalter der Talmuds und die Gaonats* (Frankfurt 1929) 91 is non committal on this point). See also P. Bernard (n. 1) 34.

[5] Plin. *Nat.* 6.139 *postea restituit* [Characene] *Antiochus quintus regum et suo nomine appellavit; iterum quoque infestatum Spaosines Sagdonaci filius, rex finitimorum Arabum, quem Juba satrapen Antiochi fuisse falso tradit*. For details see A.R. Bellinger, "Hyspaosines of Charax," *YCS* 8 (1942) 51-67. Hyspaosines' proclamation must have taken place when he was quite old, as the earliest evidence for his reign dates to the 120s BC, but he lived to be 86 (Luc. *Macr*. 16), so a connection with Antiochus IV is not impossible. For an explation of Pliny's *quintus* see Bellinger, p. 55 n. 16. He may well have been of Bactrian descent. For an attempt to save Pliny's statement that the first king was an Arab, see R.N. Frye, *A History of Ancient Iran* (Munich 1983) 276.

[6] *RGDS*, 41-42. The Paikuli inscription of Narses (*NPi*) shows that the kingdom was ruled by Adurfarroday in 293 who is described as *myšn mlka* though it appears that he had a *dehem*, or crown. For discussion of his position and role in the civil war of 293 see P.O. Skjaervø, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli* 3.2 (Weisbaden 1983) 70. A Mihrshah, brother of Sapor I appears as lord of Meshan in Manichean fr. M. 37, cp. Skjaervø, 11. The Sapor, son of Sapor I, on the Nagsh-e-Rustam inscription may be identified with Sapor the Hargbad of the Paikuli text, for discussion of the office see Skjaevø, 39.


MAP 3: PALMYRA AND THE EAST
Land above 1000m.
Mud or salt flats, marshes
Antioch
Apamea
Epiphania
Emesa
Qasr el-Heir
Damascus
Kh. el-Bilaas
PALMYRA
Arak
Edessa
Carrhae
Soura
Resapha
R. Khabur
Circesium
Doura
Singara
Hatra
R. Tigris
Anatha
Station T-1
inscrs.
Diacira (Hit)
W. Hawran
Naarmalcha
Seleucia
Ctesiphon
Babylon
Vologesias?
R. Euphrates
Susa
R. Eulaeus (Karkheh)
R. Pasitigris (Karun)
Elymene
Spasinou-Charax
Forath
Kharg I.
Berytus
Tyrus
Bostra
Gerasa
Philadelphia
Jerusalem
Mampsis
Petra
Aila
Scale 1:4 000 000
50 0 50 100 150 200 km

The principal city of Mesene was Spasinou Charax, "the camp of Spasinos." It stood on the present site of Naisan on the Shatt al-Arab just to the north of Kurramshahr.[7] Most of our information about its rulers comes from coins, while Palmyrene inscriptions and occasional references in literary texts have hitherto provided the rest of the scanty evidence for their history.[8] The new text adds immensely to this knowledge by showing that Mesene must have been ruled as an independent kingdom by Mithridates (plate VII B 1a), who took the throne just after Trajan's occupation of the area in 116/17 (Pennachietti [n. 2], 178-80). This Mithridates was probably a member of the Arsacid house, and his father Pacorus was probably none other than the Parthian king of that name who held sway at Seleucia in the years before Trajan's invasion.[9] This text also shows that the accepted reconstruction of Mesenian history (based on coins) which suggested that Mithridates was a Parthian client can no longer be accepted (Nodelman [n. 4], 111).

Mesene owed its importance to its position on the sea route from India to the west. It was here that Trajan attempted to set sail onto the Persian Gulf and was foiled by a storm. It was here that he stood lamenting, as he watched a ship sail to India, that he was too old to follow all the way in the footsteps of Alexander (Dio 68.28-29). It was also here that he was received as a friend by the local king (plate VII B 2a), who may already have been at odds with the Parthians.[10] Trajan's expedition came to a halt when the Jewish population of the eastern provinces rebelled and when, possibly encouraged by the Jewish revolt, Abgar VII of Osrhoene started a revolt against Rome in northern Mesopotamia during 117, and inflicted a serious defeat on a Roman force under the consular Appius Maximus Santra. In the wake of these revolts, and with his own health declining, Trajan had to withdraw his armies.[11] Thereafter the situation in lower Mesopotamia and in western Parthia generally remained extremely complex. Mesene passed under the control of Mithridates, and Dura was evidently restored to Parthia under king Parthamaspates, a brother of Mithradates, whom Trajan had placed on the throne.[12] Vologeses III (plate VII B 3a), who replaced Parthamaspates almost immediately after the withdrawal of the Roman army, appears to have taken the throne with Hadrian's blessing,

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[7] J. Hansman, "Charax and Karkheh," *IA* 7 (1967) 25-45.

[8] J. Teixidor, *Un port romain du désert Palmyre, Semitica* 35 (Paris 1984) 36-9 for a collection of the evidence; see also Black (n. 1) 230-1 for an interesting Chinese account of a visit by the Chinese ambassador Kan Ying to Mesene in 97 AD and the discussion of this text in Bernard (n. 1) 46-52.

[9] Pennachietti (n. 2), 178. As Bowersock (n. 1), 165-66 points out, ὁ προβασιλεύσας in l. 11 is imprecise as to the area that he ruled, because it was well known that he was king of Parthia, not Mesene, and that the expression corresponds to *MLKYN MLK'* in the Parthian text and means "king of kings," whereas Mithridates is referred to only as *MLK'* (king). Pennachietti further argues (179) that ΥΙΟΒΑΒΑΣΙΛ on the coins can be expanded as υἱὸς Φοκόρου βασιλέως βασιλέων, a dialectical variation for Pacorus for which there are parallels elsewhere, see Bernard (n. 1), 38.

[10] Dio 68.28; Nodelman (n. 4), 109-10.

[11] Fronto, *Princ. Hist.* 17 (p. 199 van den Hout) *Appius Santra vero, cum praesens Traianus Euphrati et Tigridis portoria equorum et camelorum tribularet, retro ad Balcia Tauri ab Abgare caesus est*. For the text here see D.S. Potter, "The Mysterious Arbaces," *AJP* 100 (1979) 541-42.

[12] J. Teixidor, "Parthian Officials in Lower Mesopotamia," *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987) 187-93. Teixidor points out that this arrangement may have been made by Hadrian on Trajan's instructions just before Trajan died, and thus that these instructions may not have been invented. The invention of these orders is asserted by the author of the *HA, V. Hadr. 9.1-2 inter haec tamen et multas provincias a Traiano adquisitas reli[n]quit...Hadrianus mandata sibi ut faceret secreto a Traiano esse simulabat.*

and subsequently to have taken some care not to upset the arrangements that were made in 117. A passage in the *Historia Augusta* biography of Hadrian, derived at this point from Marius Maximus, catches the tenor of this situation in describing Hadrian's dealings with eastern peoples as follows: *Parthos in amicitia semper habuit, quod inde regem retraxit, quem Traianus inposuerat. Armeniis regem habere permisit, cum sub Traiano legatum habuissent. <a> Mesopotamenis non exegit tributum quod Traianus inposuit* (21.10-12).

The situation in lower Mesopotamia was, however, somewhat more complicated than the author of the *Historia Augusta* allows. Trajan had created three new provinces: Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria. The area of Trajan's province of Mesopotamia mentioned in the biography of Hadrian corresponded roughly to that of the later Severan province. In 1959, A. Maricq argued that the area of Assyria roughly corresponded to the later Sassanid province of Asorestan, the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates south of the line from the Khabour to the Djebel Sindjar to the northern edge of Mesene.[13] But Trajan's province did not, it seems, correspond exactly to this later Sassanid scheme, for he also appears to have planned to include Mesene in his province of Assyria.[14] The evidence for the inclusion of Mesene is provided only by the fourth-century epitomator Eutropius, whose text, however, should be compared to that of Festus, the contemporary epitomator (who is plainly drawing his information from the same source);[15] and the inclusion is also suggested by a passage in Dio. This evidence is as follows:

> Eutrop. *Brev*. 8.3.1-2: Carduenos, Marcomedos occupavit et Anthemusi-um, magnam Persidis regionem, Seleuciam, Ctesiphontem, Babylonem; Mes-senios vicit ac tenuit. usque ad Indiae fines et mare rubrum accessit atque ibi tres provincias fecit, Armeniam, Assyriam, Mesopotamiam, cum his gentibus

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[13] A. Maricq, "La province d' 'Assyrie' creée par Trajan. A propos de la guerre parthique de Trajan," *Syria* 36 (1959) 254- 63; F. Lepper, *Trajan's Parthian War* (Oxford 1948) 141-48 for a discussion of Mesopotamia.

[14] C.S. Lightfoot ("Trajan's Parthian War and the Fourth-Century Perspective," *JRS* 80 [1990], 115-126) argues that Trajan never intended to create a province of Assyria. He suggests that the record of this province in Eutropius and Festus reflects propaganda at the court of Valens in the 370s (p. 121-4), and observes that there is no archaeological record of such a province. Lightfoot does not, however, note either the content of Dio's description of Trajan's time in Mesene (especially the key phrase καίπερ ὑποτελεῖν προσταχθείς at 68.28, quoted below) or Fronto's description of Trajan's activity in the *Princ. Hist*. 17 (p. 199 van den Hout). The plain interpretation of *Appius Santra vero cum praesens Traianus Euphrati et Tigridis portoria equorum et camelorum tribularet retro ad Balcia Tauri ab Abgare caesus est* is that Trajan must have been in southern Mesopotamia. He could not otherwise have been described as setting *portoria* for both the Tigris and the Euphrates while *praesens* (a phrase which further suggests a province with boundaries on both rivers). The absence of archaeological evidence for a province that only existed for a few months in an area where there has not been extensive excavation cannot be used to support any conclusion. The fact that Eutropius and Festus were obviously drawing upon a common source (not discussed by Lightfoot) suggests that this particular description of Trajan's activity cannot be localized in the reign of Valens. I would not deny Lightfoot's main point, that dreams of Trajanic glory were current at Valens' court in the 370, only his argument that these dreams were based on an inaccurate estimate of what Trajan had done.

[15] For a survey of connections between Eutropius' *Breviarium ab urbe condita* and that of Festus see J.W. Eadie, *The Breviarium of Festus. A Critical Edition with Historical Commentary* (London 1967) 88-98. I do not share his belief that Festus read Eutropius, and the passages that he adduces, while there are occasional similarities of diction (as in the passages under discussion here), do not show a close and sustained reading of one author by the other and more likely betray the use of a common source. For more on the connections between the fourth century epitimators see D.S. Potter. *Prophecy and History in the Crisis of the Roman Empire. A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* (Oxford 1990) 356-80.

quae Madenam attingunt. Arabiam postea in provinciae formam redegit. in mari rubro classem instituit, ut per eam Indiae fines vastaret. Cf. Festus, *Brev*. 20: ... Carduenos, Marcomedos obtinuit, Anthemusium, optimam. Persidis regionem, Seleuciam, Ctesiphontem, Babyloniam accepit ac tenuit, usque ad Indiae fines post Alexandrum accessit. in mare rubro classem instituit. provincias fecit Armeniam, Mesopotamiam, Assyriam quae inter Tigridem atque Euphraten sita inriguis amnibus instar Aegypti fecundatur.

Dio 68.28: ὅτι ὁ Ἀθάμβηλος ὁ τῆς νήσου ἄρχων τῆς τῷ Τίγριδι οὔσης πιστὸς διέμεινεν τῷ Τραϊανῷ, καίπερ ὑποτελεῖν προσταχθείς, καὶ οἱ τὸν Χάρακα τὸν Σπασίνου οἴκοῦντες (ἐν δὲ δὴ τῇ τοῦ Ἀθαμβήλου ἐπικρατείᾳ ἦσαν) καὶ φιλικῶς αὐτὸν ὑπεδέξαντο.

Dio's reference to the imposition of tribute shows that Mesene was to be included in a Roman province. Eutropius' *Messenios* are the Mesenians, and the plan for a fleet reported by him and by Festus could only have been possible if Mesene were to be taken under direct Roman rule.[16] In the end, most of this province of Assyria was returned to Parthia, but the Seleucia inscription suggests that Mesene itself, while no longer under direct Roman rule, remained independent under Mithridates until 151, and thus that it could have been considered a Roman client state between 117 and its annexation by Vologeses IV. The fate of Mithridates offers some support for this proposition, for the inscription says that he was "driven from the land," but not killed. The most likely place for him to have gone was the province of Syria.

Further evidence for the situation in western Parthia and lower Mesopotamia in the years after Trajan is provided an the inscription honoring the Palmyrene merchant Soades. This Soades was active in the trade that ran up the Tigris from Spasinou Charax to Vologesias, the great Parthian emporium that had been founded by Vologeses II at the end of the Naarmalcha south of Ctesiphon,[17] and Palmyra. Among Soades' various acts, which spanned the later part of the reign of Hadrian and extended into the reign of Antoninus Pius, was the foundation of a temple to the Augusti at Vologesias itself.[18] This dedication has been taken as evidence for "Parthian appreciation of the importance of commercial links with the west " (Matthews, [n. 17], 166) and so it is; but it is also testimony to perceptions of the status of Rome vis-à-vis Parthia at the time. It is difficult to believe that any Parthian king, no matter how appreciative he might be of the trade through Palmyra, would have endured the erection of a monument to the Caesars on the very doorstep of his capital unless he had recognized Rome's paramount power in Mesopotamia. He might also have feared that Rome might intervene in favor of his rival Chosroes, who tried to gain the upper hand in a propaganda war by asking for the return

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[16] See Eadie ad loc. for discussion of this point. Eutropius' inclusion of the province of Arabia at this point, seems to me to be the result of careless composition.

[17] A. Maricq, "Vologésias, l'emporium de Ctésiphon" *Syria* 36 (1959) 264-76, see also J.F. Matthews, "The Tax Law of Palmyra: Evidence for Economic History in a city of the Roman East," *JRS* 74 (1984) 165-66.

[18] R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, "La voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hit au ii^{e} siècle ap. J.-C. d'aprés une inscription retrouvée au s.-e. de Palmyre (Mars 1930)," *Syria* 12 (1931) 105-15; Teixidor (n. 8), 47-8. See also Bowersock (n. 1), 160-161.

of the royal throne that Trajan had taken away.[19] The shrine at Vologesias is one sign of the care that Vologeses took to maintain good relations with the emperors. Otherwise, when a problem arose in 123, Vologeses appears to have given in to Roman demands and agreed to meet with Hadrian on the Euphrates,[20] and when there was a question about the status of Armenia in 140 he was restrained by a letter from Pius.[21] It may also be this state of affairs that facilitated the movement of Palmyrene merchants into the local administration of lower Mesopotamia under the kings of Mesene. An inscription that is dated to 131 honors the Palmyrene Iarhai son of Nebouzabados who was serving as satrap of Thilouna (modern Bahrain) under Mithridates,[22] while another inscription, unfortunately very badly preserved, attests another Palmyrene holding some other office in Mesene, possibly in roughly the same period.[23]

The Parthian attitudes towards the settlement with Hadrian changed after the accession of Vologeses son of Mithridates in 148/49: this much is obvious from the inscription under discussion here. There is no evidence for the early years of Vologeses IV, and no evidence to explain how he came to the throne. All we know is that his father Mithridates IV (plate VII B 4a) appears to have been an independent dynast on the Iranian plateau (Black [n. 1] 231), and it is possible that Vologeses acceded through violence, or that he was selected by the nobility of the realm.[24] In any event, he apparently felt that there was no need to continue with the

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[19] *HA ,V. Hadr*. 13.8 *invitato etiam Cosdroe rege Parthorum remissaque illi filia, quam Traianus ceperat, ac promissa sella, quae itidem capta fuerat* [Hohl printed *Osdroe*, the reading of P, a corrector of that manuscript gives *Cosdroe*; this is a Latinization of the Parthian Kusru, which appears on the coins of this monarch]. Chosroes may have been the brother of Mithridates IV, the father of Vologeses IV (for this possibility see Pennachietti, (n. 2), 182; for his coinage, which is the main evidence for his activity after 117 other than the *Historia Augusta*, see D. Sellwood, *An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia* (London 1971) 233). Chosroes had been the ruler at Ctesiphon at the time of Trajan's Parthian war and thus had a particular interest in this throne. At this time Rome's relations with Parthia may have been similar to those which obtained during the period of dynastic chaos in Parthia during the later years of Augustus' reign, for which see P. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford 1990) 437.

[20] *HA V. Hadr. 12.8 bellum Parthorum per idem tempus in motu tantum fuit, idque Hadriani conloquio repressum est.* It is possible that the king involved on this occasion was not Vologeses, but rather his ephemeral rival: if so, then there is no record of trouble between Vologeses and Hadrian. But, as it does not seem that Chosroes ruled in Ctesiphon after 117, I think it unlikely that he was the Parthian king who dealt with Hadrian in 123, for this meeting seems to have been regarded by the Romans as a major event (see R. Syme, "*Problems about Janus*," *AJP* 100 (1979) 207= *Roman Papers* 3 1194). On the other hand, nothing certain can be asserted on the basis of Roman propaganda and the question must be left open.

[21] *HA V. Pii* 9.6 *Parthorum regem ab Armeniorum expugnatione solis litteris reppulit; ILS* 1076 mentions troops sent to Syria by Pius *ob [b]ellum Parthicum* under the command of L. Neratius Proculus, but this is a reference to the Armenian incident mentioned in the Historia Augusta and nothing came of it, cf. R. Syme, "Hadrian and the Vassal Princes," *Athenaeum* 59 (1981) 278= *Roman Papers* 3 1441.

[22] H. Seyrig, "Inscriptions grecques de l'agora de Palmyre," Syria 22 (1941) 253-55. For his duties see Teixidor (n. 14), 192 and Bernard (n. 1), 40 for discussion of Thilouna. For some possible further evidence of Palmyrenes (and more on Thilouna) in Mesenian service see D. Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity* 2 (Oxford 1990) 147-8.

[23] D. Schlumberger, "Palmyre et la Mésène," Syria 38 (1961) 256-260. For the extension of Mithridates' power to Oman see Potts (n. 22), 324-6.

[24] Parthian and Sassanid succession depended upon the ability of the prospective king to obtain the consent of the great nobles of the kingdom. The clearest exposition is provided by *NPi*, 5-18 and is reflected in a number of Tacitus' accounts of Parthian politics, see *Ann.* 2.2.1 *legati a primoribus Parthis, qui Vononem vetustissimum liberorum eius accirent*, 6.31; 12.10. See also Frye (n. 5), 220.

policy of his predecessor, thus, he drove Mithridates from Mesene in 151, replacing him with Orabzes II. The statue of Herakles that was set up in Seleucia was plainly taken from Mesene to advertise the victory, and it was likely to have been one of a number of trophies removed to this end.

The chief divinity of Mesene was the god Nergal, who was identified with the Iranian god of good luck, Vahram (Verethraghna), who was himself identified with Herakles. But the statue of the standing Herakles at Seleucia should not be identified with the main cult statue of the god at Mesene, for coins reveal that this representation was of a seated divinity.[25] The statue was therefore not a very important object, but it would still have been useful to advertize the victory in Seleucia, which had been held for a long time by Pacorus, father of Mithridates (Bowersock [n. 1], 165). But why was it placed in the temple of Apollo τοῦ χαλκῆς πύλης προκαθημένου? The principal temple of Apollo at Seleucia appears to have been that of Apollo Komaios, whose cult statue was taken to Rome by Lucius Verus' army in 165 and placed in the temple of Palatine Apollo.[26] The specific characterization of the temple in this text as being that of Apollo τοῦ χαλκῆς πύλης προκαθημένου suggests that it is not the same as that of Apollo Komaios, since the use of the epithet shows that care was being taken to indicate that this temple is not the same as some other temple of Apollo (Black [n. 1], 232-3). The reason why this temple, and not that of Apollo Komaios, was selected as the new home for Herakles may stem from the nature of the cult of Apollo,[27] and from beliefs about the apotropaic powers of Herakles. The first point is connected with the proper meaning of προκάθημαι. The word can mean "defending" (and it has been translated this way by most scholars working on this text),[28] a meaning that derives from the primary meaning of the word, which is "to sit before." In fact, when the simplex form is used in the context of statues, it invariably denotes a sitting cult statue.[29] Coins from Seleucia depict a seated male deity

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[25] Nodelman (n. 4), 98-99; see in general H. Seyrig, "Héraclès-Nergal" *Syria* 24 (1944-5) 62-80, and the new evidence for the cult of Herakles in the Persian Gulf in J.B. Connelly, "Votive Offerings from Hellenistic Failaka: Evidence for Hercules Cult," *L'Arabie préislamique et son environment historique et culturel* 145-58. For die identification of Herakles with the Zoroastrian *yazata* Verethraghna (associated with victory) see M. Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism* 2 (Leiden 1982) 40-41; see plate VII B 2b.

[26] Amm. Marc. 23.6.24 *qua per duces Veri Caesaris, ut ante rettulimus, expulsata, avulsum sedibus simulacrum Comei Apollonis perlatumque Romam in aede Apollonis Palatini deorum antistites collocarunt*. For the character of Apollo Komaios, a cult of Macedonian origin that was brought to Seleucia by Macedonian settlers, probably under Seleucus I, see L. Robert, "Eulaios, histoire et onomastique," *OMS* 2 977-87. Invernizzi (n. 3) 74-87, has argued at length for the identification of the temple mentioned here with that of Apollo Komaios.

[27] This point must, however, remain speculative, and the identification of this cult with that of Tiri does not help clarify the issue. Since Achaemenid times, Tiri was the Zoroastrian *yazata* who had been identified with the Babylonian Nabu, the god who was regularly identified with the Greek Apollo. For the early history of Tiri and Nabu see M. Boyce (n. 27), 31-3, for Nabu and Apollo see H.J.W Drijvers, *Cults and Beliefs in Edessa* (Leiden 1980) 64-69, and Invernizzi (n. 3), 79. and Bernard (n. 1), 52-62.

[28] The exception is Black (n. 1).

[29] Hdt. 1.183.1 ἔνθα ἄγαλμα μέγα τοῦ Διὸς ἔνι κατήμενον χρύσεον; 2.149.2 καὶ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρῃσι ἔπεστι κολοσσὸς λίθινος κατήμενος, Strabo 13.1.41 πολλὰ δὲ τῶν ἀρχαίων τῆς 'Αθηνᾶς ξοάνων καθήμενα δείκνυται; Paus. 1.14.4 πεποίηται δὲ καθήμενος 'Επιμενίδης Κνώσσιος; *id*. 1.26.4 τούτου [sc. Daedalus] καθήμενόν ἐστιν 'Αθηνᾶς ἄγαλμα; *id*. 1.42.3; 2.3.4; 2.10.2; 2.13.5; 2.17.5; 2.20.1; 2.23.4; 2.30.1; 2.37.1; 5.17.1; 5.18.3; 7.5.9; 7.21.11; 7.26.4; 8.93; 9.2.7.

with a kalathos and lyre who has been identified as "some local concept" of Apollo,[30] and this may very well be none other than Apollo τοῦ χαλκῆς πύλης προκαθημένου himself. It is therefore possible that here, as at Mesene, the image of the god was seated and that the placement of the statue of Herakles recreated the scene in Mesene. There may, however, be more to the selection of this site than simple artistic coincidence. At Hatra, Herakles was designated as the "protector of the gate," the *Gnd* or fortune of the gate. Standing here, in a temple of Apollo that was located near one of the gates of the city, this Herakles could thus also be seen as representing the "fortune" or "protection" of the city as Apollo's agent.[31]

Vologeses IV's attack on Mesene could have had implications for Parthian relations with Rome. But it did not. Antoninus Pius, an elderly man, was not given to significant military expeditions: *defendere magis provincias quam amplificare studens* (Eutrop. *Brev*. 8.8.2). His empire was a fortress surrounded by walls, his frontiers marked the limit between the barbarian world and the Roman empire.[32] He had little interest in foreign adventures and his policy towards the eastern frontier appears to have been to maintain the status quo wherever possible. There is no sign that he did anything about Mesene, and we know nothing about any dealings with Vologeses IV, unless he was the king who asked for the return of the throne that Trajan had taken away (a request that Antoninus refused).[33] It may well have seemed to Pius that Mesene was a distant land that was not worth fighting for, and it seems clear from Palmyrene texts that the change of regime did nothing to interrupt the flow of trade.

While the conquest of Mesene may not have had immediate consequences for trade, the lack of a strong Roman response can only have inspired Vologeses to greater boldness. The attack on Mesene may be seen as the first move in a program of Parthian reconquest. Vologeses was clearly an ambitious man: wars with Rome were not to be undertaken lightly, and he was the aggressor in the war that broke out in 161. At that time he sought to restore Parthian hegemony over Armenia, and it is clear that he was planning to do so even while Pius was still alive.[34]

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[30] R.H. McDowell, *Coins from Seleucia on the Tigris*, University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series 37 (Ann Arbor 1935) 137 see plate VII B 6.

[31] Invernizzi (n. 3), 109-10; Bernard (n. 1), 66. For the Hatran evidence see W. Al-Salihi, "Further Notes on Hercules-GNDA at Hatra," *Sumer* 38 (1982) 137-40.

[32] App. *Praef*. 28 τήν τε ἀρχὴν ἐν κύκλῳ περικάθηνται μεγάλοις στρατοπέδοις καὶ φυλάσσουσι τὴν τοσήνδε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ὥσπερ χωρίον. Note also the interesting description of Hadrian's activity (possibly from Marius Maximus), which implies that his frontier policy was seen as drawing a line between the Roman and barbarian worlds in *HA V. Hadr*. 12.6 *per ea tempora et alias frequenter in plurimis locis, in quibus non barbari non fluminibus sed limitibus dividuntur, stipitibus magnis in modum muralis saepis funditus iactis atque conexis barbaros separavit*. For more on this theme see Potter (n. 15), 288-89, *BMCR* 1 (1990). See also n. 43 below.

[33] *HA V. Pii* 9.7 *sellam regiam Parthorum regi repetenti, quam Traianus ceperat, pernegavit.* If Vologeses IV was a relative of Chosroes, this could explain why he renewed the request of Chosroes for the throne as a family heirloom, but so could his evident desire to restore Parthia to the position it had enjoyed be-fore Trajan's invasion. It is also somewhat difficult to see why Vologeses III would have waited so long before asking for the throne himself.

[34] *HA V. Pii* 12.7 *alienatus in febri nihil aliud quam: de re p. et de his regibus, quibus irascebatur*; *HA V. Marc*. 8.6 *fuit eo tempore etiam Parthicum bellum quod Vologessus paratum sub Pio*; for the circumstances see A.R. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius. A Biography* (New Haven 1987) 121.

Mesene and the date of Tacitus' *Annales*

The Seleucia inscription has implications for our understanding of the eastern frontier that may help clarify the difficult question of the date of Tacitus' *Annales*.[35] There are three possibilities that have received strong support. One is that the *Annales* were written between 108 (the probable date for the completion of the *Historiae*) and 116, a date suggested on the grounds that Parthia is described as a major power in *Ann*. 2.60;[36] another is that the history could have been composed over a span of more than a decade, coming to an end after the death of Trajan, but that the Tiberian books were composed before 116; the third is that Tacitus wrote between 112 and some time after 117. The latter case has been argued in recent years most often, and most forcefully, by Sir Ronald Syme.[37] The first view has had various advocates, and it has now been enshrined in a standard commentary and given preference in a standard introduction to Tacitus' work.[38] The second position found its most trenchant supporter in J. Beaujeu.[39] In all cases, the argument comes down to the interpretation of one passage: *exim ventum Elephantinen ac Syenen, claustra olim Romani imperii, quod nunc rubrum ad mare patescit* (*Ann.* 2.61.2). To what does *mare rubrum* refer? The choices are the modern Red Sea, or the Persian gulf, both known in antiquity as the Red Sea.[40] If it is the modern Red Sea, then the reference is to the conquest of Arabia in 106, a proposition that has received powerful support from G.W. Bowersock's demonstration that the frontier of Roman Arabia extended well down this body of water (Bowersock [n. 36], 518-520), and from the fact that Tacitus had described the revenues (and thus the extent of the realm) of Egyptian Ramesses as comparable to that of Rome or Parthia at the time of his writing: *haud minus magnifica (sc. tributa) quam nunc vi Parthorum aut potentia Romana iubentur* (2.60.4).[41] If the

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[35] The bibliography on this question is extensive; for a survey see S. Borzsák, "P. Cornelius Tacitus," *RE suppl.* xi 467. I cite here the discussions which seem to me to be the most important and limit my remarks to those points which seem to me to be critical to the debate.

[36] G.W. Bowersock, "The Greek-Nabataean Bilingual Inscription at Ruwwāfa, Saudi Arabia," *Le monde grec. Hommages à Claire Préaux* (Brussels 1975) 518-520. For earlier proponants of this view see R. Syme, Tacitus (Oxford 1958)768.

[37] Syme (n. 36) 465-80, esp. 470-471; idem, "How Tacitus Wrote *Annals* I-III," *Historiographia Antiqua. Commentationes Lovanienses in honorem W. Peremans septuagenarii editae* (Louvain 1977) 259-262= *Roman Papers* 3 1038-1040; idem, "Tacitus: Some Sources of his Information," *JRS* 72 (1982) 69-71 = *Roman Papers* 4 203-4.

[38] F.R.D. Goodyear, *The Annals of Tacitus ii* (Cambridge 1981) 387-393 (ignoring Bowersock's article); R.H. Martin, *Tacitus* (London 1981) 31.

[39] J. Beaujeu, "Le *mare rubrum* de Tacite et le problème de la chronologie des *Annales*," *REL* 38 (1960) 200-235

[40] For a thorough survey see Beaujeau (n. 39), 204-225 and K. Mras, "Babylonische und Erythraeische Sibylle," *WS* 29 (1907) 32. The only other occurrence of *mare rubrum* in Tacitus definitely refers to the Persian Gulf: *eos regredientes* (Hyrcanian ambassadors to Rome) *Corbulo, ne Euphraten transgressi hostium custodiis circumvenirentur, dato praesidio ad litora maris rubris deducit unde vitatis Parthorum finibus patrias in sedes remeavere* (*Ann*. 14. 25.2), although this point is not decisive in favor of the Persian Gulf at 2.61.2, it shows that Tacitus did not rigorously observe the distinction between the *Persicus sinus* and *mare rubrum* that is evident in Pliny (as argued by Bowersock [n. 36], 519-20).

[41] As Beaujeu, (n. 39), 211 points out, "est-il vraisemblable que Tacite, ayant rédigé cette allusion triomphante pendant les quelques mois où l'empire toucha le golfe Persique, ne l'ait pas effacée quand les précaires conqêtes de Trajan furent évacuées?" He goes on to point to the description of Armenia at *Ann*. 2.56 1: *ambigua gens ea antiquitus hominum ingeniis et situ terrarum, quoniam nostris provinciis late praetenta penitus ad Medos porrigitur*, and he argues that it is inappropriate at a time that it was a Roman province. Syme's ar-

mare rubrum of 2.61.2 is the Persian Gulf, then this must be a reference to Trajan's conquest of lower Mesopotamia, and the evidence adduced in the preceding pages on the status of Mesene may help strengthen this case, for it may then be possible both to describe Roman boundaries extending to the Red Sea and Parthia as a power in the years after 117, even if Vologeses III was pursuing an obseqious policy towards Rome.

Before any more is said on this matter, it is necessary to look at the way that Tacitus thought about the nature of Roman control. If he felt that Rome's writ ended at its provincial boundaries, the question may be closed here, and the reference can only be to *provincia Arabia*, for the passages adduced in note 41 above (especially *Ann*. 2.60.4) show that it would be very hard indeed to fit Tacitus' references to the eastern frontier into the context of Trajan's campaigns. But if the Tacitean *claustra* are simply geographical points that mark boundaries of the provinces, as opposed to limits of the imperium of Rome (a distinction does seem to emerge from 2.61 where the *claustra olim Romani imperii* stand in opposition to *quod* [sc. *imperium*] *nunc rubrum ad mare patescit)*, then it is possible that he is describing the situation in the east after 117.[42] On any chronology, Tacitus was writing before the massive fortifications of the Hadrianic empire made the image of the empire as a fortified camp a natural one for a Roman to choose.[43] Indeed, in his description of the empire in *Annales* 4, it is evident that he did not think this way at all, but rather that he considered Rome's client kingdoms part of the empire. Thus he wrote:

> Mauros Iuba rex acceperat donum populi Romani. cetera Africae per duas legiones parique numero Aegyptus, dehinc initio ab Syria<e> usque ad flumen Euphraten, quantum ingenti terrarum sinu ambitur, quattuor legionibus coercita, accolis Hibero Albanoque et aliis regibus, qui magnitudine nostra prote-guntur adversum externa imperia. et Thraeciam Rhoemetalces ac liberi Co-

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gument, "if nothing else, Roman pride or resentment counselled him to let the words stand" (p. 471 [above, it. 35]), is not a strong one in this instance. For discussion of 2.60.4 *legebantur et indicta gentibus tributa, pondus argenti et auri, numerus armorum equorumque et dona templis ebur atque oderes quasque copias frumenti et omnium utensilium quaeque natio penderet, haud minus magnifica quam nunc vi Parthorum aut potentia Romana iubentur* see Goodyear's note on 2.61.2 (for others who make the same point see Syme [n. 35], 769 n. 2), for the Roman conception of empire in terms of a list of peoples ruled that appears in this passage see B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire* (Oxford 1990) 394-401.

[42] The word *claustrum* is simply used to refer to certain geographical points elsewhere in Tacitus' work, cf. *Ann*. 2.59. 3; *Hist*. 2.82.3.

[43] See n. 32, above. This change in imperial ideology is an important one (and one not generally observed in studies of the subject). Tacitus' view, as shown here, is in line with the earlier position that Rome's rule extended over all peoples who sought her protection (and should expand to cover the earth). For a survey of this point (but not discussing the changes of the second century), see Brunt (n. 19), 434-39. Isaac (n. 41), 27, denies the relevence of the evidence collected in n. 32, but he was not aware that the language of the sibylline oracles suggests that the view evident in Appian, Pausanias, and Aelius Aristides was not restricted to a peculiar minority, but that it must have received broad circulation. I have argued elsewhere that the Romans were conscious of the difficulty in illustrating their ideological principles in concrete terms; see "*The Tabula Siarensis*, Tiberius, the Senate and the Eastern Boundary of the Roman Empire," *ZPE* 69 (1987) 269-76. In that article I suggested that the arch placed *in montis Amani iugo* was in fact located at Platanus on an important stopping point on the road on the eastern slope (*iugum*) of Mt. Amanus, which I also refer to as the grove on Amanus, an attractive site notable for its plane trees; it was placed there to symbolize the eastern extension of Rome's power. The western arch mentioned in the *tabula Siarensis apud ripam* Rheni has now been identified on the east bank of the Rhine opposite the Roman camp at Moguntiacum, see H.G. Frenz, "The Honorary Arch at Manz-Kastel," *JRA* 2 (1989) 120-5.

> tyis, ripanique Danuvii legionum duae in Pannonia, duae in Moesia attinebant (*Ann*. 4.5.2-3).

This discourse was introduced with the words: *quod mihi quoque exsequendum reor, quae tunc Romana copia in armis, qui socii reges, quanto sit angustius imperitatum* (*Ann*. 4.4.3). Furthermore, when he describes the preparations for Corbulo's campaigns under Nero, Tacitus says that instructions were given to the client kings along the eastern frontier to ready their forces to battle:

> haec aque talia vulgantibus, Nero et iuventutem proximas per provincias quaesitam supplendis Orientis legionibus admovere legionesque ipsas pro<p>ius Armeniam collocari iubet, duosque veteres reges Agrippam et <Ant>iochum expedire copias, quis Parthorum fines ultro intrarent, simul pontes per amnem Euphraten iungi; et minorem Armeniam, Aristobulo, regionem Sophenen Sohaemo cum insignibus regiis mandat (*Ann*. 13.7. 1).

It is plain from these statements that Tacitus regarded the client kings he mentions as being within the area that Rome ruled, and thus that he did not see a great distinction between the provinces of the empire and client states when he thought about the extent of the Roman *imperium*. Thus, since Mesene remained a client kingdom after Hadrian's withdrawal, the reference to the extension of the *imperium* to the *mare rubrum* could very well be appropriate, in his mind, for the whole period between Trajan's conquest and 151 (though I am not suggesting that he lived so long).[44] This point may not be sufficient to prove that *Ann*. 2.61.2 must refer to the period after 116/17, but it should be sufficient to show that the condition of Mesene offers a viable alternative to *provincia Arabia* for the interpretation of this passage.

Consideration of Tacitus' working habits offers a second line of approach. The Younger Pliny included three letters to Tacitus concerning the *Historiae* in Books 6 and 7 of his *epistulae*: two are responses to Tacitean enquiries about his experiences and those of his uncle during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79, the third volunteers information about an act of his own courage (as he saw it) in 93 (Plin. *Ep*. 6.16; 6.20; 7.33). These books contain letters that can be dated to the years 106-7, whence the conclusion that the *Historiae* could not have been finished before 108, when it seems that some parts of it were sent to Pliny for his editorial advice (Plin. *Ep*. 7.20; 8.7).[45] There is no reference to a major work other than the *Historiae* anywhere in the collection. This suggests that Tacitus did not sit down immediately after the completion of the *Historiae* to offer sections of the *Annales* to the public. Considering the rate at which he wrote the *Historiae*, this should not be suprising. In a letter to Titinius Capito, composed, it seems, one year earlier (c. 105), Pliny announced that many people were suggesting that he write a history, but that he was uncertain whether to undertake the task, and—if he did—whether he should take up *vetera et scripta aliis or intacta et nova* (*Ep*. 5. 8.12). This should be taken as an indication that Tacitus' *Historiae* were not yet available

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[44] See also Syme (n. 36), 769 on the use of *patesco* in this context to imply a wide extendion of territory.

[45] See A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny. A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford 1966) ad loc.

some seven years after the completion of the *Agricola*,[46] and it would be another two or three before the project was completed.

Tacitus was clearly not a fast worker (even though there is no need to assume that he spent all his time on this project), and he may well have composed a draft of the whole of the *Historiae* before he gave any of it to the public. This is the conclusion that may be drawn from Pliny's letter about the eruption of Vesuvius, which opens: *petis ut tibi avunculi mei exitum scribam, quo verius tradere posteris possis* (*Ep*. 6.16.1). The implication of the words *quo verius tradere posteris possis* is that Tacitus already had decided to give an extensive description of the eruption and was now asking Pliny for some details about one aspect of the catastrophe so that he could fill out that account. It seems to have taken ten years for Tacitus to finish with the various phases of composition required for the twelve (or fourteen) books of the *Historiae*. Assuming that he worked at a similar pace on the *Annales*, it would not be likely that he would have much of anything done in a form that he might care to give to the public before the time that Trajan invaded Parthia, and this would not have been the finished project. Indeed, it seems that before he wrote anything he read extensively through the available sources for most, if not all, of the period covered by the *Annales*: thus, for example, he is able to remark, in Book 1, on the duration of Poppaeus Sabinus governorship in Thrace, and to bring the memoirs of Agrippina the younger (a source missed by other writers on the period) to bear on questions pertaining to the elder Agrippina's dealings with Tiberius in Book 4.[47] Tacitus was plainly a slow and painstaking author, and it is therefore likely that the *Annales* as we have them were not completed before the death of Trajan in 117 (Syme [n. 36], 473).

In a case like this, certainty is impossible. But the congruence of the two lines followed here, the possibility that 2.61.2 refers to the situation on the eastern frontier after 117, and the the speed with which Tacitus wrote, do indeed suggest that the Annales were still being written in the early years of Hadrian's reign.

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[46] Sherwin-White (n. 45), 353 on ep. 5.8: "...he has not yet heard of or received any volume of the Histories of Tacitus, or been approached by him as in vi.16, 20; vii.33." Even if, as some have suggested, Pliny had heard that the *Historiae* were in preparation, this does not affect my point (for these views see Sherwin-White's note on 5.8.12). I tentatively accept the argument advanced by T.D. Barnes, "The Significance of Tacitus' *Dialogus de oratoribus*," *HSCP* 90 (1986) 225-44 for a date of c. 97 for the *Dialogus*. My argument would not be serious affected if the date of 102, favored by Syme (n. 36), 670-73, were to be preferred. As Syme (n. 36), 109-11, says, a work of history seems to be promised at *Dial*. 11.3 when Tacitus has Maternus say: *iam me deiungere a forensi labore constitui* , and it is clear that Tacitus had not yet planned the *Historiae* as they stand when he wrote Agr. 3.3 *non tamen pigebit vel incondita ac rudi voce memoriam prioris servitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse*, though the idea was clearly in his mind.

[47] Tac. *Ann*. 1.80; 4. 53.2 *id ego, a scriptoribus annalium non traditum, repperi in commentariis Agrippinae filiae, quae Neronis principis mater vitam suam et casus suorum posteris memoravit*; cp. also 4.2.1 where he alludes to the concentration of the guard cohorts in Rome by Sejanus three years before it happened. Note also *Ann*. 1. 81.1 *de comitiis consularibus, quae tum primum illo principe ac deinceps fuere, vix quicquam firmare ausim: adeo diversa non modo apud auctores, sed in ipsius orationibus reperiuntur*, a claim to have examined the relevent evidence throughout the reign before writing this account of an event in 15.

B 1a)

B 1b)

B 2a)

B 2b)

B 3a)

B 3b)

B 4a)

B 4b)

B 5a)

B 5b)

B 6)

B) 1a-b) coin of Mithridates of Mesene. 2a-b) coin of Attembelos III of Mesene; the reverse shows the seated god Herakles. 3a-b) coin of Vologeses III of Parthia. 4a-b) coin of Mithridates IV of Parthia. 5a-b) coin of Vologeses IV of Parthia. 6a) coin of Seleucia on the Tigris depicting the god Apollo seated (courtesy of the American Numismatic Society [1], the Ashmolean Museum [2-5], and the Kelsey Museum, University of Michigan [6])