

## EARLY ROMAN RULE IN COMMAGENE

Modern historians generally understand Roman military occupation and the replacement of local rule by Roman administration and taxation as elements of Roman imperialism. Profound changes of this kind took place in the empire's East during the reign of the emperor Vespasian, when the military dispositions and infrastructure as well as the political and administrative structures were thoroughly reorganized. The central element of these changes was the transformation of Cappadocia into a major military province with a garrison of two legions and many auxiliary units. During the course of these developments, in AD 72,<sup>1</sup> the small Late Hellenistic kingdom of Commagene was invaded and occupied by Roman forces, and its king Antiochos IV, who had been a true and loyal ally, was deposed. The country was incorporated into the Roman province of Syria and a legion was stationed at its former capital Samosata on one of the major crossings of the Euphrates. The circumstances are described in a well-known passage by Flavius Josephus:<sup>2</sup> Caesennius Paetus, the governor of Syria (whether speaking sincerely or out of enmity to Antiochus, was never clearly ascertained), sent letters to the emperor accusing the king and his son Epiphanes of plans to revolt against Rome and claiming that they were in league with the king of Parthia. Vespasian therefore gave orders to terminate their rule, as he felt he could no longer trust the king of Commagene to safeguard the strategic crossing of the Euphrates at Samosata. Paetus invaded Commagene at the head of *legio VI Ferrata*, some *cohortes* and *alae*, as well as royal troops supplied by Aristobulus of Chalcidice and Sohaemus of Emesa. Antiochus, who 'never entertained a moment's thought of a war with Rome', immediately withdrew from the capital, 'hoping thus to clear himself in the eyes of the Romans of the charge under which

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- 1 According to Josephus BJ 7,7,1 the invasion took place during Vespasian's fourth year, i.e. between 1 July 72 and 1 July 73: cf. T.V. Buttrey, *Documentary Evidence for the Chronology of the Flavian Titulature* (1980) 6f. Within that period Vespasian and Titus simultaneously earned two imperial acclamations (9 and 10, viz. 3 and 4). One of those must surely have been the result of the Roman victory in the *bellum Commagenicum*. Both imperial acclamations entered Vespasian's and Titus' titulatures before 1 January 73 (ILS 246. BMC II p.146). Hence, the invasion probably took place in the second half of 72. For the developments in Cappadocia see the contributions 'Cappadocia. Vom Königreich zur Provinz' and 'The development of the Roman forces in north eastern Anatolia', in this volume.
- 2 Jos., BJ 7,7,1–3. F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337* (1993) esp. 80–83.

he lay'. At this stage, the king's sons, Epiphanes and Callinicus, prepared the royal army for battle. Antiochus, however, left his army the next morning and fled to Cilicia, 'thereby breaking the spirits of his own troops'. The two princes, now fearing for their lives, fled to the king of Parthia. In the end, however, Vespasian received Antiochus with great honours in Rome and assigned him revenue sufficient to maintain a regal establishment. Even his sons, who thought it 'intolerable to live outside the Roman empire', were brought back to Rome in honourable style by a Roman military escort.<sup>3</sup> The family never returned to rule in Commagene. Henceforth they led a glamorous life at Rome. Epiphanes' son, who continued to call himself βασιλεύς, even entered the Roman Senate and was honoured by Trajan with a consulship in AD 109.<sup>4</sup>

These events clearly mark a new phase in the Empire's frontier policy in the East. In several stages and over a period of about 5 years this policy led to a new political organization and an entirely new disposition of the Roman legions along the Eastern frontier. Yet the dubious justification of the invasion of Commagene in particular has left many questions open. Some scholars believe this policy to have consisted of an expansion of the empire, others that it aimed at the creation of an advantageous defence line on the banks of the Euphrates.<sup>5</sup> In any event, Commagene is generally understood to have been 'annexed' to the Roman Empire. If this is correct, 'expansion' and even 'imperialism' may equally be fitting terms to describe the events of 72. Those terms then raise numerous questions as to the size and shape of the empire in the period preceding Vespasian's rule, as well as about the former location and functioning of its borders. The question at stake is whether royal rule by local monarchs had anything to do with the notion, Roman or local, of independence. In this respect, the history of Commagene in the early first century AD is an example of what both the imperial Roman and the local understanding of the Eastern frontier and the local political situation in those years may have been.

3 ILS 9200. Jos., BJ 7,7,3.

4 H. Halfmann, *Die Senatoren aus dem östlichen Teil des Imperium Romanum bis zum Ende des 2. Jh.n.Chr.* (1979) 131ff. R.D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Commagene', *ANRW II.8* (1978) 794ff.

5 Expansion: e.g. B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire. The Roman Army in the East* (1992<sup>2</sup>) 39ff. (occasionally confusing Commagene with Cappadocia). S. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy* (1999) 91. Expansion and imperialism: e.g. Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 80ff. Cf. also C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (1994) esp. 56f. Idem, 'Where are the frontiers now?', in: D. Kennedy (ed.), *The Roman Army in the East*, *JRA Suppl.* 18 (1996) 25–41. For a view emphasizing Roman strategic thinking see e.g. E. Wheeler, 'Methodological limits and the mirage of Roman strategy: part I.', *The Journal of Military History* 57 (1993) 7–41. D. Potter, 'Emperors, their borders and their neighbours: the scope of imperial *mandata*', in: Kennedy, *op.cit.*, 49–66.

## I. The Euphrates and the Roman point of view

Ever since the early first century BC Rome had considered the Euphrates the limit of the Roman and Parthian empires.<sup>6</sup> Strabo, writing towards the end of Augustus' reign and in the early years of Tiberius, put it thus: 'The Euphrates and the land beyond it constitute the boundary of the Parthian empire. But the parts this side of the river are held by the Romans ...'.<sup>7</sup> Hence, throughout the first century AD the Euphrates marked a border in Anatolia and through the Fertile Crescent.<sup>8</sup> The degree of Roman control of the vast lands 'this side of the river' was, of course, an entirely different matter, and subject to many changes since the time when Rome had first claimed the Euphrates for its Eastern border. As is well known, allied kingdoms were the predominant political organizations controlling the west bank of the Euphrates until the end of the reign of Augustus. To a lesser extent they continued to play an important role until the reign of Vespasian.<sup>9</sup>

Commagene was one of these kingdoms. It was situated in SE Anatolia, roughly between the Taurus Mountains in the West and the middle Euphrates in the East, and between the Nemrud Dağı in the North and Doliche in the South. Its capital Samosta watched over one of the three major crossings of the Euphrates in Anatolia.<sup>10</sup> The strategic importance of the crossing at Samosata was well known to Rome, as it offered 'a most easy passage' of the otherwise nearly impenetrable<sup>11</sup> Euphrates barrier in Anatolia, not only to Roman armies but also to the

6 Livy, per. 70. 100. Strabo 6,4,2. 16,2,10. Vell. 2,101. Sen., Brev. vit. 4,5. Jos., Ant. 18,4,5. Tac., Ann. 2,58. 6,37. 12,10f. 13,7. 14,25. 15,1. 15,17. 15,26. Tac., Hist. 5,9. Suet., Cal. 14. Plut., Sulla 5. App., Mith. 10. 57. 105f. 116. 118. 121. Dio 36,45,3 and 36,51,1 (cf. also 36,2,5–3,2). 62,22,2. Florus 3,6 and 11. Ruf. Fest. 16. etc. Cf. J. Wagner, *Die Römer an Euphrat und Tigris. Antike Welt, Sondernummer* (1985) 16f. R.D. Sullivan, 'The Dynasty of Commagene', *ANRW II.8* (1978) 763ff. On rivers as borders of the empire cf. in particular Tac., Ann. 1,9. Hist. 4,26. The term 'border' as used in this article is obviously not to be understood in the modern sense, for although the Euphrates was the official *terminus imperii* that, of course, never excluded Roman interventions beyond the river nor did it lead to full Roman military or administrative control of the border in any modern sense.

7 Strabo 16,1,28.

8 Contra: e.g. Whittaker, *Frontiers* (n. 5): 142 'it is becoming clearer that the Euphrates had never, even in the earlier Empire, been the political or military border'. Where the river entered the wide steppe zone and the desert to the south its role as a dividing line naturally became less clear which is why Strabo 16,1,28 goes on to say that some of the Arab chieftains of this area adhered to the Parthians and others to the Romans. For Augustus' relations with the Parthians see esp. Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 27ff. and D. Kienast, *Augustus* (1999<sup>3</sup>) 342ff. For the provincialization of Mesopotamia see the contribution 'Ein Bollwerk für Syrien', in this volume. Rome's varying success in achieving some degree of control over Armenia shaped the development of the Cappadocian frontier: cf. the contributions 'Traian: Bellicosissimus princeps', 'Cappadocia – vom Königreich zur Provinz', and 'The development of the Roman forces in northeastern Anatolia', in this volume.

9 Cf. e.g. D. Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King* (1984) esp. 91ff. Millar, *Near East* (n.2) 1ff.

10 The others were at Melitene and at Zeugma.

11 Impenetrable in particular for large armies and their logistical support.

Parthians, should they ever decide to invade.<sup>12</sup> Pompey, in 64 BC, added to Commagene's territory the city of Seleuceia on the Euphrates (Zeugma) with what was perhaps the most important crossing of the Euphrates in Northern Mesopotamia.<sup>13</sup> Rome, therefore, surely understood Commagene's strategic role in guarding those crossings and in keeping Roman territory safe. This, at any rate, appears to have been what Julius Caesar had king Antiochus I of Commagene (c. 70 – c. 36 BC) and other monarchs in the region promise in 47 BC: 'to watch over and guard the (Roman) province (of Syria)'.<sup>14</sup> In return Antiochus was accepted amongst the most loyal friends of both Caesar and the Roman people. Antiochus, however, appears to have understood Rome's expectations in this respect even before Julius Caesar came by: already in 51 BC he was the first to inform Cicero, then governor of Cilicia, that the Parthians had begun to cross the Euphrates.<sup>15</sup> A first conclusion must therefore be that from a Roman point of view the kingdom of Commagene had lain within the boundaries of the Roman empire since the early first century BC and was expected to fulfil an important strategic role on Rome's Eastern frontier.

Another matter is the degree of dependence of the Commagenian rulers. When Pompey celebrated his military success and his settlement of the East in 61 BC with a triumph in Rome his list of subjected kings also included Antiochus I of Commagene.<sup>16</sup> Only two years later, in 59 BC, Antiochus was granted the *toga praetexta* and official Roman recognition as an allied king.<sup>17</sup> From this time onwards all kings of Commagene proved to be most loyal allies. Antiochus' son, Mithradates II (c.36 – 20 BC), personally led his forces to Actium in support of Marcus Antonius in 31 BC.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless Caesar's heir confirmed the king of Commagene on the throne of his ancestors.<sup>19</sup> That, however, marked the beginning of a new era of dependence and a new phase of increased interventions in Commagene by Rome and its new ruler.<sup>20</sup> From now on the Roman emperor decided who should rule in Commagene.<sup>21</sup> Archaeological and epigraphical evidence suggests that perhaps one of the first measures taken after Actium was to reduce in scale drastically (or perhaps even to terminate) the grandiose royal cult

12 Jos., BJ 7,7,1.

13 Strabo 16,2,3. Plin., NH 5.21. Tac., Ann. 12.12. M. Hartmann / M.A. Speidel, 'The Roman Army at Zeugma: recent research results', in: R. Early et al., Zeugma: Interim Reports. JRA Suppl. 51 (2003) 101ff.

14 Bell. Alex. 65.

15 Cic., Ad fam. 15,1,2.

16 App., Mith. 117 (cf. 106). Plut., Pomp. 45.

17 Cic., Ad Quint Frat. 2,10,2. For gifts conferred upon allied kings together with recognition cf. Braund (n. 9) 27ff. and 42f.

18 Plut., Ant. 61.

19 For the following see G.W. Bowersock, Augustus and the Greek World (1965) 46–51, 57f. Sullivan (n. 4) 775–83. In general: Millar, Near East (n. 2) 29ff.

20 Dio 52,43,1.

21 Dio 54,9,3.

which had been established by Antiochus I.<sup>22</sup> Mithradates now loyally called himself (and his father) Φιλορώμαιοι but he appears to have dropped Φιλέλληνη in both their titulatures. Also, Antiochus I was no longer referred to as Θεός and Δίκαιοι.<sup>23</sup> Both titles had played an important role in describing his extraordinary position within the Commagenian royal cult. The reasons for these changes of the royal titulature are nowhere mentioned but perhaps Mithradates wanted to avoid possible charges of insufficient subordination or of uncertain loyalty. Finally, Mithradates may have had to hand over to Rome (i.e. to the Roman province of Syria) the city of Zeugma with its major crossing of the Euphrates.<sup>24</sup>

In AD 17 king Antiochus III of Commagene died. As a direct result his kingdom was transformed to provincial status.<sup>25</sup> Only two decades later, in AD 38 just after the death of Tiberius, the new Emperor Gaius returned Commagene to the former royal family and added a large part of Cilicia to the new king's rule.<sup>26</sup> Gaius' decision to restore royal rule in Commagene does not appear to have been in line with Tiberius' long-term plans for the region, for it is listed by Cassius Dio among other decisions Gaius took reversing his predecessor's will.<sup>27</sup> Yet, as Dio reports further on, Gaius soon revoked his own decision and took Commagene back again.<sup>28</sup> Hardly a year later, in AD 41, Gaius was murdered. His successor Claudius not only cancelled all of Gaius' decrees<sup>29</sup> but also immediately reinstated Antiochus IV to the throne of his ancestors, thereby even confirming the king's rule over parts of Cilicia.<sup>30</sup> Antiochus IV was a Roman citizen.<sup>31</sup> He ruled his kingdom as a loyal ally of Rome until AD 72 when royal rule in Commagene was terminated for the third time within two generations.<sup>32</sup>

These interventions and the transitions of Commagene from royal to direct Roman rule and *vice versa* confirm the Roman imperial attitude as described by a number of ancient authors towards such dependent kingdoms and their rulers.

22 S. Şahin, 'Forschungen in Kommagene', EA 18 (1991) 116ff. W. Hoepfner, 'Arsameia am Nymphaios und der Allgötterkult Antiochos' I.', in: J. Wagner (ed.), Gottkönige am Euphrat (2000) 65ff.

23 Şahin (n. 22) 102f. 121f. Sullivan (n. 4) 776ff. On Φιλορώμαιοι in general see Braund (n. 9) 105ff.

24 J. Wagner, Seleukeia am Euphrat / Zeugma (1976) 6, but see K. Butcher, in: D. Kennedy (ed.), The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates (1998) 233. Doliche, too, may have been yielded to Rome in 31 BC: J. Wagner, 'Neue Denkmäler aus Doliche. Ergebnisse einer archäologischen Landesaufnahme im Ursprungsgebiet des Iupiter Dolichenus', BJ 82 (1982) 161ff.

25 Strabo 16,2,3. Tac., Ann. 2,56. Cf. text to n. 51ff below.

26 Dio 59,8,2.

27 Dio 59,8,2. Cf. also Suet., Cal. 16.

28 Dio 60,8,1.

29 Suet., Claud. 11. Dio 60,5,1.

30 Dio 60,8,1. Jos., Ant. 19,5,1. King Agrippa of Judaea, who had a very similar fate (Dio 59,8,2 and 59,24,1), was also reinstated by Claudius: Dio 60,8,2. Jos., Ant. 19,5,1.

31 C. Iulius Antiochus Epiphanes: PIR<sup>2</sup> I 149. Halfmann (n. 4) 45f. 132f.

32 See text to n. 88ff.

They were seen as integral parts of the Roman empire and subject to the emperor's rule.<sup>33</sup> Imperial edicts could be designed to include such kingdoms and it was not even unusual for Roman troops to be stationed there.<sup>34</sup> Strabo put it thus: '... all parts of it (i.e. Asia Minor) this side of the Phasis and the Euphrates, except certain parts of Arabia, have been subject to the Romans and the rulers appointed by them.'<sup>35</sup> The Roman understanding was that such kings had no independent right to rule over their country, as their power was a *donum populi Romani*.<sup>36</sup> Such a gift could, of course, be taken away just as easily as it had been granted.<sup>37</sup> Thus, no king or dynast had an independent hereditary claim to the throne of his ancestors. Rather, the Roman emperor was entirely free to replace one king by another or to transfer a country from royal rule to provincial status or *vice versa*. The history of Judea, of course, provides the best known examples for this. Ever since Actium the political fate of such kingdoms had lain in the hands of the Roman emperor. Imperial Rome never considered Commagene or any other such allied kingdom within the empire's boundaries as independent. Their kings ruled for Rome and, in this sense, royal rule in these countries was a form of Roman rule.<sup>38</sup>

- 33 Suet., Aug. 48. Cf. Suet., Aug. 60 and Eutrop. 7,9f. Cf. also Dig. 49,15,19,3 (the *ius postliminii* applied when entering a dependent kingdom). Strabo 17,3,25 describes them as belonging to the emperor's portion of the Empire (as apposed to the Roman people's provinces). Augustus' *breviarium totius imperii* with the list of the *opes publicae* also included *quot ... regna*: Suet., Aug. 101,4. Tac., Ann. 1,11. (For the *breviarium totius imperii* cf. the contribution 'Geld und Macht' (I.), in this volume). The actual degree of dependence naturally varied according to the size and location of the kingdom, and the character of its ruler. On the subject in general Braund (n. 9) passim. H. Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (1996) 29f. F. Millar, *Rome, The Greek World, and the East. Government, Society and Culture in the Roman Empire*. Edited by H.M. Cotton / G.M. Rogers (2004) 229ff. ('Emperors, Kings, and Subjects: The Politics of Two-Level Sovereignty').
- 34 Edicts: Jos., Ant. 19,5,3. Troops: Tac., Ann. 12,15 with M.P. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies II*. (1992) 173ff. ('Bithynian Troops in the Kingdom of the Bosphorus'). 229f. ('The Roman Army in Judea under the Procurators'). According to Tacitus (Ann. 4,5), Rome's greatness (*magnitudo*) extended to protect kingdoms on the eastern frontier (including Hiberia and Albania: cf. Jos. BJ 2,16,4) against foreign powers (*externa imperia*). Cf. also Tac., Ann. 12,45 and 14,26 (Armenia) etc. For further examples see the contributions 'Cappadocia. Vom Königreich zur Provinz', 'Ein Bollwerk für Syrien' and 'Ausserhalb des Reiches?', in this volume, and Braund (n. 9) 94.
- 35 Strabo 6,4,2.
- 36 Tac., Ann. 4,5. Tacitus Agr. 14,2 described such kings as *instrumenta servitutis*. He called them (expressly including Antiochus IV of Commagene) *reges servientes* (Tac., Hist. 2,81), Josephus ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις βασιλεῖς (BJ 5,11,3). According to Strabo 14,5,6 the Romans preferred to rule Cilicia Tracheia by kings rather than by Roman governors because they judged royal rule more efficient than direct Roman rule. Cf. also Appian, Praef. 7.
- 37 Thus Augustus in RgdA 27: *Armeniam maiorem ... cum possem facere provinciam, malui ... regnum id Tigrani ... tradere*. Cf. also Strabo 12,1,4 with Tac., Ann. 2,42. 12,56 (Cappadocia). Strabo 14,5,6 (Cilicia Tracheia) etc.
- 38 Strabo 17,3,24. H. Braunert, *Politik, Recht und Gesellschaft in der griechisch-römischen Antike. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden*. Herausgegeben von Kurt Telschow und Michael

## II. Provincialization: Commagenian perspectives

When Antiochus III died in AD 17 Commagene was put under direct Roman rule, not simply because of the king's death but rather because of turmoil within the country.<sup>39</sup> Two opposing factions appear to have formed, and both sent embassies to Rome. One party (representing the majority according to Tacitus) led by kingdom's noblemen (according to Josephus) requested provincial status for their country, whereas the masses (according to Josephus) wished to continue the monarchical tradition. Whatever the reasons for this development may have been, it seems clear that there was, at the time, no successor to the royal throne of Commagene with the authority to prevent unrest and to unite his people. Instability, however, would inevitably bring Rome into the matter. Thus, as in Judea, Tacitus saw the reasons for provincialization *defunctis regibus aut modicum redactis*.<sup>40</sup>

Very little is known about the internal history of the kingdom of Commagene. Still, there are some indications of recurring conflicts between different groups of its inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> Ethnic divisions between the local Semitic population and the immigrant families with Iranian, Greek and Macedonian roots as well as rivalries within the royal family may have been the background and perhaps part of the reasons for such conflicts. Antiochus' I syncretistic religious programme may well have been intended, in part, to reconcile such differences (and thereby stabilize the king's rule).<sup>42</sup> At any rate, the royal family was not of local origin, Antiochus rather celebrated his Greek and Persian roots.<sup>43</sup> It is interesting, therefore, that a large part of the population of Commagene asked for direct Roman rule after the death of Antiochus III in AD 17. It is perhaps even more interesting that the nobles in particular favoured a radical change in the political structure of the country. Whatever their motivations may have been, it seems clear that there was no stable foundation within Commagene for the continuation of royal rule.

Zahrnt (1980) 294–304 (*'Omnium provinciarum populi Romani ... fines auxi'*). Millar, Government (n. 33) 243 ('Emperors, Kings, and Subjects: The Politics of Two-Level Sovereignty'): 'But what is striking and important is that the kings adopted a public role which very explicitly acknowledged their subordination to a line of superior monarchs' (i.e. the Roman emperors). Statements such as that of E. Honigmann, RE Suppl. IV (1924) 987 s.v. Kommagene: 'Im J. 38 n.Chr. wurde K. noch einmal selbständig' are thus entirely misleading.

39 Tac., Ann. 2,42. Jos., Ant. 18,2,5.

40 Tac., Hist. 5,9. Similarly Strabo 6,4,2.

41 Dio 49,21,2. 52,43,1. 54,9,3.

42 Cf. B. Jacobs, 'Die Religionspolitik des Antiochos I. Von Kommagene', in: Wagner (n. 22) 48f.

43 Cf. e.g. W. Messerschmidt, 'Die Ahnengalerie des Antiochos I. von Kommagene', in: Wagner (n. 22) 37ff.

The inscription of a funerary altar found in the village Sofraz near Adiyaman gives a glimpse of how some leading families received the change to Roman direct rule in AD 18. The main part of the inscription runs thus: <sup>44</sup>

	Μάρκελλος ἥρωσιν
	τοῖς ἐν τῷ ἄνω μνημείῳ
	κειμένοις·
	Μιθριδάτη Ἀντιόχου
5	μονοκρίτη προπάππῳ,
	Λαοδίκη . . . ὁ[υ] Μιθρι-
	δάτου γυναι[κὶ πρ]ο[μάμ]μη,
	Ἀψεβει Ἀντα Τακ[ί]του γυ-
	ναικὶ πάππου αὐτοῦ,
10	Σακέρδωτι πατρὶ αὐτοῦ],
	Λαοδίκη Ἀντα μητρ[ὶ αὐτοῦ],
	Λαοδίκη ἀδελφῆ,
	Ἀψεβει ἀδελφῆ,
	Μαρκέλλῃ Σακ[έρδωτος]
15	υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ θυγ[ατρὶ].
	τοῖς ἐνθ[άδε]·
	Βακχίῳ ῥήτορι [---],
	Μαρκέλλῃ γυναικὶ ἑαυτοῦ,
	Σακέρδωτι υἱῷ καὶ ἑαυτῷ.

This altar was set up by Marcellus, son of Sacerdos, as part of a now-lost two-story-high funerary monument built and decorated in good Greco-Roman fashion of around the mid-first century AD. Its inscription reveals the names of several members of a wealthy Commagenian family stretching over seven generations. The first family member named in the inscription is Mithridates, son of Antiochos (line 4). He carried the otherwise unattested title *μονοκρίτης* which the editors explain as having been a judicial function within the royal administration of Commagene and a sign of his comparatively high social standing. The names of Mithridates and his father recall those of king Mithradates II and of his father Antiochus I. Furthermore, Mithridates' wife Laodike (line 6) carries the same name as the mother of king Antiochus I. These analogies and Mithridates' position within the royal administration date this generation to the second half of the first century BC. From the next generation onwards a distinct change can be observed in the traditions of this Commagenian family. All sons (with the one

44 G. Schmitz / S. Şahin / J. Wagner, 'Ein Grabaltar mit einer genealogischen Inschrift aus Kommagene', EA 11 (1988) 81–95 (the reading presented here is the editors'). = SEG XXXVIII 1544.



possible exception of the ‘rhetor’ Bakchios in line 17) now received decent Roman names: Tacitus (line 8), Sacerdos (line 10) and Marcellus (line 1). Marcellus, the author of the text, named his own son Sacerdos (line 19) and his daughter Marcella (line 18). Marcella (line 14) was also the name of Marcellus’ wife, which shows that other families too had adopted Roman names. If (as seems likely) in such families the choice of names was in any way to serve as a sign of loyalty towards the ruling government, or perhaps rather a sign of the will of such families to belong to those in power, the funerary altar from Sofraz reveals an interesting and surprising turn of opinion. Such families now wished to appear ‘Roman’. The genealogy of Marcellus’ family shows that this must have happened near the introduction of direct Roman rule in AD 18 (though it remains unclear whether this happened before or after that date). The new habit of this family of giving Roman names to their sons apparently did not change after Commagene returned to royal rule in AD 38/41. Yet neither Marcellus, his sons or his ‘romanized’ ancestors appear to have held public office again.

Many Commagenians, in AD 17/18, were not in favour of direct Roman rule and there had been unrest in the kingdom. The Syriac Letter of Mara Bar Sarapion addressed to his son Sarapion may provide an interesting insight into such a situation.<sup>45</sup> The text is a letter of consolation determined mainly by Greek tradition, some biblical history and Stoic moralising. The letter itself contains no precise date or place of origin but the context presented in this document may indeed reflect a real situation. The letter refers to a day of grief, when some friends of the author were forced to leave the Commagenian capital of Samosata as well as their families and possessions, and were unable to return because the Romans would not allow them to do so. Mara Bar Sarapion joined his friends while they were on their way to Seleuceia (which of the many cities with this name is left open). Now in exile, from where Mara was writing, they were longing to return home and hoped for the Romans to act justly. Mara admits that the empire was no cause of any detriment and says that he and his friends were willing to be loyal subjects of Rome.

The only reason possibly referred to in this text why Mara’s friends may have been exiled is that in earlier days when the city was still flourishing many men had made ‘evil speeches’. Mara and his friends, who also appear to have been politically active, had not belonged to this group. They had had different plans for

45 W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (1855) 43–48 (text) and 70–76 (translation). Cf. esp. F. Schulthess, ‘Der Brief des Mara bar Sarapion. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der syrischen Literatur’, *ZDMG* 51 (1897) 365–391, esp. 366–375 with a German translation. Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 460ff. Most recently: A. Merz / T. Tieleman, The letter of Mara Bar Sarapion, in: A. Houtman / A. de Jong / M. Misset-van de Weg (eds.), *Empsychoi Logoi – Religious Innovations in Antiquity* (2008) 107–133 with further literature. These two authors, together with D. Rensberger, are preparing a new edition of Mara Bar Sarapion’s letter, including a translation and interpretive essays.

Samosata, but fate (as Mara calls it) prevented them from being accomplished, and exile appears to have been the result. Much of all this remains enigmatic, as Mara Bar Sarapion was not writing history. However, it seems clear that Rome was in control of Samosata while Mara was writing his letter from elsewhere. The nostalgic reference to the former flourishing days of the city and Mara's admission that the empire causes no detriment could well fit such a situation as that in AD 18 (or perhaps rather AD 72?) when Commagene, after a period of turmoil, passed from royal to direct Roman rule.<sup>46</sup> Whatever the precise date and true context of the Letter of Mara Bar Sarapion, it attests to a heated local political discussion about the future of the capital Samosata and refers to a party which (as must be concluded) was judged hostile by the Romans and therefore exiled.

Most revealing, however, are the formal decisions taken by the Commagenians after the death of Antiochus III: they sent embassies to Rome asking for Tiberius to decide on the future of the political situation in their country.<sup>47</sup> The alternatives presented to Tiberius by these embassies were a new king for Commagene or direct Roman rule. Both alternatives were fully in line with the political realities of the Roman East and must therefore, at least in principle, have been acceptable solutions to the emperor. Yet we must ask, what did this mean for the Commagenians? Was one party asking for incorporation into the Roman empire and the other trying to preserve independence? Surely not. By peacefully sending embassies to Rome (and nowhere else, for that matter) and by presenting acceptable alternatives for the political future of their country to the Roman emperor the Commagenians proved that they were fully aware of the emperor's role, of their own possibilities and of the procedures required to obtain what they were hoping for. This shows that the official representatives, at least, had fully accepted their fate as subjects of the Roman empire (just as their kings had done), that they were prepared to abide by the empire's rules and to accept the emperor's decision.<sup>48</sup> Under comparable circumstances, after the death of Herod, his son Archelaus travelled to Rome to request his father's throne from Augustus, whereas the Jewish people and the Greek cities each sent embassies of their own asking for direct Roman rule.<sup>49</sup> Clearly, this was the procedure Rome expected. The Commagenians were obviously aware of this and acted accordingly.

46 Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 461 is perhaps right to assume that the 'appropriate context ... is the early 70s'. However, there is no reference in the text to a conquest by armed forces as was the case in AD 72. Merz / Tieleman (n. 45) recently argued, that ll. 147–155 of the letter may refer to Jesus and the Jewish uprising of AD 66–70. If true (which, however, is far from certain), this would also point to the context of the early 70s.

47 Jos., *Ant.* 18,2,5. Tac., *Ann.* 2,42.

48 Sullivan's statement (above n. 4, 785) that the death of Antiochus III in AD 17 and the introduction of direct Roman rule was Commagene's 'darkest hour' is thus entirely misleading.

49 Jos., *BJ* 2,7,3. Jos., *Ant.* 17,13,2–3. Nic. Dam. FGH 90, F 131. Millar, *Government* (n. 33) 231 ('Emperors, Kings, and Subjects: The Politics of Two-Level Sovereignty').

Provincialization in AD 18 neither marked the end of Commagenian independence nor was it an annexation of the country to the Roman empire. With Rome choosing its ruler, intervening in local affairs, determining its foreign policy and (directly or indirectly) setting the standards for the royal cult, the kingdom had long lost its independence. Hence, it was considered by Rome, by its former kings, and by the official representatives of its own people as an integral part of the Roman empire.<sup>50</sup> Yet provincialization was far more than the simple substitution of one administrative system for another. It was a profound change in the history of the country. The termination of the traditional political system and the introduction of direct Roman rule, though welcomed by many, was also passionately rejected by others.

### III. Administrative and military changes after AD 17

Commagene was not the only trouble spot in the Near East in AD 17.<sup>51</sup> Cilicia and Cappadocia, too, had vacant thrones, Parthia was threatening war over the disputed succession to the throne of Armenia, and ‘the provinces of Syria and Judea, exhausted by impositions, asked for a reduction of tribute’.<sup>52</sup> Tiberius (and the Senate),<sup>53</sup> fearing for the safety of the Eastern territories, therefore sent Germanicus as proconsul with powers exceeding all but the emperor’s. His mission was *in transmarinas provincias ... in conformandis iis rebusque eiusdem tractus ...*, as the Tabula Siarensis puts it,<sup>54</sup> or, according to the ‘senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre’ of AD 20, ... *ad rerum transmarinarum statum componendum ...*<sup>55</sup> The wording of this assignment is another clear sign that Rome considered this an internal affair. As a result, king Archelaus II was installed in Cilicia Trachea and king Artaxias II in Armenia.<sup>56</sup> Cappadocia and

50 For a very similar view cf. I. Shatzman, ‘The integration of Judea into the Roman Empire’, *SCI* 18 (1999) 49–84.

51 Tac., *Ann.* 2,5. 2,43.

52 Tac., *Ann.* 2,1–4. 2,42.

53 Technically, the Senate had an official role in such affairs Strabo 12,1,4. Suet., *Tib.* 30. Tac., *Ann.* 2,43. Dio 59,12,2. 60,23,6. See also AE 1984, 508 = Tab.Siar. frg. I 15f. on the *cura et tutela* of the overseas regions, which Tiberius assigned to Germanicus *ex auctoritate senatus*] (thus W.D. Lebek, ‘Der Proconsulat des Germanicus und die *Auctoritas* des Senats, Tab. Siar., frg. I 22–24’, *ZPE* 87 [1991] 114), and the ‘s.c. de Cn. Pisone patre’ 1. 30f.: (Germanicus), *qui a principe nostro ex auctoritate huius ordinis ad rerum transmarinarum statum componendum missus esset ...* : W. Eck / A. Caballos / F. Fernandez, *Das senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* (1996) esp. 158ff. Cf. in general Millar, *Government* (n. 33) 164ff. (‘Emperors, Frontiers, and Foreign Relations, 31 B.C. to A.D. 378’). P.A. Brunt, ‘The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime’, *CIQ* 34 (1984) 432ff.

54 AE 1984, 508 frg. I 15f.

55 Eck et al. (n. 53) ll.30ff. 157ff. Lebek (n. 53) 103–124.

56 Tac., *Ann.* 2,56. 2,78.

Commagene underwent profound changes. Royal rule was terminated and both countries received provincial status.<sup>57</sup>

Some details as to how Germanicus fulfilled his mission in AD 18 are on record. From amongst his senatorial friends who had accompanied him to the East, he installed Q. Veranius<sup>58</sup> as *legatus* in charge of Cappadocia, and sent Q. Servaeus<sup>59</sup> to Commagene, which was then put under the ‘jurisdiction of a praetor’ for the first time.<sup>60</sup> Neither senator, however, remained there for long. Veranius was in Antioch in October AD 19 to attend Germanicus' funeral, as was, in all probability, Servaeus.<sup>61</sup> Both were leading witnesses and prosecutors in the trial against Cn. Calpurnius Piso in Rome which began in late November of AD 20.<sup>62</sup> Veranius and Servaeus must therefore have been back in the capital well before Piso's return to Rome in September or October of that year.<sup>63</sup> The task these senators were given in Cappadocia and Commagene was thus of short duration, and could not have consisted of much more than implementing Roman administration.

However, we need to know what exactly this means. Did Tiberius create a tiny<sup>64</sup> new province of Commagene, as some scholars concluded?<sup>65</sup> Strabo's comment *νῦν δ' ἐπαρχία γέγρονε* seems to point in this direction.<sup>66</sup> If so, who ruled it? Tacitus' statement (Ann. 2,56) *Commagenis ... tum primum ad ius praetoris translatis* appears to suggest that the former kingdom was put under the administration of a senatorial governor. If Tacitus did not just have the very short term of Q. Servaeus in mind, then that governor was surely the *legatus Augusti* of neighbouring Syria. Hence, other scholars believe that Commagene was simply incorporated into *provincia Syria*, as it was again after AD 72.<sup>67</sup> Strabo certainly

57 Tac., Ann. 2,42. 2,56. Strabo 16,2,3. For the changes in Cappadocia in these years see the contribution ‘Cappadocia. Vom Königreich zur Provinz’, in this volume.

58 PIR V 265.

59 PIR S 398.

60 Tac., Ann. 2,56. For Q. Servaeus also Tac. Ann. 6,7: ... *praetura functus et quondam Germanici comes* ...

61 Tac., Ann. 2,74.

62 Tac., Ann. 3,10. 3,13. 3,19.

63 Eck et al. (n. 53) 119ff. 149ff.

64 Tiny size: Strabo 16,2,3: ἡ Κομμαγενὴ μικρά τις ἐστίν.

65 Thus M. Gelzer, RE X (1917) 453 s.v. Germanicus Iulius Caesar. M. Charlesworth, CAH X (1966) 620f. E. Paltiel, Vassals and Rebels in the Roman Empire (1991) 131. R. Haensch, *Capita provinciarum. Statthaltersitze und Provinzverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1997) 396f. W. Eck, in: DNP 11 (2001) 460 s.v. Servaeus. Cf. also L. Keppie, *Legions and Veterans. Roman Army Papers 1971–2000* (2000) 245 (‘Vexilla Veteranorum’). For a similar view S. Demougin, ‘À propos d'un préfet de Commagène’, ZPE 43 (1981) 105.

66 Strabo 16,2,3.

67 Thus J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung I* (1881<sup>2</sup>) 399. D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (1950) 494f. E. Honigmann RE Suppl. IV (1924) 984 s.v. Commagene. Wagner (n. 6) 29. B. Rémy, *L'évolution administrative de l'Anatolie aux trois premiers siècles de notre ère*

counted recently provincialised Commagene as part of Syria,<sup>68</sup> though he may have meant this in a strictly geographical sense. What happened in Commagene after Servaeus left is therefore best revealed by a now lost fragmentary inscription found in 1912 in Pisidian Antioch. The editor transcribed:<sup>69</sup>

I · ALAE · ANII  
 AEF · VETERAN  
 XII · PRAEFECT  
 O M M A C E N T  
 5     ^AESARIS · AVG  
 -]         CAES

and commented: ‘In l.1 the first letter may be I or T, but not H or N. The last two letters may be TI or II, but not N or M or H: they are quite complete except at the top. In l.4 C is certain, not G; the last letter is certainly T not I. There is a mark (perhaps part of a letter) after it. In l.5, there is no mark after G but there is not space enough to receive the letters VSTI between ll.5 and 6’. The inscription may therefore be read as follows:

-]  
 [praefec]t(o) alae Antī-  
 [anae, pr]aef(ecto) veteran-  
 [orum leg(ionis)] XII, praefect(o)  
 [C]ommageneꝯ  
 5     [praef(ecto) Ti.] Çaesaris Aug(usti),  
 [col(onia)] Caes(area).

This monument was set up by the colony of Antioch in honour of an equestrian officer. The date is revealed by his last recorded post, prefect of the emperor Tiberius in the colony of Antioch.<sup>70</sup> The first two remaining positions of the equestrian’s career were military commands: *praefectus alae Antianae* and

(1986) 33. Cf. also J. Wagner, ‘Dynastie und Herrscherkult in Kommagene. Forschungsgeschichte und neuere Funde’, *Ist.Mitt.* 33 (1983) 177–224.

68 Strabo 16,2,2–3. Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 53 combines both views and concludes that Commagene as a province came under the *legatus* of Syria.

69 W.M. Ramsay, ‘Studies in the Roman Province Galatia’, *JRS* 14 (1924) 201f. no. 40 = *AE* 1926, 82. Cf. the excellent commentary by Demougin (n. 65) 97–109 (based on improved readings by Keppie [n. 65] 244f.) = *AE* 1982, 885. Cf. also S. Demougin, *Prosopographie des chevaliers romains Julio-Claudiens* (1992) 263f. no. 310 and H. Devijver, *Prosopographia militiarum equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum II* (1977) *Incerti* 65 (with comments by E. Birley). No drawings or photographs of the inscription exist. Cf. now also *AE* 2002, 1453 and *AE* 2005, 1555.

70 Demougin (n. 65) 107ff.

*praefectus veteranorum legionis XII (sc. Fulminatae)*.<sup>71</sup> Both units belonged to the Roman army of Syria.<sup>72</sup> The next post is recorded in lines 3 and 4. As parts of the full title have broken away, the precise restoration remains uncertain. However, it is most likely to be understood as some form of ‘prefect of Commagene’.<sup>73</sup> It is of no relevance to our question whether we should restore *praefect(o) / [C]ommagenes*<sup>74</sup> or *praefect(o) / [civitat(ium) C]ommagenes* or something similar.<sup>75</sup> In either case such prefects, known from many provinces throughout the early Roman empire, were not independent governors but rather administrators of districts or parts of provinces and subordinate to higher-ranking senatorial governors.<sup>76</sup> There can be little doubt, therefore, that in AD 18/19 Commagene was incorporated into the Roman province of Syria and put under the control of a prefect.<sup>77</sup> It is not unlikely, that the internal administrative structures of Commagene were also changed by Q. Servaeus in AD 18/19, though this remains

71 A legionary tribunate may have preceded the prefectures: Demougin (n. 65) 98.

72 Keppie (n. 65) 184 (‘The legions in the east from Augustus to Trajan’). P. Spaul, Ala<sup>2</sup> (1994) 27f.

73 Restoring *praefect(o) [alae or cohortis C]ommageno[r(um)]* in line 4 seems impossible because the letter following the N cannot have been an O – unless one chooses to disregard Ramsey’s readings. It is suggested here to read the Greek genitive – *C]ommagenes* as in IGLS I 42 (= ILS 7204). 43. 44.

74 Thus either assuming *C]ommagenes* stood centred in line 4 (perhaps the most likely solution) or that it was preceded by a (somewhat strange) lacuna of about 6 or 7 letters (as offered by Demougin [n. 65] 106 in order to restore the title to *praefect(o) [vacat ? C]ommageni[s]*).

75 It is perhaps even conceivable to restore *praefect(o) / [provinc(iae) C]ommagenes* if *provincia Commagene* is understood as the prefect’s ‘sphere of responsibility’ within *provincia Syria*. This would reconcile the statements of Strabo 16,2,3 and Tac., Ann. 2,56 (Strabo 16,2,2f.). However, there is no documentary evidence for a *provincia Commagene*. For ‘provinces within a province’ see the contribution ‘Ein Bollwerk für Syrien’, in this volume. For the differences between prefects of entire countries such as the *praefectus Iudaeae*, and the *praefecti civitatium* cf. S. Demougin, L’ordre équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens (1988) 723f.

76 On such prefects cf. O. Hirschfeld, Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diokletian (1905<sup>2</sup>) 383. H. Zwicky, Zur Verwendung des Militärs in der Verwaltung der römischen Kaiserzeit (1944) 11ff. A.H.M. Jones, Studies in Roman Government and Law (1968) 115ff. P.A. Brunt, ‘Princeps and Equites’, JRS 73 (1983) 55–58. H. Cotton, ‘Some Aspects of the Roman Administration of Judea/Syria-Palaestina’, in: W. Eck (ed.), Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserlichen Provinzen vom 1. bis 3. Jahrhundert (1999) 76–91, esp. 77f. W. Eck, ibid. 4 with n. 11. Idem, ‘Rom und Iudaea – der Beitrag der Epigraphik’, in: A. Oppenheimer, Jüdische Geschichte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit (1999) 245. Idem, ZPE 166 (2008) 218–226. S. Demougin, ‘Les débuts des provinces procuratoriennes’, in: I. Piso (Hg.), Die Römischen Provinzen (2008) 65–79.

77 A similar view is held by Demougin (n. 65) 105: ‘Mais la Commagène resta certainement sous le haut patronage du légat de Syrie’. For the comparable fate of Judea in AD 6: Cotton (n. 76) 76ff. What exactly happened in Cappadocia remains less clear. The title of the earliest equestrian (Dio 57,17,7) governors is as yet unattested. They may also have been *praefecti*, as they too, appear to have been subordinates of the legate of Syria: cf. Tac., Ann. 12,49 with P.A. Brunt, ‘Princeps and Equites’, JRS 73 (1983) 56. Cf. also Rémy, (n. 67) 30ff. Haensch (n. 65) 396f. and the contribution ‘Cappadocia. Vom Königreich zur Provinz’, in this volume.

impossible to prove. All that seems clear is that before Actium royal Commagene was subdivided into several *στρατηγίαι*,<sup>78</sup> whereas by the early third century AD the established division was into *quattuor civitates Commagenes*.<sup>79</sup>

Like other such prefects, the new prefect of Commagene was a man of military experience. Quite possibly Roman troops were now stationed in the former kingdom. At the same time Cappadocians, too, witnessed Roman auxiliary troops being stationed in their country,<sup>80</sup> and Judea, when transformed into a prefecture in AD 6, had also received a garrison that comprised some Roman auxiliary units.<sup>81</sup> The army of the Judean prefects, however, also included some units which were simply former royal regiments inherited from Herod's army.<sup>82</sup> Comparable developments may have taken place in Commagene in AD 18, for at least one *ala Commagenorum*, and possibly six *cohortes Commagenorum* were in existence already by the mid-first century AD.<sup>83</sup> Hence these auxiliary troops must have been incorporated into the Roman army after Commagene was taken under direct rule in AD 18, either as inherited royal regiments or, in some cases perhaps, as newly raised units. Yet, there is no indication that the Roman army in Commagene between 18 and 38 AD was any larger or more efficient than the royal armies before and after that period. The disposition of the troops within the former kingdom remains entirely unknown, but Philo of Alexandria clearly implies that much of the Roman army of Syria was now safeguarding the Euphrates.<sup>84</sup> Finally, royal property was confiscated, and from AD 18 onwards taxes were collected for Rome.<sup>85</sup> It is, however, impossible to say whether the rates remained the same or if, as in Cappadocia, they were lowered in order to

78 This is revealed by an inscription dating to the reign of Antiochus I: F.K. Dörner / R. Naumann, 'Forschungen in Kommagene', *Ist. Forsch.* 10 (1939) 43–47. Cf. also Schmitz / Fahin / Wagner (n. 44) 94f.

79 IGLS I 42 (= ILS 7204). 43. 44. According to Th. Mommsen, *Eph. Ep.* 5 (1884) 21 those were Samosata, Doliche, Germanicia, and Perre. Doliche, however, may have been part of the province of Syria since 31 BC: J. Wagner, 'Neue Denkmäler aus Doliche. Ergebnisse einer archäologischen Landesaufnahme im Ursprungsgebiet des Iupiter Dolichenus', *BJ* 82 (1982) 161ff.

80 Cf. Tac., *Ann.* 12.49. 15.6. *Hist.*, 2.6. There is no need to assume with M. Heil, *Die orientalische Aussenpolitik des Kaisers Nero* (1997) 208 that the Cappadocian auxilia mentioned in Tacitus were all irregular units. Cf. the contribution 'The development of the Roman forces in northeastern Anatolia', in this volume.

81 Speidel (n. 34) 224ff. ('The Roman Army in Judea under the Procurators').

82 Speidel (n. 34) 224f. Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 45.

83 P.Heid.Lat. 8 = ChLA XI 501 from AD 48–52. Cf. P.A. Holder, *The Auxilia from Augustus to Trajan* (1980) 112. D. Kennedy, *CAH X<sup>2</sup>* (1996) 730f.

84 *Leg. Ad Caium* 31.207 and 34.259. Cf. A. Gebhardt, *Imperiale Politik und provinzielle Entwicklung* (2002) 31ff.

85 Suet., *Cal.* 16.

make Roman rule more acceptable.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, coins with the portrait of Tiberius appear to have been struck in Commagene as early as AD 19/20.<sup>87</sup>

#### IV. Conclusions

After only two decades of direct Roman rule, in AD 38, the Emperor Gaius returned Commagene to the former royal family. Not much later he revoked his decision, only for Claudius to reconfirm it in AD 41.<sup>88</sup> There are no precise reasons on record for any of these changes but they all carry the hallmarks of whimsical personal decisions by individual emperors. Certainly the restoration of royal rule would not have entailed a loss of Roman strategic control. There is indeed nothing to suggest that the royal army was ever inadequate in any respect. Under Antiochus IV it counted well over 2000 cavalry and 3000 infantry archers. Hence, in numbers, it roughly equalled the strength of at least one Roman legion and therefore cannot have been much smaller than the Roman army which finally replaced it in AD 72 (one legion and perhaps a few *auxilia*).<sup>89</sup> According to Josephus this royal army even withstood the large Roman invasion force in AD 72 for an entire day without major losses.<sup>90</sup> The country was firmly integrated into the empire and its kings had continuously proven to be loyal subjects.

Strategic considerations may, however, have played a role in the re-organisation of the Eastern frontier under Vespasian. In AD 70, Titus sent a legion to Melitene in Cappadocia and personally met a Parthian embassy at Zeugma.<sup>91</sup> In AD 72/73 royal rule was terminated not only in Commagene but also in the small dependent kingdom of Armenia Minor.<sup>92</sup> Other small dependent kingdoms in the region (Chalcidice, Emesa) also disappeared in these years. At nearly the same time we hear of a dangerous military escalation between Rome and Parthia.<sup>93</sup> Legions were then based near Samosata in 73 and at Satala by the mid 70's.<sup>94</sup> In the end Cappadocia was a major military province and all the great ancient routes

86 Tac., Ann. 2,56.

87 A. Burnett / A. Amandry / P. Ripollès, *Roman Provincial Coinage I* (1992) 574f. nos. 3868–3870.

88 Cf. above n. 26–30.

89 Jos., BJ 2,18,9 gives the number of Commagenian soldiers whom Antiochus IV sent in AD 66 to support the Roman governor Cestius Gallus against the Jewish rebellion. The Commagenian army is therefore likely to have counted significantly more than 5'000 soldiers. Size of a legion: M.P. Speidel, *The Framework of an Imperial Legion* (1992) 6ff.: ca. 5'400 soldiers.

90 Jos., BJ 7,7,2.

91 Jos., BJ 7,1,2. 7,5,2.

92 S. Mitchell, *Anatolia I* (1993) 118. Gebhardt (n. 84) 43.

93 Plin., Paneg. 9,2. 14,1. 16,1. 58,3. 89,3. ILS 8970. Cf. E. Dabrowa, *The Governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus* (1998) 64ff.

94 Keppie (n. 65) 192ff. ('The legions in the east from Augustus to Trajan').



crossing the Euphrates and connecting the East and the West were under the control of Roman legions. Roman fleets were set up on the coasts of the Syrian Mediterranean and the Anatolian Black Sea, and an immense network of highways along the frontiers and in central and eastern Anatolia was developed.<sup>95</sup> It thus seems likely that all this was part of an overall plan conceived by the new emperor and based (at least in part) on strategic considerations. What, however, had led to these changes and what their precise objectives were is not on record, though Corbulo's military experiences in the 50's and early 60's in the region may have helped to shape such plans.

Still, the Roman takeover of Commagene as described by Josephus was initiated by an accusation (true or false) by Caesennius Paetus, the governor of Syria, alleging the likely future disloyalty of Antiochus' IV and his son.<sup>96</sup> This, at first view, does not appear to agree with the idea of a preconceived strategic plan. Josephus, however, fails to inform us what reasons Antiochus might have had for his apparently sudden and far-reaching change of mind. Suetonius, on the other hand, gives no indication that the decision was anyone's but Vespasian's: ... *item Trachiam Ciliciam et Commagenen ditionis regiae usque ad id tempus, in provinciarum formam redegit.*<sup>97</sup> No reasons are added. Whether or not sending a legion to Melitene in AD 70 was indeed one element of a preconceived overall plan, this could in any case have raised questions at Samosata about the future of royal rule in Commagene. It is therefore particularly interesting to find Antiochus IV's sons, in Josephus' account, heavily involved both in the initial accusations and in the short-lived attempt to resist the invasion, as well as to hear of their flight to the Parthian king Vologaeses while their father Antiochus 'fled' to the West.

Throughout the imperial period Commagene was firmly integrated into the Roman empire, both as kingdom and, of course, as provincial territory. Provincialization in AD 18 (and in 72) brought about profound changes, which were welcomed by one part of the population and rejected by the other. Yet the provincialization of Commagene cannot be described as annexation or as an expansion of the Empire. Along the Euphrates Augustus' successors much rather adhered to his advice not to move the Empire's boundaries.<sup>98</sup> It was only Trajan who first violated this advice with his conquests beyond the Euphrates in AD 114–117 – a step that went too far even for some Romans.<sup>99</sup> The first century AD

95 Fleets (probably) set up under Vespasian: D. French, *Classis Pontica*, EA 4 (1984) 53–60. D. van Berchem, 'Le port de Séleucie de Piérie et l'infrastructure logistique des guerres parthiques', BJ 185 (1985) 47–87. C. Marek, *Pontus et Bithynia* (2003) 59f. Roads: Mitchell (n. 92) 124f.

96 Jos., BJ 7,7,1.

97 Suet., Vesp. 8.

98 Tac., Ann. 1,11. Dio 56,33,5.

99 Dio 68,17,1 and 29,1, cf. 75,3,3. See the contribution 'Traian: Bellicosissimus princeps', in this volume.

was a period characterised by a great many administrative changes and transitions, in the East as in the West. Variety, flexibility and change are the hallmarks of this earliest period of imperial government. It was often only after generations that anything like a more systematic approach gradually developed and led to more stable arrangements.<sup>100</sup> The history of early Roman rule in Commagene was no exception. It reflects the contemporary imperial practice of government and provincial administration which, rather than persistent Roman imperialism, is the appropriate background for its history in the Early Empire.

100 This development has been admirably described for the Roman Near East by Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 27ff.