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VOLUME XII

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The Crisis of Empire, A.D. 193–337

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PREFACE

The twelfth volume of the first edition of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, the last of that series, appeared in 1938 and was entitled 'Imperial Crisis and Recovery', taking as its terminal dates the accession of Septimius Severus in 193 and the defeat of Licinius by Constantine in A.D. 324. The editors thus chose to exclude from its purview the period of Constantine's sole rule and the foundation of Constantinople and, in doing so, they made an implicit statement about what they regarded as key events or crucial stages in the history of the later Roman empire and the transition to the Byzantine and the medieval world. The centrality of the idea of the transition is itself reflected both in the editors' preface to the volume and in the list of contents, as well as explicitly in several of the individual chapters.

As is appropriate to the nature and purpose of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, the new edition of Volume XII reflects the differences in viewpoint and emphasis which have developed in the period since the publication of its predecessor, as well as the accretion of new evidence. We have chosen the same starting-point as our predecessors, the accession of Septimius Severus, but we close this volume at the end of the reign of Constantine (A.D. 337), a choice partly but not solely determined by the fact that the Press took the decision, at about the time when Volumes X, XI and XII were being planned, to add two extra volumes (XIII and XIV) to the series in order to take the story down to A.D. 600. It seemed, on several counts, more satisfactory and logical to end this volume with the death of Constantine, the first Christian emperor.

We have taken as our title for this volume 'The Crisis of Empire', reflecting the incontrovertible fact that the period from Septimius Severus to Constantine was marked by serious dislocation, disturbance and threat to the fabric of the Roman empire. There is, likewise, no doubt that the latter part of the period, between 284 and 337, saw fundamental and far-reaching changes in the nature of imperial power and the organization of the empire which gave to both a form and a substance significantly different from their antecedents in the periods covered by Volumes X and XI. Whether 'recovery' is the appropriate word to describe these phenomena is, we think, less obvious, but we are conscious that all such choices, whether traditional or

innovative, are judgemental. The period has traditionally been subjected to a tidy periodization, which cannot be wholly avoided. We begin with the accession of Septimius Severus in the civil war following the assassination of Commodus, and the foundation of a dynasty which Rostovtzeff, following in Gibbon's footsteps, famously characterized as 'the military monarchy'. This was followed by a half-century of 'anarchy' (A.D. 235–84), which saw a series of short reigns of short-lived emperors (not a few of which were simultaneous), before Diocletian seized power and established a collegial rule, first with Maximian, later with two junior 'Caesars', thus substantially changing the configuration of imperial power. This period, the first tetrarchy (A.D. 284–305), also saw the first stages in the formalization of the division of the Roman world which shaped the history of the western and eastern empires until the rise of the successor kingdoms and the Arab invasions. After two decades of further conflict between the leading contenders for empire, Constantine defeated Licinius in A.D. 324 and established a sole rule which he and the successors of his line sustained for a further three and a half decades.

Nevertheless, as is noted in the Preface to Volume XIII, there have been significant changes of emphasis and of viewpoint in approaches to the history of the empire in the third and fourth centuries. The editors of Volume XIII rightly draw attention to the fundamentally important works of A. H. M. Jones and of Peter Brown, the one establishing a new foundation for the study of the organization and administration of the later empire, the other stimulating a new appreciation of the interaction of pagan culture and Christianity in the formation of what we now conventionally refer to as 'late antiquity'. Both of these great works rest on a wealth of modern scholarship on all aspects of Roman imperial civilization which has, by and large, suggested a more gradualist and developmental picture than that of an empire reduced by the 270s to political and military impotence and socio-economic chaos, and rising phoenix-like from the ashes in the hands of Diocletian, his colleagues and his successors.

The editors of the first edition noted that source-criticism had played a central role in revising historical views of the period. In amplification of this, the volume contained a note on the sources by Harold Mattingly, concentrating on the literary and numismatic evidence. In 2002, we would prefer to avoid the term 'source-criticism', as suggesting a rather too restricted approach to the appreciation of the importance of the many writers whose works are relevant and we would emphasize the fact that our views of many important historical phenomena have been significantly changed by the accretion of new documentary and other non-literary sources. We have not attempted to write a note to match that of Mattingly, but encouraged the authors of individual chapters to comment on the relevant sources as they think appropriate. The latter half of the twentieth century has seen

a plethora of works treating the writers of history in their contemporary context and establishing the value, not merely of the facts which they retail, but of their own experiences and viewpoints. Thus, to name only a few, Cassius Dio and Herodian have been historiographically contextualized, and Tertullian and Cyprian of Carthage made to contribute to more than a merely narrow 'Christian' approach to third-century history. The importance of Lactantius and Eusebius (the former in particular long stigmatized as an unreliable source) for the Diocletianic and Constantinian periods has been firmly established. Two works or collections on which Mattingly commented only briefly deserve special notice here. The first is the notorious collection of imperial biographies known as the *Historia Augusta*, ostensibly the work of six different writers. Mattingly was well aware of the problems which this posed but it has taken the influential work of Sir Ronald Syme, following the pioneering study by Dessau published in 1889, to establish beyond all doubt that this is the work of a single, puzzling and unreliable late fourth-century author whose testimony, especially for the third-century emperors, cannot be used unless supported by evidence from other more reliable sources. Second, the collection of twelve Latin Panegyrics, eight of which are relevant to the Diocletianic and Constantinian periods. These are (of course) rhetorical, tendentious and often chronologically imprecise or confusing but there is nevertheless a great deal of historically valuable information to be derived from them, especially when collated with the other literary and documentary sources, as a recent re-edition and exhaustive commentary demonstrates.

The contributions of numismatics, epigraphy, papyrology and especially archaeology to the history of this period are vital, particularly in the absence of a single reliable and comprehensive literary historian such as Tacitus or Ammianus Marcellinus. Each category of evidence presents its own difficulties. The complex history of the coinage in the third and fourth centuries is still imperfectly understood in relation to economic history and in particular the relationship between currency debasement and price-inflation. There are a few very important new inscriptions such as the Currency Edict of Diocletian, but the number and density of inscriptions pales in comparison with the second century. Papyri of the third and fourth centuries are particularly plentiful and attest to important features of political, social and economic history, not least in elucidating some of the complex chronological problems of imperial reigns and providing detailed evidence for the Decian persecution. Some individual texts or groups of texts have, however, occasionally been made to sustain too heavy a burden of generalization: the collapse of the coinage in the 260s, the growth of the *annona militaris*, the crushing burdens of liturgical service and the decline of the *curiales*. Nevertheless, the papyri have an important contribution to make and add a dynamic perspective to the important evidence of the legal codes which

can, if taken in isolation, present a rather static picture. Archaeology too makes an important and positive contribution in allowing us to see regional and local variations in the degree of social and economic change and the richness and variety of the material culture.

The contents of this volume are divided into six main sections. The intention of Part I is to provide a basic narrative account of the political history of the period between 193 and 337, devoting separate chapters to the Severan dynasty, the period of the so-called 'anarchy' (235–84), the first tetrarchy (284–305), and finally the succession and the reign of Constantine (306–37). Part II offers an account of the administration of the empire from what is, broadly speaking, the perspective of the central authority. One chapter is devoted to the army, which underwent major changes in the late third and early fourth centuries, another to the central public administration. The third chapter in this section deals with the development of Roman law, for which the Severan and the Diocletianic periods were particularly significant. The placing of this topic in this section is a deliberate tactic, intended to indicate that these are not merely matters of legal theory or jurisprudence, but that the legal developments and their perpetrators were central to the changes in government and administration. As in the case of the chapters on Egypt and on Christianity (see below), the account offered here contains important material on the period before the accession of Septimius Severus, not treated in detail in Volume XI.

Part III corresponds in a broad way to the province-by-province treatments offered in the new editions of Volumes X and XI but includes only one chapter on an individual province (Egypt). We have adopted a different, thematic plan for this volume, dealing separately with the development of the provinces, regions and frontiers and with the provincial and local administration (as distinct from the central administrative structures described in Part II). The single provincial chapter in this section may seem anomalous, but perhaps not less so than the corresponding anomaly in the first edition (on Britain). There are two reasons for including a detailed treatment of Egypt. One is that the evidence of the papyri for the third century and in particular for the reigns of Diocletian and Constantine makes a very important contribution to our understanding of the changes in administration and the socio-economic problems of the period, and it is a contribution which goes far beyond the borders of the province of Egypt itself, touching on major features of the central administration. The second is that Egypt was deliberately excluded from the provincial section in Volume XI, the intention being that the chapters in Volumes X and XII should between them cover the whole period.

Part IV consists of two chapters written by a single author, offering an account of the very complex problems presented by the monetary and

economic history of the period – more vital and more difficult to interpret for the third century than for any other part of the empire's history.

In Part V we offer a survey of the most important of Rome's neighbours, beyond the boundaries of the empire, the Germans, the Sassanids, the inhabitants of Armenia and the Arabs and desert peoples. These are of particular importance not merely because of the successive periods of military crisis provoked by the hostility of external tribes and kingdoms during the third century, but also because an appreciation of their role and development is crucial to our understanding of the conditions which determined the shape of the eastern and western empires in later centuries.

Part VI is devoted, broadly speaking to religion and culture, though it will be noted that we have departed from the precedent of the first edition in not dealing with the history of Greek and Latin literature in this period. But the centrality of the topic of Christianization needs no justification and religious change may be said to be the predominant theme in four of the five chapters in this section. Two chapters deal with pagan religion and popular culture, one with the development of the philosophical schools and one with Christianity as such. The editors took the decision to consolidate the treatment of the subject between A.D. 70 and 337 in this volume rather than split it between Volumes XI and XII. To this has been added a chapter on the important topic of art and architecture in the later empire.

As in earlier volumes, authors have been encouraged to provide what they saw as a balanced account of their topic in the current state of knowledge and research. The editors have not attempted to impose any kind of unity of view or approach on the individual chapters and they are conscious of the fact that it is more than normally difficult to reach a generally accepted 'standard' account of much of this period, particularly the central decades of the third century. For this reason, the reader may well find that there is a greater than usual number of inconsistencies or differences of view between one chapter and another. We take the view that this unavoidable and we have not attempted even the minimum amount of reconciliation which was applied in earlier volumes.

We are conscious of the fact that there have been unavoidable delays in seeing this volume through to completion. Volumes X, XI and XII of the new edition were planned in conjunction and it was hoped they could proceed *pari passu* over a period of a few years. That, alas, proved far too optimistic. In the event, this is the last of the volumes of the new edition to see the light of day, coming behind Volumes XIII and XIV. Many of the chapters were written several years ago, and we have been able only to offer their authors the opportunity to make minor revisions and to update their bibliographies.

The principle of ordering the bibliographies is that adopted for the later volumes in the new edition. A list of frequently cited works of general

importance has been extracted and placed at the beginning. There then follow bibliographies for each part.

The editors have incurred many debts in the preparation of this volume. John Matthews was one of the original team who planned the work. We are of course, enormously grateful to all the individual authors. The maps were compiled by John Wilkes. Chapters 11 and 12 were translated by Michel Cottier and Ann Johnston. Chapters 6a–d were translated by Hugh Ward-Perkins. Chapters 9 and 16 were translated by Brian Pearce and Geoffrey Greatrex. In the latter stages of the work, Simon Corcoran has provided a great deal of assistance to the editors, particularly on the bibliographies but also on substantive matters, especially in the chapters covering the period from 284–337. We are very grateful indeed to him for this work, without which the volume would have been further delayed. Thanks are also due to Professor R. J. W. Evans and Mr. Fatih Onur for advice on the accentuation of modern toponyms in Appendix III.

The index was compiled by Barbara Hird.

Finally, it is difficult to pay adequate tribute to Pauline Hire, whose vision and determination has driven this new edition to completion. It is unfortunate that we were not able to complete it before her retirement but we hope that she will greet the appearance of this volume with pleasure and relief. The work which remained to be done after Pauline's retirement was not inconsiderable and we are equally indebted to her successor, Dr Michael Sharp, for his cheerful patience, goodwill and determination.

A. K. B.
A. M. C.
P. D. A. G.

Map 1 Topographical map of the Roman empire

CHAPTER 1

THE SEVERAN DYNASTY

BRIAN CAMPBELL

1. THE BACKGROUND AND ACCESSION OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

After Commodus had been strangled on the evening of 31 December 192, the main instigators of the deed, Aemilius Laetus the praetorian prefect and Eclectus the chamberlain, immediately approached Pertinax. This was a wise choice. Pertinax held the eminent positions of consul II and prefect of the city, and a long career that had included the frequent command of soldiers and the governorship of four consular provinces had earned him a distinguished reputation. He sent a friend to check that Commodus was dead, and probably was genuinely unaware of any plan to kill the emperors.[1] Despite some reservations among senators about Pertinax's origins as the son of an ex-slave, there was general approbation, especially since, in contrast to Commodus, Pertinax attempted to play down the autocratic and dynastic aspects of his position. Styling himself 'princeps senatus', he refused to name his wife Augusta or his son Caesar. In Pertinax's view the purple was not his to bestow on others. He was affable and approachable; his integrity and benevolence in the conduct of his imperial duties contributed to an atmosphere free from terror, where freedom of speech could flourish. Informers were punished; the death penalty for treason was not invoked; public affairs were efficiently managed in the interests of the state. Pertinax also had positive ideas for reorganizing the empire's administration. All land, including imperial estates, which was not under cultivation in Italy and the provinces, was to be given over to private individuals to work, with security of tenure and a ten-year tax exemption. New customs tariffs introduced by Commodus were withdrawn. Moreover, the emperor would not inscribe his name on imperial property, presumably wishing to convey the idea that it belonged to the Roman state, while his coinage proclaimed the setting free of the citizens.[2] Despite these good intentions, Pertinax

[1] The main literary sources are Cassius Dio, Herodian (translation and commentary by Whittaker, *Herodian* vols. I–2), and *SHA*. Specific references have been given only in order to emphasize particular points or to record direct quotations. Pertinax – *PIR*² H 73; Birley, *The African Emperor* 63–7 and 87–95, who believes that Pertinax was involved in the conspiracy.

[2] Dio, LXXIII.5.1–5; Herod. II.4; *SHA*, *Pert.* 6.6–7.11; *BMC* V p. 1, no. 3.

faced serious problems. The treasury was virtually empty, and he had to sell Commodus' possessions to raise cash for donatives to plebs and soldiers. The praetorians, and to a lesser extent the imperial freedmen, had to be placated and disciplined after the licence accorded them by Commodus. In Dio's opinion Pertinax lacked political judgement. 'He did not realize despite his extensive experience in public affairs that it is impossible to reorganize everything simultaneously, and especially that to stabilize the political set-up requires both time and skill.'[3] On 28 March 193 Pertinax was murdered by some of his bodyguard. It is likely that this was a spontaneous move by the disgruntled soldiers, who had tried on at least two previous occasions to replace him, and bitterly resented his fraudulent claim to have given them as much as Marcus Aurelius. Pertinax was the first emperor therefore to be overthrown by purely military discontent because he could not satisfy the expectations of his troops; this was a dangerous legacy for his successor. Furthermore, he had helped to highlight again the senatorial perception of what made a 'good emperor'. The achievements of Pertinax's successors need to be measured against this range of senatorial expectation.

In the aftermath of Pertinax's murder, two men came forward to contend for the purple, Ti. Flavius Sulpicianus, prefect of the city and father-in-law of the dead emperor, and M. Didius Iulianus.[4] Sulpicianus was already in the praetorian camp, having been sent there by Pertinax to quell unrest. When Julianus arrived outside, the infamous 'auction' of the empire took place. For this the soldiers were partly to blame, but also the two senators who were prepared to exploit the vacuum and bid for the praetorians' support. Perhaps because they feared reprisals from Sulpicianus, the guardsmen accepted Julianus' offer of 25,000 *sesterces*. The sum was not excessively large, but the manner in which it was extorted set a further bad precedent for open bribery of the soldiers. Julianus was by no means a nonentity; he had governed several provinces, held a suffect consulship in 175, and had been proconsul of Africa. He conspicuously tried to flatter the senate and win approval, even sparing Sulpicianus. But the emperor was unconvincing and the senators remained unimpressed. Julianus was doomed by the manner of his accession and his obvious reliance on the now discredited praetorians, who had surrounded the senate house for its first meeting. The situation was exacerbated by some of the plebs who abused Julianus, and then in what was apparently an organized political demonstration occupied the Circus for a night and the following day, demanding that Pescennius Niger, the governor of Syria, should assist them. It is possible that Niger did receive some intimation of the disorderly situation in Rome before he was proclaimed emperor, probably towards the end of April 193.[5] However, L. Septimius Severus the governor of Pannonia Superior needed no such

[3] LXXIII.10.3. [4] *PIR*² F 373; *PIR*² D 77. [5] Herod. II.7.6; 8.5.

encouragement. He was proclaimed emperor by his troops on 9 April before he can have heard much about the new regime in Rome. It is not necessary to explain his speed in terms of a plot, since during Pertinax's three months' rule Severus had doubtless received news of the emperor's difficulties. A wise and ambitious man would have weighed up his chances and taken some preliminary soundings of opinion on what to do if there was further chaos in Rome. His march on Italy was launched in the first instance with the Danubian troops, supported by the legions of the Rhine. Before leaving Pannonia Severus perhaps heard of the proclamation of Niger in the east, and shrewdly removed his only other possible rival, D. Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, who came from Hadrumetum in Africa, by declaring him Caesar.[6]

Severus was born in Lepcis Magna in Africa in 145. Lepcis had been a Roman colony since 110, and although the family of the Septimii was of Punic extraction, it is likely that it had enjoyed Roman citizenship at least from the time of Vespasian. It was also rich and well connected: two cousins of Severus' father had been consul – P. Septimius Aper and C. Septimius Severus, who had also been proconsul of Africa in 174.[7] Severus himself was a typical product of the municipal aristocracy: well-versed in Graeco-Roman culture, and interested in the study of philosophy and law, he had assimilated the Roman upper-class ethos. Dio says that he desired more education than he received, and in consequence was a man of few words but many ideas. In any event, there is no reason to think that his actions were the product of an alien, un-Roman mind or that he had any African bias. Moreover, Severus' traditional and unspectacular career, begun in the 160s, should have imbued him with the usual Roman conceptions of office holding. During his career he did not hold a military tribunate, commanded the IV Scythian legion in Syria in time of peace, and governed no province containing legionary troops until appointed in 191 to Pannonia Superior. He was therefore hardly an experienced military leader or a charismatic soldiers' man. So, his policies should not necessarily be seen as the hostile reaction of a tough soldier to bureaucracy and political niceties. It was as a fairly average senator, perhaps not very well known, that Severus set out on his march to Rome. Julianus first reacted by declaring him a public enemy, and tried to fortify the city using the praetorians and sailors from the fleet at Misenum. But there was little chance that the guard could resist an army, and Julianus lost any remaining credibility by asking the senate

[6] The gold and silver coinage of Severus (*BMC* v p. 21, nos. 7–25) shows that initially he was supported by at least fifteen of the sixteen legions in Raetia, Noricum, Dacia, the Pannonian, Moesian and German provinces. The legion x Gemina stationed at Vienna is missing from the coin series, but appears as 'loyal, faithful, Severan' on an inscription (*AE* 1913.56). Clodius Albinus – Dio, LXXIV.15.1; Herod. II.15.3; *ILS* 414–15.

[7] Birley, *Septimius Severus* 213–20; Barnes (1967).

to vote a share in the imperial power to Severus. The emperor had run out of options and when the praetorians responded favourably to a letter from Severus demanding the surrender of the murderers of Pertinax, the senate was emboldened to sentence Julianus to death, confer power on Severus, and deify Pertinax, probably on 1 June 193. Before entering Rome in early June, Severus oversaw the execution of the murderers of Pertinax and then disbanded the entire guard, replacing it with soldiers from his own legions. Outside the gates of the city Severus changed into civilian dress and led his troops in glittering armour to the temple of Jupiter where he offered sacrifice. Dio recalled a happy, festive occasion. But many spectators were also anxious and fearful on this day.[8] In the subsequent meeting of the senate, the emperor made an initially good impression by taking an oath not to execute senators, and by promising the end of confiscations without trial and reliance on informers. It was good policy for Severus the military usurper to claim justification in the avenging of Pertinax. He had taken Pertinax into his nomenclature before leaving Pannonia; now this was officially voted by the senate and a grand funeral for the deified emperor was organized. This was all Severus could do to conciliate the upper classes in a stay in Rome of less than a month. The plebs was kept happy by shows and a cash distribution, while the troops received a donative of 1,000 *sesterces* after an embarrassing and frightening confrontation with their emperor.

II. CIVIL AND FOREIGN WARS

Severus set out for the east along the Via Flaminia while one of his commanders, Ti. Claudius Candidus, went on ahead in command of the Pannonian legions. Meanwhile, Pescennius Niger had occupied Byzantium and entrusted the defence of the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara to Asellius Aemilianus. In the autumn of 193 Candidus defeated Aemilianus near Cyzicus and executed him. Niger, besieged in Byzantium by Marius Maximus, was forced to withdraw to Nicaea, which remained loyal to his cause. But his defeat in a battle to the west of the city and his subsequent withdrawal to Antioch undermined his chances of organizing further resistance. Asia fell into Severus' hands, and by 13 February 194 Egypt was supporting him. Niger attempted to defend the approaches to Syria at the Cilician gates, but in the spring of 194 he was decisively defeated at Issus by C. Anullinus, another of Severus' trusted commanders. Niger was soon captured and executed. His head was sent as a grim warning to Byzantium, which still held out against Severus. The victory was also marked by Severus' fourth salutation as *imperator*, and a series of reprisals against individuals

[8] Dio, LXXIV.1.3–5; cf. Herod. II.14.1; *SHA*, *Sev.* 7.1–3.

and cities that had supported Niger, although at this stage no senator was executed. In order to break up the large concentration of troops exploited by Niger, the province of Syria was divided into two, Coele (northern Syria) with two legions under a consular governor, and Phoenice (southern Syria), with one under the command of a legionary legate of praetorian rank.[9] Leaving Byzantium still under siege Severus turned his attention towards Rome's eastern neighbours. The pretext was the support given to Niger by the Osrhoeni under king Abgarus, the Adiabeni, and the Scenite Arabs, and their attack on Nisibis, which was apparently held to be in the orbit of Roman influence. But Dio's explanation of the campaign – 'a desire for glory' – is likely to be right. Casualties had been heavy in the civil war, and Severus, who had not been present at any of the battles, had won little distinction. He needed a foreign war, especially one that involved little risk of large-scale conflict. In the spring of 195, rejecting all overtures of peace, the emperor invaded Mesopotamia and marched straight to Nisibis, where he divided his army into three groups and despatched them to do as much damage as possible to the enemy; in a subsequent operation Abiabene may have been attacked. Three imperial salutations (V, VI, VII) belong to these campaigns, and Severus assumed the titles *Parthicus Adiabenicus* and *Parthicus Arabicus*, though *Parthicus* was later dropped. He presumably wished to avoid an open breach with the Parthians since they had not been directly involved in the campaigns because of a rebellion in Persis and Media. Other celebrations of the campaigns were muted, though it seems that a new province of Osrhoene was established in 195 excluding the city territory of Edessa, which was left under the control of Abgarus.[10] Severus' intention will have been to enhance Rome's standing among the eastern states without offending the Parthians, and to improve his own reputation in Rome. During the campaigns in Mesopotamia the emperor heard word of the fall of Byzantium after a siege of two and a half years and excitedly blurted out the news to the troops. He knew that this marked his final triumph over the forces of Niger and he vindictively punished the city by depriving it of its land and rights, by destroying the walls, and by executing the magistrates and the soldiers who had defended it. At the same time his mind was on the creation of a stable dynasty. First, he announced himself to be the son of Marcus Aurelius. This remarkable move was a direct attempt to associate Severus with the revered memory of Marcus, who had been very popular with the senate. Then his elder son Bassianus took the names M. Aurelius Antoninus ('Caracalla'), and possibly also the formal position

[9] *AE* 1930.141. These milestones show the existence of Phoenice, while Severus is *Imperator* IV (194). He did not receive his fifth salutation until the campaigns in 195.

[10] The date of C. Julius Pacatianus' procuratorship of Osrhoene is much disputed; see *PIR*² A 8; Pflaum, *Carrières* no. 229 (pp. 605–10); Whittaker, *Herodian* I: 282–3. But Wagner (1983) 103–12 has argued convincingly that the province was established in 195.

of Caesar.[11] Severus' second wife was Julia Domna, daughter of the priest of Baal at Emesa, who was a descendent of the old ruling dynasty there, and she bore him two sons, Bassianus, born on 4 April 188, and Geta, born on 7 March 189. Clodius Albinus, nominated Caesar in 193, obviously could expect little but a quick death from the new regime, and made his own bid for supreme power by proclaiming himself Augustus.

On his way back to the west Severus briefly visited Rome, perhaps in late autumn 196. The news was not good since Albinus had invaded Gaul, captured Lugdunum, and defeated the governor of Germania Inferior, Virius Lupus, a Severan partisan. However, at the battle of Lugdunum on 19 February 197 the Severan forces won a decisive victory, although casualties were enormous. Lugdunum was looted and burnt and Albinus was captured and beheaded. Severus treated his body with indignity to set an example. There followed widespread confiscations and reprisals against senators and prominent provincials who had supported Albinus. By 9 June Severus was back in Rome to confront the supporters of Albinus in the senate. Out of 64 brought to trial, 29 were executed. The emperor was at his most intimidating, decrying the morals of many senators and praising Commodus, whose deification he ordered. However, the situation in the east required Severus' personal presence. After 195 northern Mesopotamia was regarded informally at least to be within the Roman sphere of influence, with a Roman garrison in Nisibis. The invasion of Parthia in 197 should be seen as a limited war in an attempt to re-establish their prestige. The Parthian king Vologaeses, beset with rebellion and family dissension (one brother accompanied the Romans), withdrew before the arrival of Severus, who marched straight to Nisibis, which Julius Laetus had successfully defended. A punitive expedition then sailed down the Euphrates in the autumn of 197, and after occupying Seleuceia and Babylon, captured Ctesiphon, the Parthian capital; there was little resistance and the city was plundered with huge loss of life and a vast haul of prisoners. Severus was able to announce the conquest of Parthia on 28 January 198, the centenary of Trajan's accession. But he did not pursue Vologaeses. On his return march he attacked the city of Hatra between the Tigris and the Euphrates. During the siege Severus executed a tribune of the praetorians for criticizing the war, and also his commander Julius Laetus, who seemed too popular with the troops.[12] The siege was resumed, but the emperor's indecision lost the one chance of storming the city and the campaign petered out in recrimination and near mutiny.

The main result of the war was the creation of a new province of Mesopotamia, garrisoned by two legions under the command of an equestrian prefect. Osrhoene apparently remained a province, under a Roman

[11] See Whittaker, *Herodian* 1: 286–7. [12] The identity of Laetus: Birley, *Septimius Severus* 345–6.

procurator though Abgarus continued to rule Edessa. Severus boasted that the new province served as a protection for Syria. Yet in Dio's view it was expensive, unproductive and even dangerous, in that it brought the Romans into contact with new peoples. It is unlikely that Severus had formulated long-term strategic plans in 195 to create a new province. He seized an opportunity that arose with the weakness of Parthia. The conquest of Mesopotamia served his personal interests more than those of Rome, in that as *Parthicus Maximus* and *Propagator Imperii*, he was a military leader who had enhanced the honour and glory of Rome, not merely a victor in squalid civil wars that cost thousands of Roman lives. The military success was consummated with new dynastic arrangements. Caracalla, who had already received the title of 'emperor designate' (*imperator destinatus*), was proclaimed joint Augustus, shortly after the capture of Ctesiphon, on 28 January 198, while the younger son Geta was proclaimed Caesar.[13] When the annexation of Mesopotamia had been completed in the summer of 199, Severus proceeded through Palestine and Syria to Egypt, where he effected a reorganization of local government by giving a council to Alexandria and to each of the *metropoleis*. This was not however designed to bring Egypt into line with municipal local government elsewhere, but was another device for finding people to perform the expensive local magistracies that kept the *metropoleis* running financially. The emperor made the long return journey through Asia Minor and Thrace, founding Forum Pizus as a centre of trade in the area, and arrived in Rome in 202.[14] In the same year a great celebration was organized to mark ten years of Severus' rule, his victories, and the marriage of Caracalla to Plautilla, the daughter of Plautianus, his praetorian prefect. There were lavish games and a cash distribution to the plebs and praetorians on an unparalleled scale of generosity in which Severus took great pride. The triumphal arch subsequently erected in the forum affirmed his achievements – the rescue of the state and the extension of the power of Rome. In 202, at the peak of his career, the emperor set out for a visit to his native province, where the district of Numidia had recently been constituted as a separate province under the command of the legate of the III Augusta. Many communities benefited from Severus' generosity, especially Lepcis Magna.

The secular games and further distributions to the plebs, which took place in 204, were followed by a period in the capital when Severus could devote himself to affairs of state. But in 208 the emperor departed for Britain on a campaign that was to be his last. The province had been neglected

[13] Severus as military leader: *ILS* 425 'because of his restoration of the state and the extension of the power of the Roman people'; *RIC* IV.1 p. 108 nos. 142–4; Caracalla as emperor designate and his proclamation as Augustus: *SHA*, *Sev*. 16.3–5; *BMC* V p. 52 no. 193; *CIL* XIII.1754. See in general, Reynolds, *Aphrodisias* 124–9.

[14] *IGBulg* III.1690.

during the civil wars, and Albinus had withdrawn the greater part of the garrison in order to fight Severus. Herodian indeed claims that Severus divided Britain into two provinces in 197. That would make sense in the light of his earlier division of Syria to break up a large concentration of troops. But inscriptional evidence showing two provinces in Britain does not appear until after Severus' death, and there are other signs that Britain still consisted of one territorial province during his reign. The division should probably be ascribed to the period *c.* 211–20, but no certainty is possible.[15] In any event, the work of restoration went on throughout the reign, with the object of protecting the security of the province by dealing with those tribes who threatened Hadrian's wall, especially the Caledonians, who dwelt in the highlands, and the Maeatae, who lived north of the Forth. Alfenus Senecio, a very senior figure, having already governed Syria, was active *c.* 205–7, but eventually decided to request the emperor's personal presence. Severus was glad of the opportunity because, according to Dio, he was worried about the behaviour of his sons and the idleness of the legions, and wanted more military glory for himself. But Dio's hostility to wars of aggrandizement may have affected his judgement here. For the history of the campaign the literary sources are very meagre and the archaeological evidence inconclusive. It is possible that Severus had no definite policy at the outset, but wavered between a desire to conquer and occupy northern Scotland and a willingness to settle for a series of punitive expeditions to establish Roman influence and prestige beyond the Forth. The emperor perhaps realized that the conquest of the Highlands was not worth the trouble of dealing with the difficult terrain and the enemy's guerrilla tactics. There were apparently two campaigns; the first, in 208–9, involved substantial preparations and an advance across the Forth and then up the east coast of Scotland to within twelve miles of the Moray Firth. Evidence suggests a simultaneous advance from the west coast just north of Hadrian's wall. Once across the Forth, this force moved eastwards and joined the rest of the army or advanced parallel with it. An advance base was begun at Carpow on the Tay, and Severus was able to conclude a favourable treaty with the Caledonians and Maeatae in 209. Late in the same year the emperor and his sons took the title *Britannicus* and Geta was raised to the rank of Augustus. But the peace did not last and a further campaign was launched in 210 probably by the same kind of route.[16] Caracalla seems to have taken charge since Severus was too ill. On 4 February 211 Severus died at York, aged sixty-six. Caracalla concluded peace with the Caledonian peoples and withdrew from their territory. The Romans were content to hold the line of Hadrian's wall after these displays of their military power.

[15] Graham (1966); cf. Mann and Jarrett (1967).
[16] Birley, *The African Emperor* 170–87; Frere, *Britannia* 154–66; Salway (1981) 221–30.

Caracalla and his brother Geta, who had been left behind in the southern part of the province to deal with administrative affairs, immediately returned to Rome.

III. SEVERUS, THE ARMY AND THE SENATE

The character of Septimius Severus' regime was inevitably influenced by the bloodshed, confiscations and terror associated with civil war, and by his dependence on the army. Superficially, he must have seemed like a military adventurer whose chances of establishing stable government were slight, especially since the troops who burst into the senate house in 193 demanding a donative must have thought that Severus was at their mercy. Moreover, senators were little reassured by the disbandment of the disloyal praetorians and the formation of a new guard. Yet the evidence hardly bears out senatorial fears of extravagant treatment of the troops. Frightening as the episode in the senate was, the demand of the legionaries for 10,000 *sesterces* on the precedent of Octavian was not excessive by previous standards. Indeed Severus handed over only 1,000 *sesterces* per man, presumably as a down payment. In addition to donatives, the booty from the sack of Ctesiphon and Lugdunum may have helped to satisfy the expectations of the soldiers. He did substantially increase military pay, but this, although undoubtedly helping to cement the loyalty of the army, was long overdue. In general, he made a soldier's life more pleasant by removing the ban on marriages and by allowing junior officers to form clubs. Inscriptions prove his popularity among the troops.[17] But all this falls far short of a corruption of discipline. What is more, the legal privileges of the troops built up by previous emperors remained largely unaltered. Admittedly, two mutinies are recorded during the reign, but both were the result of particular incidents and did not lead to more substantial outbreaks. Moreover, the Severan army fought two civil wars, two difficult campaigns in the east, and a costly war in Britain while remaining a powerful effective force, loyal to the dynasty at the accession of Caracalla and Geta, and even after the murder of Geta.

Severus himself became a worthy commander-in-chief. He recruited three new legions (I, II, III Parthica) in Italy, perhaps for the war against Albinus. Two (I and III) eventually became the garrison of the new province of Mesopotamia, while the other was stationed in Italy at Albanum. He waged war assiduously and extended the territory of Rome, accumulating outstanding military honours. He shared the toils of his fellow soldiers

[17] *ILS* 2438; 2445–6; note *ILS* 446 – *conditor Romanae disciplinae*. Pay – Brunt (1950); Speidel (1992); Alston (1994); marriage of soldiers – Campbell (1978), esp. 159–66; Campbell, *ERA* 193–5, 409–10; military *collegia* – *Diz. Ep.* II.1, 367–69. *Collegia* of junior officers had existed from Hadrian's time but many more are found under Septimius Severus. Ordinary soldiers were prohibited from associating in this way – *D* XLVII.22.1.*pr*.

and clearly emphasized the military role of the emperor. But many emperors before Severus, either willingly or through circumstance, had devoted much attention to military affairs. What did make Severus different was his reliance on the army for support in civil war, and that was both unavoidable once he decided to march on Rome, and also obvious to contemporaries. However, the close association between emperor and troops did not necessarily mean that the traditional framework and conventions of the principate were disrupted. Severus was not a 'military emperor' and showed no particular preference for soldiers, even at the minor levels of administration. The office of equestrian procurator, where military service was often an integral part of a man's early career, could provide an avenue for ex-centurions and tribunes of the praetorians to seek promotion to the emperor's service. These men competed with those who had held the traditional equestrian military posts. In the Severan era, of the equestrian procurators known to have military experience, about 57 per cent still had held one or more posts in the traditional equestrian militia. The proportion of ex-centurions and tribunes of the guard promoted to procuratorial posts remained roughly similar to that in the second century. In addition, some procurators continued to have no previous military experience in their career. There is therefore no sign that Severus preferred soldiers or deliberately tried to militarize the lower grades of the administration. By ending the exclusively Italian recruitment of the praetorians, Severus theoretically made it possible for any legionary to proceed through the tribunate and centurionates of the guard to equestrian status and posts in the emperor's service. But this was a natural and gradual consequence of Severus' need to reward the legionaries who had first supported him, rather than a deliberate policy of democratizing the army.[18]

Even after the reign of Commodus and the subsequent chaos, senators still had an idea of what a 'good' emperor should do. 'He made certain promises to us like those made by good emperors in the past, that he would put no senator to death'. Dio sarcastically observes that the senator who organized the subsequent decree was executed by Severus. Initially at least, many senators were fearful of the new emperor and not impressed by his adoption of the name Pertinax, and subsequently of the Antonine nomenclature. They resented the crowd of soldiers in Rome, the vast expenses incurred, and especially his open reliance on the army. The tense atmosphere that sometimes prevailed in the senate is graphically illustrated by Dio's story of the examination of a charge of treason against Apronianus, proconsul of Asia, during which an incriminating reference to a bald-headed senator was made. Dio, like many other senators instinctively felt his head

[18] Pflaum (1950) 179–82, 186–90; Campbell, *ERA* 408–9; the democratization of the army – Parker (1958) 82.

to make sure that he had hairs and stared at anyone who was bald.[19] Of the three contenders for the purple, Severus was the least popular. There was a public demonstration in the Circus against him in 197 and strong currents of support in the senate for both Niger and Albinus. This explains the emperor's hostile speech to the senate after the battle of Lugdunum. Severus was nervous and needed to set an example. There are signs that as he began to feel more secure, his relationship with the senate improved. The emperor was temperate in his personal conduct and lifestyle, taking only traditional honours and titles and preventing his freedmen from getting above themselves. His industrious daily routine was like that of many respected emperors of the second century. In financial affairs Severus pursued all sources of revenue vigorously, and on his death left a large surplus in the treasury, despite vast expenditure on many projects and his generosity to the people of Rome. He did, however, make substantial confiscations, directed at his political enemies. And the financial organization responsible for personal monies of the imperial house (*res privata* or *ratio privata*), which had appeared at least by the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius, was probably developed by Severus through the establishment of local procurators to administer the fund in regions of Italy, and subsequently in some provinces.[20]

Severus' administration of the law was along traditional lines. He held court conscientiously even when Caracalla was ill, gave the litigants adequate time to plead, and allowed his advisers full freedom to speak. Now, the praetorian prefects enjoyed enhanced judicial responsibilities in the late second and early third centuries. However, Ulpian's principle that cases within the hundredth milestone from Rome were in the jurisdiction of the prefect of the city and that those outside were the responsibility of the praetorian prefects, is presumably confirmatory not innovatory, in view of the inscription from Saepinum, which shows the praetorian prefects exercising jurisdiction in Italy in Marcus Aurelius' reign.[21] The developing judicial activity of the praetorian prefects was certainly a gradual process, which lacked central direction; it began long before Severus, and was not deliberately intended to undermine the usual pattern of legal business. It was a recognition of the importance of this role that led to the appointment of jurists like Papinian and Ulpian in the Severan era. In general, it would be optimistic to see in Severus' attitude to the law a liberal, reformist tendency, characterized by mildness, equity and a recognition of the value of

[19] LXIV.2.1–2; LXXVI.8.

[20] Pflaum, *Carrières* 1002–7; Millar, *ERW* 627–30; Nesselhauf (1964). Severus debased the silver content of the *denarius* to two-thirds what it had been under Commodus, though there was probably little inflationary effect; finance under the Severans – Crawford (1975) 562–9.

[21] *D* 1.12.1.4; Millar, *ERW* 122–5; Saepinum – *FIRA*² I no. 61.

human life.[22] First, measures ascribed to Severus in the *Digest* may simply be a restatement of existing practice, not an innovation. Second, the emperor's legal training will have encouraged him to take a special interest. His approach was conservative – 'where uncertainty arises from the laws, customary practice or the authority derived from repeatedly confirmed precedents should have the force of law' – and like most emperors he sought to preserve the status and prerogatives of the upper classes and the patriarchal society. For instance, his decision to prevent abortions was primarily concerned with protecting the interests of the father rather than the rights of the unborn child.[23] Furthermore, that Severus extended the use of torture to all classes of society cannot be taken as a liberal reform.[24] Severus accepted the traditional practices and values of the principate and the conventional lip service paid to the constitutional framework of imperial government. He did not need to set his lawyers to think up and define in legalistic terms a more autocratic regime. Augustus' system was quite autocratic enough, and the constitutional facade suited both emperors and upper classes.[25]

An integral part of this arrangement was that senators held the top administrative posts and governorships. Severus maintained the predominant role of the senatorial class. Admittedly all the three new legions created by the emperor were commanded by equestrians. But two were stationed in Mesopotamia, which had an equestrian governor, and a senator could not be asked to serve under an *eques*. The other was stationed in Italy and may have been responsible to the equestrian praetorian prefects. There was in any event a tradition that élite troops in Italy were commanded by *equites*. Mesopotamia, Severus' new acquisition, was the only province besides Egypt where an equestrian governed in command of legionary troops. But in the aftermath of conquest the province may not have seemed a pleasant assignment; and senior men were perhaps unwilling to take on a demanding post. Moreover, many senators were suspect to Severus, and there were five armed provinces close to Mesopotamia governed by senators and containing a total of eight legions. Severus' appointment of an *eques* was an *ad hoc* solution based on the immediate conditions in a province where there was no tradition of senatorial office holding. More sinister perhaps was the appointment in seven instances between 193 and 211 of an equestrian official to a province in the absence of the normal senatorial governor. But this is hardly significant, especially since in most of these cases

[22] Parker (1958) 75–7.

[23] *D* 1.3.38; abortion – XLVII.11.4 'a woman, who deliberately brings about an abortion on herself should be sent into temporary exile by the governor; for it can be considered improper that she should deprive her husband of children with impunity'; rights of masters over slaves – XXVIII.5.49; XLIX.14.2.6.

[24] As suggested by Parker (1958) 75–6; Paulus, *Sent.* V.29.2. [25] Campbell, *ERA* 410–11.

the *eques* was not in command of legionary troops.[26] These appointments were temporary, as the title 'acting in place of the governor' suggests, to deal with a crisis, and did not become a permanent institution. For instance, in one example Hilarianus, the procurator, took over from the deceased proconsul of Africa. Severus did not initiate the practice though he may have unintentionally contributed to its development through the force of circumstances. Even so, there are only six more known cases down to 235, though one of these, C. Furius Sabinius Aquila Timesitheus served three times *vice praesidis*, and more are found in command of troops – a sign of the increasingly unsettled times.[27] But on the whole senators can hardly have complained about Severus' treatment of them, since at his death they virtually monopolized the senior administrative posts and army commands.

Much more disturbing was the career of C. Fulvius Plautianus, a native of Lepcis Magna and kinsman and friend of Severus, who had been appointed probably as sole prefect of the guard by 197.[28] His great influence with the emperor and his long tenure of the prefecture allowed him to acquire power beyond the formal responsibilities of his office, culminating in the consulship and the betrothal of his daughter Plautilla to Caracalla in 202. Apparently he had more statues than the imperial family; men wrote to him as to a fourth Caesar; and he cut a daunting figure in the street.[29] But he made the mistake of falling out with Julia Domna and alienating Caracalla, who also detested his wife, Plautilla. A rift developed after the emperor's brother P. Septimius Geta on his deathbed in 204 had warned Severus about the dangers of Plautianus' power; Severus ordered that some of the prefect's statues should be melted down and presumably restricted his influence. This may have encouraged a palace plot against Plautianus, in which Caracalla seems to have been implicated. The prefect was lured to the palace on 22 January 205 and immediately murdered.

Severus preserved the traditionally predominant position of Italy in the empire, though he did make some innovations. He disbanded the Italian praetorian guard, replacing it with Danubian soldiers, and for the first time a legion was stationed permanently in Italy. However, Severus needed to reward his own troops with service in the guard, and opportunities were still open to Italians to serve in the augmented garrison of the capital.[30] In addition, he will have seen the need for regular legionary troops in Italy

[26] Pflaum (1950) 134–9.

[27] To Pflaum's list add Valerius Valerianus – *AE* 1966.495; for Timesitheus see *PIR*² F 581. He was the father-in-law and praetorian prefect of Gordian III.

[28] Birley, *Septimius Severus* 294–5. Aemilius Saturninus may have been appointed as co-prefect in 199, but he was soon murdered by Plautianus.

[29] Dio, LXXV.15–16; LXXVI.1–5; Herod. III.11.1–3.

[30] It is difficult to accept Herodian's claim (III.13.4) that Severus quadrupled the garrison of Rome, though the praetorian cohorts, the urban cohorts and the *vigiles* were probably increased in size; cf. E. B. Birley (1969).

after his easy capture of Rome, and the embarrassing exploits of the notorious bandit Bulla. Italy of course retained its basic right of exemption from taxation. The emperor made the usual effort to protect the interests of the provincials against oppression, and probably found that, like other emperors, it was difficult to enforce his wishes. Indeed there are a few signs of intermittent opposition in several areas of the empire. Inscriptions from Africa and Asia show action being taken against 'enemies of the state and murderous plotters'. In Germany detachments of all four garrison legions had to be assembled by C. Iulius Septimius Castinus to deal with 'rebels and insurgents'.[31] Besides the generous exemption of the provinces from the expenses of the *vehiculatio*, and the extension of official recognition to local alimentary schemes, Severus bestowed his munificence on many provincial communities. This of course had much to do with rewarding those who had supported him in the civil war. In the same way, the extension of Roman citizenship, especially in the east and in Africa, was part of a gradual process of Romanization, here accentuated by Severus' need to reward his supporters, by the influence of Julia Domna, his Syrian wife, and by partiality for his native land. Furthermore, the admission of provincials into the senate was a long-term trend which was not deliberately developed by Severus. It is hardly surprising that the emperor used many men of African origin in posts of responsibility, since Africans were becoming more prominent as the province grew richer and more Romanized. Severus naturally employed those friends and their connections from Lepcis whom he thought he could trust. Such men were appointed because they were reliable, not because they were African. Indeed Severus could hardly trust all Africans, when Clodius Albinus himself probably came from Hadrumetum in Africa and must have had many friends there. Africa was not a homogeneous area, but a collection of communities many of which were rivals. So, Severus had no general principle of favouring the provinces or Africans in particular; rather he acted as expediency dictated to ensure widespread support and his personal security.[32]

The reign of Septimius Severus occupies an important place in the development of the Roman empire.[33] His positive achievement was that he established order, tried to preserve the traditional structure of the Roman state threatened by his seizure of power, and provided for an orderly succession. He maintained the discipline of the army and vigorously asserted Roman power through military activity, for motives of personal aggrandizement

[31] *D* 1.16.4; XXXIX.4.6; XXXIX.4.16.14; oppression of the local population – Mitchell (1976); Campbell, *ERA* 243–54. Opposition – *ILS* 429 (A.D. 208), 430, Castinus – *ILS* 1153 (perhaps A.D. 205 or 208).

[32] Birley, *Septimius Severus* Appendix III emphasizes the importance of the African element in the emperor's support; see also Barnes (1967); senators of the Severan era – Barbieri (1952b); Severus' benefactions in the east – Millar (1990) 31–9.

[33] Discussion in Campbell, *ERA* 401–14; Birley, *The African Emperor* 188–200.

and to divert attention from the civil wars; he aimed to govern conscientiously in the usual passive way of Roman emperors and to protect the privileges and prerogatives of the people he relied on to help run the empire, both the Roman upper classes and the local élites. He was not an innovator or reformer; he did not deliberately attempt to alter the traditional basis of the principate, or change the balance between Italy and the provinces, or degrade the role of the senate and senators. Nevertheless the empire he ruled was very different from that of Augustus or even the Antonines. The crucial point was the manner of his accession through armed rebellion. For the first time in 124 years a military commander had captured Rome with his army and initiated a period of prolonged civil war. This was a serious break with the tradition of orderly and peaceful succession, and Severus had to deal with the inevitable consequences of this and ensure that no one followed his example. The association of emperor and army was closer now and more obvious; the confidence of the senatorial class had been further eroded, their willingness to serve the emperor reduced and the way made easier for emperors to ignore the senate and employ more *equites*; the long-term levelling up process of the provinces was also advanced. None of this was the deliberate policy of an emperor with original ideas, rather it was the inevitable reaction of a military usurper trying to secure his rule. Severus was probably the best Rome could hope for, though the execution of senators despite the emperor's attempts at clemency, the excessive power of Plautianus followed by his brutal murder, and the violent dissension between Caracalla and Geta, provided disturbing signs of a sinister side of politics behind the facade of civilized order. At the end, no one could conceal the looming power of the army and the implications for the future. Severus' last advice to his sons sums up the imperial dilemma – 'be harmonious, enrich the soldiers, and despise all the rest'.[34] By demonstrating again the success of the methods used to secure the army's loyalty, Severus enhanced the importance of such methods in the process of winning and keeping power.

IV. CARACALLA

Septimius Severus' final intention had been that both sons should succeed as joint emperors. Julia Domna tried to hold the family together, but Caracalla was impatient of restrictions and the influence of his father's advisers, particularly the praetorian prefect Papinian, who had been a close friend of Severus and apparently took the side of Geta. A tense situation developed in which each brother had his own courtiers and advisers and his own section of the palace. It was even rumoured that only the intervention

[34] Dio, LXXVI.15.2.

of their mother prevented a plan to split the empire between east and west. Then on 26 December 211 Caracalla invited his brother to a conference in Julia's quarters and had him murdered as he clung to his mother. This brutal act and the subsequent purge of Geta's supporters, who included many distinguished men, will certainly have undermined senatorial confidence in the new regime. Caracalla indeed was in a precarious position, since it was by no means certain that the army would support him. He therefore immediately rushed to the praetorian camp where he made an extravagant bid for support – 'I am one of you; for you alone do I wish to live, so that I can give you many benefits; for all the treasuries are yours.'[35] The day after the murder the emperor approached the legion stationed at Albanum, where he was apparently refused entry since the soldiers were incensed at the murder. They were placated by a donative. To the senate he announced an amnesty for exiles. However, nothing could conceal that the reign had got off to a bad start. Caracalla's eagerness to leave Rome was doubtless influenced by a wish to spend time with his army on campaign, through an aggressive foreign policy.

It is easy to see why Caracalla was unpopular with senators and why contemporary writers produced such an unfavourable account of his regime. Several distinguished senators were either executed or humiliated and forced out of public life by an emperor who seemed inconsistent, uncaring of advice, and prone to exercise his inexplicable whim. Spies were prevalent and men of talent were suspect; Rome was 'mutilated'.[36] Moreover, the senate was degraded by the use of people of low birth to perform important functions. During his absence in the east Caracalla appointed a eunuch, Sempronius Rufus, who also specialized in sorcery and juggling, to have charge of Rome – 'a despicable act unworthy of the Senate and people of Rome'. The freedman Theocritus, who had taught Caracalla to dance, was placed in command of an army and given the title prefect, surpassing even the praetorian prefects in power and influence. Senators by contrast were never sure of their reception. In winter quarters at Nicomedia Caracalla sometimes kept them waiting outside all day while he passed round cups of wine to his soldiers. He made it plain that he preferred his troops to the senators, and on one occasion announced disdainfully that he had weapons and soldiers so that he could ignore what the senate said about him. Dio was particularly incensed at the emperor's extravagance and his ruthlessness in acquiring money. Irregular exactions were heavy; widespread requisitioning of supplies accompanied his numerous campaigns and the construction of resting houses (*mansiones*) and other buildings at local expense along his route. New taxes were imposed, and

[35] Dio, LXXVII.3.2. [36] Dio (Xiphilinus), LXXVII.6.1.

existing ones, like those on manumission and inheritance, were increased from five to ten per cent.[37] All these factors made it difficult for Caracalla to find a working relationship with the senators, who did not know what was expected of them or how the emperor was going to behave. His reliance on the army was heavily emphasized; he increased pay, posed as 'father of the soldiers', encouraged the troops to call him 'fellow-soldier', and on campaign ostentatiously shared their routine duties and hardships.[38] Secure amid his troops, Caracalla liked to play the military man and thought that he could isolate himself from the realities of political life and dialogue with the senate.

Nevertheless, he did have some qualities associated with good emperors, and did try to preserve some elements of the traditional basis of the principate. He kept the senate informed through despatches of his activities on campaign. He wrote from Antioch criticizing senators for being lazy, for not meeting enthusiastically, and for not registering their votes individually. It is interesting that vestiges of the ideal role of the senate as the great council of state with a part in decision making still remained in imperial ideology. Although Caracalla was fascinated by gladiatorial contests and army matters, he did not completely reject routine administration, which he dealt with in his own idiosyncratic way, by deputing his mother to sort out his correspondence while he was on campaign and refer to him only the most important matters. Indeed the emperor assimilated material rapidly and showed good judgement; a far from uncultured man, he was highly articulate, often expressed himself elegantly, and could quote Euripides *ex tempore*.[39] Some found fault with Caracalla's dilatoriness in hearing legal cases, but he had a wide range of experience under his father's guidance, and the number and nature of rescripts issued by him confirm that this aspect of imperial administration was functioning in the usual way. Indeed, an inscription from Dmeir in Syria shows Caracalla's courtroom technique. In a case concerning minor local interests the emperor has his advisers present but uses his own judgement to sort out an argument over procedure; he shows a good, quick understanding of the issues involved and allows generous freedom of speech to the advocates.[40]

Perhaps the main criticism of Caracalla was that he was inconsistent both in his willingness to hear cases and in his attitude in court. He was subject to whims and effusive outbursts. This is the background to the greatest enigma of the reign, the *constitutio*, by which Caracalla bestowed Roman

[37] Dio, LXXVII.17.2–4, 21.2; LXXVII.9; Herod. IV.4.7.

[38] *ILS* 454; cf. 452; Campbell, *ERA* 52–3; pay increase – Speidel (1992) 98–100; Alston (1994) 114–15, 119–20.

[39] Dio, LXXVII.11.3–4; LXXVIII.8.4.

[40] *SEG* XVII.759; cf. W. Williams (1974); the case was heard at Antioch on 27 May 216.

citizenship on the population of the empire. The motive remains obscure. Dio believed that the emperor wanted to increase revenue by making more people subject to the inheritance and manumission taxes payable only by Roman citizens. But Dio is patently hostile to Caracalla and there were many other more direct and less troublesome means of raising extra revenue quickly. Caracalla's own words suggest that he was effusively giving thanks in celebration of a great occasion, possibly either the successful coup against Geta or his rescue from shipwreck on the way to the east in 214, depending on the date of the papyrus which preserves part of a Greek translation of this announcement. This fits in with his personality and also the Roman tradition of extending citizenship as a reward or as an act of patronage. Caracalla was acting as the grand patron. This ephemeral motive explains the absence from the coinage of any mention of the *constitutio*. In addition, the value of the citizenship was declining, as a distinction in respect of social status between *honestiores* and *humiliores* increasingly determined the government's treatment of the population.[41]

It was as a soldier that Caracalla wanted to die and be remembered. Yet contemporary writers dealt harshly with his military pretensions. They saw him as an empty showman who postured as 'fellow-soldier' and revered the memory of Alexander the Great with a peculiar intensity, and as an arrant coward who had no coherent policy, and actually bought the enemy off with money. However, the emperor showed both energy and ability in his northern campaigns and achieved popularity with his troops. Crossing into the *Agri Decumates* by 11 August 213, with the assistance of C. Suetrius Sabinus, he attacked the Alamanni and then advanced up the Rhine to Mainz where he engaged the Cenni. By September, after a victory on the river Main, Caracalla had been hailed *imperator* III, and he styled himself *Germanicus Maximus*. But illness may have caused the emperor to curtail the campaign and pay a subsidy to some of the Germans. During these campaigns the turf wall and frontier posts in Raetia were reconstituted. His objective was to sustain Roman prestige beyond the Rhine and make the defence of the formal frontier more efficient. It was probably now that the emperor began wearing the long Celtic tunic (*caracalla*) from which he acquired his nickname. After a brief visit to Rome, Caracalla travelled to the Danube front in 214, but little is known about the details of operations which were mainly diplomatic and apparently aimed at breaking up alliances between Danubian tribes. However, there may have been some fighting, and hostages were surrendered to Rome. It was probably at this time that the two Pannonias were reorganized so that of the three legions

[41] *P. Giss.* 40, col. 1 (now *P. Giss. Lit.* 6.1); the traditional date of 212 has been disputed by Millar (1962); see now Gilliam (1965), reaffirming 212, and Rubin (1975a), arguing for 213; significance of the *constitutio* – Sherwin-White (1973); status distinctions – Garnsey (1970) 221–33.

in Pannonia Superior, legion I Adiutrix was moved into Pannonia Inferior, which then received a governor of consular rank.[42]

Caracalla proceeded to Asia, establishing his headquarters at Antioch by spring 215, and set about the administrative problems of the east with his usual energy. His visit to Egypt in 215 resulted in an extraordinary incident when the emperor ordered a massacre of the inhabitants of Alexandria. The motives for this are obscure. The turbulent population had been rude about the emperor but there seems to have been serious disorder in the city and Caracalla will have wanted to secure the province before his expedition to Parthia.[43] Here the central issues were as usual the status of Armenia and Rome's relations with the Parthian king. There is evidence of forward planning in a recruitment drive, in increased minting in the east, in the construction of *mansiones*, and in the summoning of the vassal kings of Armenia and Osrhoene to Rome in 213/14. Caracalla was following the traditional policy of preserving Roman prestige by establishing a nominee on the throne of Armenia, and disrupting as much as possible the Parthian ability to interfere. He could not predict the rise of the formidable Persians in a few years' time. Opportunely there were two contenders for the Parthian throne: Artabanus V controlled Media, while Vologaeses V had his capital at Ctesiphon. At first, since Vologaeses was harbouring Tiridates, a possible aspirant to the throne of Armenia, Caracalla made common cause with Artabanus and offered to marry his daughter; this may have been part of Caracalla's imitation of Alexander, or perhaps it was a ploy to win over Artabanus, or even to provoke Vologaeses. In any event when Vologaeses nominally accepted Caracalla's authority the emperor was able to use Artabanus' rejection of the marriage alliance as an excuse to invade his territory (mid-216).[44] The expedition, largely confined to northern Mesopotamia and Adiabene, was a demonstration of Roman strength rather than a serious attempt at annexation. Caracalla may have had plans for further campaigns, although the return of II Adiutrix to Pannonia suggests that Rome's influence had been sufficiently re-established. In the event, Caracalla's ultimate intentions in the east were frustrated by his murder on 8 April 217. M. Opellius Macrinus, one of the praetorian prefects, had been intriguing against his emperor. Knowing that he was under suspicion he decided to act by suborning Julius Martialis, an *evocatus* attached to the praetorians. Letters which had been sent to Caracalla warning him of the plot were directed to Julia Domna and arrived too late to prevent Macrinus from having the emperor murdered on a visit to the temple of Sin near

[42] Campaigns in Germany – *ILS* 451, 1159, 7178 with *AE* 1961. 208 (probably referring to the Cenni); Dio, LXXVII.14.1; Pannonia – Mócsy (1974) 198; Whittaker, *Herodian* I: 414–15.

[43] Whittaker, *Herodian* I: 424–5.

[44] Dio, LXXVII.12.1, 18.1, 19.1–2; LXXVIII.1.3–5; Whittaker, *Herodian* I: 429–31.

Carrhae. Martialis was immediately killed by the German bodyguard and this allowed Macrinus to conceal his complicity in the plot.

V. THE END OF THE DYNASTY

In the first two days following the murder of Caracalla there was confusion in the absence of an obvious successor or any firm lead from army commanders. Macrinus exploited this vacuum and the troops' fears of the threat from Artabanus, and seized power for himself. In a letter the new emperor made gestures to win senatorial approval, but he faced formidable problems. Being of equestrian rank and Moorish birth he was the object of great prejudice among the upper classes, which was exacerbated by his adoption of the titles and prerogatives of emperor before they were formally voted by the senate. Some of his appointments also aroused criticism, especially that of M. Oclatinius Adventus to senatorial rank, the consulship, and the prefecture of the city. As consul he could not even hold a sensible conversation and had to pretend to be ill on election day. The real basis of Macrinus' position was the support of the army, but here too he had to overcome the legacy of Caracalla who had been very popular with his soldiers, partly because of his generous pay rise. The cost of the army was now an immense drain on imperial resources and Macrinus tried to compromise by maintaining Caracalla's pay scales for all serving soldiers, but enrolling new recruits on the old terms established by Septimius Severus. He ought to have waited until the army had been dispersed to their normal camps. As it was, the old soldiers, fearing for their own privileges, supported the recruits. Therefore the emperor faced a turbulent and resentful army which could easily be exploited by others. The crucial factor was the continuing threat from the Parthians, which forced Macrinus to keep a large force assembled. Artabanus had seen his chance to recover Parthian prestige and seems to have threatened to invade Mesopotamia. Diplomatic contacts were begun, followed by a battle at Nisibis possibly in autumn 217, and then a peace settlement in 218 which involved a payment of reparations to the Parthians for the damage done by Caracalla. These operations allowed Macrinus to claim a *Victoria Parthica*, although he declined the name *Parthicus*. Indeed, he deserves some credit for preserving Mesopotamia intact, though there was little enthusiasm in Rome, where demonstrations took place against the emperor in September 217. Numerous coins proclaiming 'the loyalty of the soldiers' suggest Macrinus' anxiety about his failure to win over the army.[45]

The death of Julia Domna, partly by cancer, partly by self-starvation, may have increased sympathy in the army for the Severan family. Julia's

[45] *BMC* v p. 496–7, nos. 11–14; p. 505, nos. 64–5.

sister Julia Maesa had two daughters: Julia Soaemias, married to the distinguished *eques* Varius Marcellus of Apamea and mother of Varius Avitus, who was born probably in 203 and was a priest of the sun god at Emesa, by whose name he was known (Elagabalus); and Julia Mamaea, who also had a son, Alexianus, born probably in 209. The soldiers' resentment against Macrinus, and their dynastic loyalties, created a climate of revolt. It began at the military camp near Emesa on 16 May 218 when Elagabalus entered and was represented as the illegitimate son of Caracalla. Macrinus went to Apamea and tried to placate the II Parthica by distributing money and proclaiming as Augustus his son Diadumenianus, who also took the name Antoninus. However when a counter-attack on the camp at Emesa failed he retreated to Antioch leaving the II Parthica to go over to the rebels. The movement in support of Elagabalus gained in strength. Macrinus wrote to the prefect of the city pointing out the impossibility of meeting the army's financial demands and blaming Septimius Severus and Caracalla for corrupting military discipline; but it did him no good and he was defeated by Elagabalus near Antioch on 8 June 218. Macrinus and his son fled to Antioch and thence to Nicomedia from which they escaped by ship to Chalcedon. After being apprehended there they were butchered in Cappadocia by their guards on the way back from Antioch.[46]

In Dio's view the four-year reign of Elagabalus (M. Aurelius Antoninus Augustus) was an appalling hiatus in even the desire for good government. The young emperor displayed a lack of sensitivity towards the senate in minor violations of precedent; for example, he assumed his titles before they were formally voted. The situation was exacerbated by the appointment of unworthy people to high positions. Dio was particularly incensed by the striking career of P. Valerius Comazon who had once served in the fleet, but who managed to become praetorian prefect and eventually consul (220) and prefect of the city on two occasions in Elagabalus' reign. The unpopularity of the regime was increased by the treatment of the god Elagabalus. Eastern cults were acceptable in Rome, but the flaunting of the peculiar dress and rituals involved, and the appearance of 'the most mighty priest of the invincible Sungod' among the imperial titles, preceding *Pontifex Maximus*, were, at least, undiplomatic.[47] Moreover, critics found it easy to attack the emperor's personal reputation. Stories of his sexual depravity and promiscuity were widespread in Rome. Much of this may have been the result of the rituals associated with the cult, but the perception of the regime among the upper classes was one of instability, the collapse of social values and traditions, and the decline of government authority. An atmosphere was thus created in which the overthrow of Elagabalus seemed

[46] Dio, LXXVIII.39–40; Herod. V.4.11. [47] *BMC* V p. 564, no. 225; *ILS* 473, 475, 2008.

feasible and desirable. The most important factor was the political rift in the dynasty itself.

The emperor's grandmother, Julia Maesa, worried by the effect of his behaviour on the army and public opinion, tried to distance herself from Elagabalus and Julia Soaemias by promoting the interests of her other daughter, Julia Mamaea, and her son Alexianus. On 26 June 221 Elagabalus was prevailed upon to adopt his cousin, who took the name Alexander, and apparently bestow on him a measure of *imperium*.[48] Obviously the emperor and his mother resented this development since almost immediately they began to plot against Alexander and to overcome the influence of Maesa. While both sides bid for the soldiers' support, Elagabalus attempted to cancel Alexander's title of Caesar and refused to participate with him in their procession as joint consuls on 1 January 222. However he was quickly losing the support of the praetorians who had earlier been dissuaded from revolt only by the promise that Elagabalus would dismiss some of his favourite advisers. Finally, when Elagabalus ordered the troops to move against Alexander, they mutinied and murdered the emperor and his mother on 13 March 222.

Alexander, who was only thirteen at his accession, signified his legitimacy by styling himself Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander Augustus. An idyllic picture of his reign is presented by the *Historia Augusta*. That source may be discounted, but Herodian too is very favourable – 'the nature of the sovereignty was changed from an arrogant tyranny to a form of aristocratic government' – and later writers take up the theme of a benevolent and effective regime.[49] This can be explained partly in terms of the fact that the thirteen continuous years of Alexander's reign must have seemed like a golden age to those who had seen the following fifty years of civil wars, pressure on the frontiers, and a rapid succession of emperors most of whom were feeble and ineffective. Moreover, Alexander and his advisers deliberately tried to create a contrast with the rule of Elagabalus – the slogans 'liberty', 'justice', 'fairness' appear on his coinage – in much the same way as did Vespasian, who followed the civil wars of 68–9 and the rule of Nero, and Nerva, who succeeded Domitian. The town of Thugga in Africa responded in the way Alexander must have wanted by addressing him as 'preserver of liberty'.[50] This policy required that Alexander was respectful towards the senate and upper classes. The emperor, personally

[48] On a military diploma of 7 January 222 Alexander appears as *imperator* as well as Caesar (see *CIL* XVI.140, 141); cf. *AE* 1964.269 – *Caes(ar) imperi(i) et sacerdotis co(n)s(ul)*. As it stands, the text does not seem to make sense, and it can be argued that *consors* has been left out of the inscription because of its similarity to *consul* (see Whittaker, *Herodian* 2: 62–3).

[49] Herod. VI.1.2; Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXIV.2; Eutr. VIII.23.

[50] *BMC* VI pp. 120–1, nos. 62–6; p. 217, no. 1053; p. 175, nos. 612–14; p. 217, no. 1048. Thugga: *ILS* 6796.

modest, restrained, and courteous, was diligent in his judicial work He was meticulous in consulting the senate and his beneficent attitude to individual senators is illustrated by his willingness to undertake the expenses of Dio's second consulship. But there is a clear distinction between showing this kind of respect to the upper classes and actually giving any real power to the senate or changing the balance between it and the emperor. Alexander's treatment of his council of advisers is crucial to this question. It would represent a break with previous practice if the emperor set up a special group, which was chosen by the senate and regularly consulted. Herodian believed that sixteen senators were chosen by the senate and that Alexander did nothing without their approval. Since Herodian was not a senator he cannot have known except by hearsay and impression how often Alexander consulted these men. Dio describes how Julia Mamaea chose the best men in the senate as her son's advisers, 'informing them of all that had to be done'.[51] Yet it is difficult to accept that these men were very influential, since it is clear that the emperor's grandmother and mother controlled affairs, with the assistance, at least for the first year and a half of the reign, of the praetorian prefect Ulpian, who was not a senator. The council probably consisted of the emperor's *amici* and any others he called on for advisers and operated along traditional lines.[52] That is, Alexander summoned his advisers when it suited him, in order to discuss important matters, and accepted or disregarded their advice as he wished. The idea of having some of them chosen by the senate was a matter of diplomacy and tact and certainly did not mean any formal increase in the senate's power. Similarly, Alexander's practice of submitting to the senate the names of men he intended to appoint to the praetorian prefecture was merely a gesture of politeness. The confused testimony of the *Historia Augusta* should not be taken to mean that the emperor appointed men of senatorial rank as prefects.[53] That the praetorian prefects were now permitted to style themselves *viri clarissimi* in the manner of senators was an upgrading of the status of this office and an extension of the practice common since the end of the first century A.D., of giving senatorial rank to a prefect on his retirement. However, Alexander made a concession to senators in that he apparently appointed a senatorial legate instead of an equestrian prefect of the II Parthica legion, while it accompanied him in the east in 231–3. Indeed the inscription of the distinguished *eques* Licinius Hierocles, who was governor of Mauretania Caesariensis in 227, shows that earlier in his career he was prefect of II Parthica 'in place of the legate'.[54] This may

[51] Fragment preserved by Zon. XII.15 (Loeb edition of Dio: Cary (1927) 488).

[52] Ulpian: in a rescript (*CJ* IV.65.4) Alexander describes Ulpian as '*praefectus praetorio et parens meus*'; council: Herod. VI.1.1–2 and VII.1.3 – confirming that Alexander's *amici* were on his council.

[53] *SHA*, *Sev. Alex.* 21.3–5. [54] *AE* 1971.469; *ILS* 1356; cf. Pflaum, *Carrières* no. 316.

suggest that a senatorial commander of this legion was normally appointed under Alexander even when it was in its usual station at Albanum in Italy.

The relatively large number of rescripts issued during Alexander's reign may indicate the determination of his advisers to show a conscientious interest in judicial activity. The emperor's legal secretaries express sentiments of equity and righteousness. It is debatable how much direct influence Alexander had in this but at least their attitudes must have been consistent with his general wishes and those of his advisers.[55] So, in a letter to the city of Aphrodisias in Asia Minor he states, 'to take away anything from the rights belonging to the city is foreign to the guardianship [extended to all in my] reign'. Rescripts proclaim 'the purity of my times', 'the demise of treason charges in my era', and 'it is particularly appropriate in the exercise of power to abide by the laws'.[56] This concept is not inconsistent with the assertion in the same rescript that 'the law conferring imperial power exempts the emperor from the formalities of the law'. Since the time of Augustus, the emperor had been an autocrat whose power was limited only in so far as he chose to restrain his own whim. Ulpian's claim that the emperor was free from the restraints of the laws, merely restated a clause of the *Lex de Imperio* of A.D. 69, and was not an attempt to define formally the autocratic position of the emperor in Alexander's reign.[57]

Even if Alexander's rule did provide an interlude of respect for the senate and the traditional procedures of government and office holding, that should not conceal the fact that behind this facade there were serious weaknesses. Because of the emperor's youth at his accession, it was inevitable that affairs of state were managed by others. His grandmother Julia Maesa and his mother, Julia Mamaea, took charge, and from the start both women were called Augusta. Julia Mamaea remained dominant throughout the reign.[58] She appears on coins as Augusta, but there is no mention of Alexander; frequently the reverse types emphasize her unique position – '*Juno Conservatrix*', '*Fecunditas Augustae*', '*Venus Genetrix*', '*Venus Victrix*', '*Venus Felix*', '*Vesta*'; she is associated with the concepts of '*Felicitas Publica*' and '*Pietas*'.[59] Inscriptions show her with extraordinary titles – 'mother of the emperor, and of the camps, and of the senate, and of the fatherland, and of the whole human race'.[60] Alexander himself appears completely subservient, even his wife being chosen by his mother, who in a jealous rage subsequently had her exiled and her father executed. The emperor, who was incapable of wresting

[55] Honoré, *E&L* 95–114, 134–8, 190–1 attempts to establish the identity of the holders of the post of legal secretary (*a libellis*) on the basis of their style and attitudes. The rescript system in general: Honoré, *E&L* 1–70; see also W. Williams (1979); Campbell, *ERA* 264–7.

[56] Aphrodisias: Reynolds, *Aphrodisias* 129; rescripts: *CJ* IX.9.9, IX.8.1, VI.23.3.

[57] *D* 1.3.31; on the *Lex de Imperio*, see Brunt (1977) esp. 107–16.

[58] *AE* 1912.155; *ILS* 482, 484.

[59] *BMC* VI p. 119, no. 42; p. 203, no. 913; p. 128, no. 151; p. 184, no. 712; p. 132, no. 188; p. 151, no. 380; p. 160, no. 483; p. 196, no. 821.

[60] E.g. *ILS* 485.

the initiative from his mother, seemed feeble, lethargic, and ineffective to the mutinous armies at the end; his indecision and cowardice, encouraged by Mamaea, contributed to the defeat of an army in the war against the Persians. It is significant that Maximinus, the leader of the mutineers, taunted the emperor as a timid mother's boy, a sissy who was no real soldier, and accused Mamaea of greed and parsimony.

Although the loyalty of the troops was vital to the stability of the regime, the emperor and his advisers never succeeded in establishing discipline and respect. There were numerous revolts, some of them serious, and morale was low in the provincial armies. According to Dio, troops in the east indulged in gross licence and abuse; desertions were frequent and the governor of Mesopotamia, Flavius Heracleo, was actually murdered by his own men. In Rome the situation was no better. As early as 223 Ulpian was murdered by the guardsmen under his command even though he ran into the palace and tried to take refuge with the emperor and his mother. Moreover, Epagathus, the instigator of the murder, could not be openly brought to justice. He had to be appointed prefect of Egypt and subsequently removed to Cyprus for execution.[61] Even while Ulpian was still alive a fight broke out between the praetorians and the populace in Rome, resulting in a battle lasting three days which ended only when the soldiers, who were coming off the worse, set fire to parts of the city. Such was the confident arrogance of the guardsmen that they demanded the surrender of Dio because he had enforced strict discipline while governor of Pannonia Superior. Indeed when Dio was elected consul for the second time in 229, Alexander had so little control that he feared the praetorians might kill Dio if they saw him in his robes of office, and asked him to spend his consulship outside Rome. The soldiers' hostility subsequently relented but it is clear that unrest and indiscipline persisted throughout the reign in the imperial bodyguard.

The state of the army was particularly disquieting in that Alexander had to face two serious wars. In 208 Ardashir (Artaxerxes) had taken control of the Sassanians of Persis, and having defeated Artabanus V in 224, went on by 227 to seize the Parthian empire and revive Persian power. He advanced into Roman-occupied Mesopotamia, taking Nisibis and Carrhae, and threatened Cappadocia and Syria. The king boasted that he intended to recover all the lands the Persians had ruled from the time of Cyrus. This was more than a matter of prestige. Roman territory was under a serious threat, to which Alexander responded with energetic military preparations and the usual kind of diplomatic contact which had been successful in the past.[62] He arrived in Antioch in 231 with reinforcements from the northern armies and by the summer of 232 a three-pronged expedition had been

[61] Dio, LXXX.2.4; a papyrus (*P. Oxy.* XXXI.2565) shows M. Aurelius Epagathus in office as prefect of Egypt in 224.

[62] Herod. VI.2.3–4; see Whittaker, *Herodian* 2: 93.

planned, in which one army was to advance through Armenia, a second was to proceed down the Euphrates to attack the Persian south-eastern flank, and the third commanded by Alexander himself was to use the central route by way of Hatra. This plan went well until the crucial failure of the emperor to continue his advance in support of the other two armies. The second army was cut off and severely mauled by the Persians, while all the troops suffered badly from heat and disease. However, after Alexander's return to Antioch in the winter of 232–3, a stalemate developed, since Ardashir, omitting to follow up his advantage, disbanded his army. It is likely that the Persians had suffered heavy losses in the campaign, and Roman territory remained intact, at least for the moment. In any event Alexander was unable to launch a further operation because urgent despatches summoned him to deal with a crisis on the northern frontiers where the Alamanni were threatening to break through near the Taunus mountains at Mainz. Unrest continued to smoulder among the troops, some of whom were critical of Alexander's powers as a general, while the Illyrian troops in particular were worried about their families left behind at the mercy of the marauding tribes. Nevertheless the emperor returned to Rome in 233 to celebrate a triumph and enjoy other celebrations of what was termed a victory in the east.[63] In 234 Alexander arrived at Mainz and bridged the Rhine. His intention was probably to re-establish Roman prestige and chastize the German tribes. Stories about attempts to buy off the enemy presumably reflect diplomatic activity to ensure German disunity. But the lull in military activity could be exploited by those who wanted to undermine Alexander's position. Julius Verus Maximinus, who was in charge of training recruits, became the focus for opposition. From a humble background he had become a Roman citizen, and by holding a series of positions in the army had acquired equestrian status.[64] When the Pannonian recruits declared Maximinus emperor the revolt spread quickly in Pannonia and Moesia. After bestowing double pay on his supporters he made a strike directly at Alexander's headquarters. The news of the uprising caused consternation in the emperor's entourage; no one took any decisive action and his soldiers gradually drifted away. Without a fight Maximinus took control and sent a tribune and centurions to murder Alexander and Julia Mamaea in their tent in 235.

Throughout his reign Severus Alexander faced formidable internal and external problems. At a time when the empire most needed a strong central direction, he appeared feeble and indecisive, under the sway of his mother, who also lacked firmness and competence. It was not enough to pay lip service to the traditions and prerogatives of the senatorial order. Alexander

[63] Coin types celebrating *Jupiter Propugnator* and *Mars Ultor* appear from 231: *BMC* VI pp. 194–5, nos. 789, 802; Whittaker, *Herodian* 2: 125.

[64] Career of Maximinus: Syme, *E&B* 185–9.

failed to prepare the empire adequately against the Persian threat or to deal effectively with the relationship between emperor and army, which had reached crisis point. He was overthrown largely by military discontent because he seemed parsimonious, and incapable of impressing his troops or leading a proper campaign. A man's capacity to rule was now dangerously associated with his military ability. This change in the emperor's standing was part of a long-term development and not directly Alexander's fault, but his incompetence fostered it and opened the way for a further decline in the traditional balance between emperor, army and state, with the arrival of Maximinus, the first truly soldier–emperor, who fought in the ranks with his comrades.

CHAPTER 2

MAXIMINUS TO DIOCLETIAN AND THE 'CRISIS'

JOHN DRINKWATER

I. INTRODUCTION

The fifty years following the death of Severus Alexander were among the most disruptive ever experienced by the Roman empire. Historians conventionally refer to them as a period of 'crisis', which began in 235, reached its peak around 260, and then gradually yielded to the ministrations of a series of reforming emperors, ending with Diocletian.[1] The outstanding characteristic of this crisis was war, both civil and foreign. It saw at least fifty-one individuals who, legitimately or illegitimately, received the title of Roman emperor; and during it imperial territory frequently fell victim to the depredations of Franks, Alamanni, Goths and Persians. In order to understand the age, and to determine the extent to which it may justifiably be interpreted as one of 'crisis', we must first establish a reliable picture of its events. This is difficult, because of their complexity and because of the lack of good source-material: it is significant that one of the most disputed aspects of late third-century history remains its basic chronology. (See Note on Sources at the conclusion of this chapter.) The following essentially political and military narrative attempts to summarize and, where necessary and possible, to reconcile the findings of recent work.

II. NARRATIVE

1. Maximinus, 235–8

Severus Alexander and his mother, Julia Mamaea, were murdered near Mainz in late February or early March 235, on the orders of the usurper C. Iulius Verus Maximinus. Severus Alexander had only recently moved to the Rhine from the east where, since 231, he had been facing the Persians. These, under the Sassanid dynasty, had taken over the Parthian empire, and were causing unrest in the region. Severus Alexander's Persian campaign, while not wholly disastrous, had won him no great reputation as a general.

[1] E.g. Mattingly (1939); Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE* 433ff.; Bengtson (1970) 378ff.; Loriot (1975a) 659; Demandt, *Spätantike* 34ff.; Strobel (1993) 340ff.

In 233 he concluded a truce and then, according to Herodian, proceeded westwards in response to official reports of damaging Germanic attacks across the Rhine and Danube.[2] However, corroborative evidence for significant Germanic pressure on the provinces of Upper Germany and Raetia at this time is not strong;[3] and, indeed, from the end of 233 until well into 234 the emperor rested in Rome. It appears, therefore, there was no real emergency on the western front. Severus Alexander finally reached the Rhine late in 234, and was killed at his winter headquarters, around which he had assembled an exceptionally large and cosmopolitan army. Maximinus was a man of late middle age. Though of relatively humble stock (he may have been a member of the Moesian military gentry), he had exploited the opportunities for promotion in the reformed army of Septimius Severus, winning high rank and equestrian status. During the eastern campaign he had served on Severus Alexander's general staff. When he rebelled, he was on the Rhine commanding a force of Danubian recruits.[4]

The Severan dynasty fell because the western army shifted its loyalty to someone outside the ruling circle. After the eastern débâcle, Severus needed to regain the respect of his troops; this, indeed, was probably the main reason for his western campaign. However, he played the martinet; and before committing himself to conflict he was attempting to negotiate with the Germans. Negotiation was hardly new, and might well have resulted in a respectable settlement; but his soldiers despised a commander-in-chief already characterized as a mother's boy for even considering this expedient when he had such overwhelming force at his disposal. Maximinus' proclamation by his reserve army, and his acceptance by the main imperial force, took the imperial establishment by surprise. Severus' vulnerability had not been conceded, and so his position had not been strengthened, nor had he been replaced by a better man. When Maximinus seized power there was no one to resist him.

Severus was quickly despatched, his memory condemned, and his council of advisers dismissed. Establishment resistance (two successive military revolts centred on the consulars C. Petronius Magnus and Titius Quartinus) was too late and too feeble.[5] In the meantime, and certainly before the last week of March 235, the Roman senate formally recognized Maximinus. Eighteen years after the usurpation of Macrinus, the purple had once more passed to an equestrian. However, it must again be emphasized that, despite his success, Maximinus was an outsider; unlike Macrinus, he had not attained the rank of praetorian prefect. His unusual position helps explain his subsequent actions.

[2] Herod. VI.7.2. [3] Okamura (1984) 169ff., 180ff.
[4] Herod. VI.8.2f.; Whittaker, *Herodian* 2: 131f.; Syme, *E&B* 181ff. [5] Whittaker, *Herodian* 2: 156.

Maximinus did not follow the usual practice of successful usurpers by moving to Rome, but chose to continue the German campaign. He may, of course, have simply wanted to consolidate his standing with the army. On the other hand, that he remained three full years on the northern frontier suggests that it was an acute awareness of his political vulnerability that caused him to stay away from the capital, where senatorial power and regard for the late Severan regime were strong. Maximinus crossed the Rhine south of Mainz after midsummer 235; he traversed the *Agri Decumates* before engaging the enemy: there was no fighting on Roman territory, and no surrender of the southern *limes*. Having compelled the Germans he encountered to negotiate peace, he moved south to spend the winter of 235/6 in Raetia, possibly at Regensburg. In 236, having campaigned against the Germans from Regensburg, he moved eastward to the middle Danube, where he fought against free Dacians and Sarmatians. The move necessitated the transfer of his headquarters, probably to Sirmium. In the same year, 236 (perhaps in early spring, on the anniversary of his own accession), Maximinus designated his son, C. Iulius Verus Maximus, as his Caesar and formal successor. Maximinus passed the two following winters, 236/7 and 237/8, in Sirmium. The campaigning season of 237 saw him in action once again against Sarmatians and Dacians; that of 238 was intended to be used for a major expedition against the Germans.[6]

Though all appeared to be going well, Maximinus was by now running into serious trouble. He might even eventually have experienced problems in his chosen role of conqueror of foreign enemies. The expedition planned for 238 may have been in response to the first major Gothic attack on the Graeco-Roman world (against the Black Sea cities of Olbia and Tyras); and the Persians were again threatening the east: in 236 king Ardashir had raided Mesopotamia and taken Nisibis and Carrhae, possibly Rhesaina, and perhaps Singara.[7] However, it was domestic unrest that proved to be Maximinus' undoing. Maximinus lived frugally, was disinclined to pay tribute to Rome's enemies and, while not miserly with his troops, was no spendthrift in respect of pay and donatives. On the other hand, his constant warfare led to a significant increase in state spending which had to be met from taxation. Maximinus tightened up the collection of standard taxes and demanded extraordinary payments from rich and poor alike. Money and materials were not the only things he asked for: the levying of recruits may also have occasioned resentment.[8] Though he became unpopular, and was branded the enemy of the well-to-do, with the right support at the centre of his empire he should still have been able to survive. It was his political weakness that allowed matters to get out of hand.

[6] Okamura (1984) 195ff.
[7] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.393ff. (*contra* Scardigli (1976) 204); Kettenhofen (1995).
[8] Loriot (1975a) 673ff., 681ff.; Kolb (1977) 470ff.; Potter, *Prophecy* 25.

Towards the end of March 238, there was disorder in Thysdrus, in Africa Proconsularis.[9] Here, resistance by the rich to the exactions of an overzealous imperial procurator led to this official's murder at the hands of their poor rural dependants, the involvement of the governor of the province, the aged M. Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus, and his unpremeditated proclamation by the rioters as emperor.[10] Gordian I established himself in Carthage, and took his son and namesake as his colleague in office. Gordian I was a senator of a rich and respectable family, possibly eastern in origin; but he was no soldier, and even as a civil administrator was no high-flier. He was hardly the ideal person to lead opposition against Maximinus. He and his son did not have the backing of any main regular army units, and could assert their power only by recourse to the provincial militia (based on the *iuventutes* – the local youth-associations, whose representatives at Thysdrus may have been implicated in the original unrest).[11] Once the senatorial governor of neighbouring Numidia, Capelianus, who commanded legion III Augusta and its associated auxiliaries, decided to stay loyal to Maximinus, their position became hopeless. About three weeks after their proclamation, the Gordiani were defeated by Capelianus before the walls of Carthage. Gordian II was killed in battle; his father hanged himself in the city. This should have been the end of the incident. Unfortunately for Maximinus, events had already taken another, crucial, turn.

The Gordiani had taken care to announce their usurpation to the Roman senate which, under the influence of the Severan establishment, promptly declared for them. Maximinus and his son were condemned as public enemies, and their officials and supporters in the city were killed. Senatorial endorsement ensured that the new emperors were recognized further afield. Precisely which provinces declared for the Gordiani remains uncertain though, as in the case of Numidia, most of the military regions seem to have remained loyal to Maximinus.[12] Again, there was no preparation for the sudden change of allegiance; all happened spontaneously as a result of Maximinus' lack of local support. It is likely that the senate anticipated the speedy arrival of at least one of the Gordiani to take direct charge of the situation. However, having demonstrated its hostility to Maximinus, following the downfall of the Gordiani it had no choice but to persist in its opposition to him. The dead emperors were deified; and twenty leading men were chosen from the consulars to make up a panel of individuals each considered capable of imperial office. From this panel were then elected two new emperors, M. Clodius Pupienus Maximus and D. Caelius Calvinus

[9] The chronology of 238 is exceptionally difficult, because of contradictory papyrological and epigraphic evidence. Here I follow Peachin's (1989 and *Titulature* 27ff.) compromise solution.

[10] Syme, *E&B* 163; Grasby (1975); Kolb (1977) 458; Dietz, *Senatus* 69ff., 315ff.

[11] Kolb (1977) 464ff.; Ladage (1979) 343ff.; Dietz, *Senatus* 71ff.

[12] Loriot (1975a) 697ff. and (1978); Piso (1982) 232f.

Balbinus, with equal status and power. The unsuccessful candidates seem to have been retained as advisers to the new rulers.[13]

Pupienus and Balbinus were both leading senators. Neither was young; the former was probably in his early sixties, the latter a little older.[14] Balbinus was the superior in birth and wealth, but both were aristocrats who moved in the highest circles of Roman society. Their election is probably best interpreted as a makeshift. Maximinus had been deposed, but the Gordiani were dead; therefore the Roman empire needed an emperor. The Roman political factions could not decide on a single strong candidate, hence the appointment of two elderly emperors. This compromise was a sign of division and weakness. Indeed, on the very day of their accession (in late April or early May 238) Pupienus and Balbinus were compelled by the Roman mob to accept as their colleague (with the rank of Caesar) the grandson of Gordian I, M. Antonius Gordianus (Gordian III), who was only about thirteen years of age. Here, at least, there is direct evidence of the manipulation of popular feeling by interested parties: Gordian III owed his promotion to relatives and friends of his grandfather and uncle desirous of maintaining their position of prominence, and perhaps to independent opponents of one or both of the newly elected Augusti.

Maximinus, therefore, ought still to have been able to deal with the situation without trouble. Pupienus, Balbinus and Gordian III were for the most part, like the two Gordiani, dependent on raw conscripts and local youth militias. Against these Maximinus could throw a large, battle-hardened army and, in response to the news of the defection of Rome to Gordian I, he was already on his way. However, his judgement continued to fail him. He seems to have decided on a *Blitzkrieg* that would take him quickly to Rome, but he did not take into account the difficulties of deploying an army towards the end of an Alpine winter, and he found it hard to cope with the guerilla tactics employed by the defenders of northern Italy. His columns came to a halt when the city of Aquileia – important not only as a major communications centre, but now also as a repository of badly needed supplies – closed its gates to him. Instead of taking a reduced force and pushing on to Rome, Maximinus allowed his anger to get the better of him, and settled down to besiege the city. This gave Pupienus the opportunity to move north to Ravenna to co-ordinate opposition. However, the outlook for Maximinus' foes remained uncertain. Pupienus' troops were of doubtful quality; and the potential for division between the three leaders of the newly established regime remained great: even before Pupienus had departed from Rome there was street-fighting between the mob and the

[13] Loriot (1975a) 703ff.; cf. Dietz, *Senatus* 7, 326ff.
[14] Syme, *E&B* 171; Dietz, *Senatus* 99, 134.

praetorian troops, possibly inspired by the Gordianic faction.[15] Maximinus should still have been able to emerge victorious, but his excessive insistence on effort and discipline caused increasing disaffection among his hungry, tired and now demoralized troops. After about four weeks, around early June 238, Maximinus' army mutinied, slew him and his son, and went over to Pupienus, Balbinus and Gordian III.

2. *Pupienus and Balbinus, 238*

The news of Maximinus' death was received enthusiastically in Ravenna and Rome, and most of the provinces which had continued to support him must now have quickly fallen into line.[16] However, despite their victory, the position of Pupienus and Balbinus continued to deteriorate. They still had to accommodate Gordian III and his backers; and, with the immediate danger removed, they began to dispute with each other over their respective status. Financially, too, there seem to have been great problems, reflected in the effective debasement of the silver *denarius* through the reintroduction of the billon *antoninianus* (a two-*denarius* piece, made of an alloy of silver and copper, originally introduced by Caracalla, but neglected by subsequent emperors). The new regime probably had trouble in paying for the war against Maximinus, and the customary accession bonuses to the troops and the people of Rome. The Persian invasion of Mesopotamia and the Gothic presence on the Black Sea (which was unsettling the free peoples and threatening the Roman provinces in the region of the lower Danube) also remained to be dealt with. Pupienus and Balbinus did what they could: it may have been their decision, for example, to despatch Tullius Menophilus, one of the defenders of Aquileia, to organize the defences of Moesia Inferior.[17] However, they never won the confidence of the army, and after only two months of rule, in early August 238, they were degraded, humiliated and killed in Rome by men of the praetorian guard. Possibly for want of a better candidate, but probably because they had been suborned, the troops made Gordian III emperor; and the senate necessarily acquiesced in their choice.

3. *Gordian III, 238–44*

Between 238 and 241 the Roman empire was governed by the surviving principals of the initial Italian revolt against Maximinus, now led by supporters of Gordian III, but including certain of Maximinus' appointees who had turned coat in time to avoid disaster and who provided an important

[15] Loriot (1975a) 718. [16] Loriot (1975a) 714f. [17] Dietz, *Senatus* 233ff., 240f.

element of continuity between the new regime and its predecessors. They comprised a group of senators and equestrians whose aim was to re-establish the monarchy as it had existed under Severus Alexander.[18]

The young emperor was encouraged to show respect for the senate, and to restore its old rights and privileges; and there was legislation to suppress informers and defend the liberty of individuals and communities. To point up the contrast between him and the 'rude' Maximinus, Gordian III was projected as the cultured philhellene. The army was brought firmly under control. Legion III Augusta was cashiered for having destroyed the Gordiani, and political supporters of the regime were given important military commands. In return, however, the legal condition of soldiers was improved. The new administration attempted to avoid a reputation for rapacity, and efforts were made to reduce the tax burden. However, the problems that had confronted Pupienus and Balbinus still remained. The continued production and debasement of the *antoninianus* suggests fiscal difficulties; Persia was predatory; and on the lower Danube Menophilus was forced to treat with the Goths. The resulting uncertainty may have been the cause of further revolt in Africa Proconsularis, led by Sabinianus, in 240. This was suppressed, but perhaps with difficulty, given the disbanding of the Numidian legion. At the beginning of 241, Gordian III's original councillors yielded first place to a single strong individual, C. Furius Sabinius Aquila Timesitheus.[19]

Timesitheus was about fifty years of age. Possibly Anatolian in origin, he had enjoyed a long and distinguished equestrian career, having been influential under Elagabalus and Severus Alexander. His wings had been clipped by Maximinus, but he had not been destroyed, and he served his new master well in the east. In 238, however, he joined the movement against Maximinus. Though his career may again have suffered some set-back he soon regained his previous eminence, and in 240 or 241 was promoted praetorian prefect. From this it was a small step to what amounted to his regency, which he quickly consolidated by arranging the marriage of the emperor to his daughter. Timesitheus and his like-minded lieutenants (amongst whom the most prominent were the equestrian brothers C. Iulius Priscus and M. Iulius Philippus, the future emperor Philip) continued the work of re-establishing the late Severan monarchical system. The overriding power of the emperor and his advisers was asserted over that of the senate – but subtly and with sedulous avoidance of any semblance of tyranny. The model was Severus Alexander, not Maximinus; and, just as he had helped to do for the former, Timesitheus began to make meticulous plans for an expedition against Persia.

[18] Loriot (1975a) 727ff.; Dietz, *Senatus* 296f., 339; Potter, *Prophecy* 30f.
[19] Loriot (1975a) 735ff.; cf. Pflaum (1948) 55f.

In fact, Timesitheus died too early to give significant attention to other aspects of imperial policy and administration, and most of what he accomplished is best explained in terms of his preparations for the eastern war. Thus his movement away from politically sound senators in appointments to senior military commands should be seen as recognition of the need for combat-experience; and his concern for other frontiers will have derived from his wish that these should remain quiet while the main army was in the east. The Rhine and upper Danube required little attention; but the North African defences were reorganized against nomadic raiders; and, for the first time since the arrival of the Goths, serious attention was given to Dacia, Moesia and Thrace. Here, though increased barbarian pressure had, without doubt, been caused by Gothic activity, the most troublesome people were still the Carpi, who were calling upon Gothic and Sarmatian aid to raid into Dacia and across the Danube. Menophilus' response had been to force the Carpi into submission by buying off their allies, and to strengthen imperial defences and communications in the area. By 241, however, Menophilus had been recalled (it would seem, in disgrace), which, together with news of Roman reverses at the hands of the Persians, encouraged Carpi, Goths and Sarmatians to renew their attacks. In 242, therefore, while *en route* for Persia, Timesitheus diverted his forces to clear the lower Danube; and it was probably now that he stopped the payment of subsidies to those Goths and Sarmatians who had reneged on their earlier agreement with Menophilus, and rejoined the Carpi.[20]

But the main enemy was Persia. Having successfully attacked northern Mesopotamia in 236, Ardashir began to raid southwards. Dura fell in April 239; and by early 241 he had captured the Roman client-city of Hatra.[21] These victories made war with Rome inevitable; they were also significant for resulting in Ardashir's nomination of his son, the warlike Shapur I, as his colleague and successor. Gordian III, with his full court and a massive army, reached Antioch late in 242. Though there may have been some activity before their arrival, he and Timesitheus opened their main campaign in spring 243, when they headed east, crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma, and retook Carrhae.[22] Next they moved north, recapturing Edessa, and east, retaking Rhesaina after a major battle. They then advanced to reclaim Nisibis and Singara, before falling back westwards across the Euphrates, and marching for Ctesiphon. Such was the momentum of the attack that even Timesitheus' illness and death in the latter half of 243 could not stop it. Philip replaced him as praetorian prefect (thus becoming the junior colleague of Priscus), and the Roman army entered Assyria and crossed to

[20] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.398; Loriot (1975a) 755f.; Scardigli (1976) 225; Dietz, *Senatus* 240f.; Gerov (1980) 337f.

[21] Kettenhofen, *RPK* 19f., 47; cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 35.

[22] Kettenhofen, *RPK* 27ff.; Potter, *Prophecy* 35f.

the left bank of the Euphrates not far from Ctesiphon, in the vicinity of Mesiche. Here, probably in mid-February, 244, it was defeated by Shapur. Gordian III perished: he either fell in the battle itself or, more probably, he died or was killed by his own men soon after its end.[23]

4. Philip, 244–9

A new emperor had to be chosen quickly, and the position was offered to Philip.[24] His eager acceptance later caused him to be suspected of engineering Gordian III's downfall. In his early middle age, he was from Trachonitis, in southern Syria. He was accepted by the troops by early March 244, and proceeded immediately to negotiate a peace with Shapur. Philip needed to leave Persia with all speed. Deep within enemy territory and short of supplies, he commanded a defeated army for whose failure he could be held at least partially responsible and whose morale will have been further shaken by the unprecedented loss of a Roman emperor. Furthermore (mindful of the mistakes of his fellow-equestrian, Maximinus) Philip will have wanted to secure his power in Rome. He was to be criticized for what he paid Shapur to secure an unmolested withdrawal: the equivalent of 500,000 gold dinars, and acceptance that Armenia lay within the Persian sphere of influence. However, these terms, though expensive, were not disastrous. Timesitheus' Mesopotamian reconquests were retained; and the money was a single payment of ransom, not an annual tribute. The abandonment of Roman influence over Armenia would cause trouble, but not for eight years yet.[25]

Philip then led his army back up the Euphrates. South of Circesium he erected a grand cenotaph to the memory of Gordian III. (The boy's ashes were sent to Rome, and he was deified.) Leaving his brother, Priscus, to oversee the east from Antioch, Philip himself arrived in Rome in the late summer of 244.[26] Shortly afterwards, he had his son, M. Iulius Severus Philippus, who was only about seven years old, proclaimed Caesar. Philip stayed in Rome until 245, when he moved to campaign on the Danube.

Here, the stability that had been established by Timesitheus had been disturbed by his death and by the humiliation in the east. The Carpi and their allies, amongst whom Gothic princelings may have been prominent, began raiding towards the end of 243; and in 244 they moved south through Dacia, to Oescus, whence they were able to use Roman military highways

[23] Loriot (1975a) 772f.; Pohlsander (1980) 465; MacDonald (1981); Kettenhofen, *RPK* 19, 32f.; Peachin, *Titulature* 29f.; Potter, *Prophecy* 204ff.

[24] Loriot (1975a) 769ff.; de Blois (1978–9) 13; Kettenhofen, *RPK* 32f.; Potter, *Prophecy* 211.

[25] Sprengling, *Iran* 84f.; Loriot (1975a) 774f.; Kettenhofen, *RPK* 34, 38f.; cf. de Blois (1978–9) 14; Potter, *Prophecy* 37f., 221ff.

[26] Cf. Trout (1989) 232.

to advance to the Balkans.[27] Philip may have brushed with these peoples in 244, *en route* for Rome; in 245, he established his headquarters in Philippopolis, in Thrace. He threw the Carpi back to the Danube, and pursued them into southern Dacia, but it was not until the summer of 246 that he could claim total victory. He returned to Rome in 247, and was there by August, linking the celebration of his successes and of the promotion of his son to the rank of Augustus with festivities in honour of the 1,000th anniversary of the foundation of the city (which will have commenced on 21 April 247, but whose main events will have been postponed in his absence). He naturally made sure that all was done in great style.

Soon, however, he faced more troubles. In the later months of 248 there was a rebellion in the area of the middle Danube, led by one Ti. Claudius Marinus Pacatianus.[28] Though Pacatian was quickly overthrown by his own troops, the affair may have tempted the Quadi and Iazyges to raid Pannonia. The general instability of this region perhaps resulted from the transfer of part of its garrison to Dacia, for it was here, and on the lower Danube, that the main problem had already manifested itself. The recent conflicts with the Carpi had seriously weakened the south-eastern defences of Dacia and threatened to isolate the Transylvanian redoubt, the *raison d'être* of Rome's Dacian province. The consequent dislocation of the imperial defence system encouraged neighbouring peoples to make further incursions into the region, including, now, the Goths.[29] The first direct Gothic thrust into the Roman empire resulted from Philip's ending of subsidies to these people. Since payments to barbarians living near the imperial frontier had been stopped by Timesitheus, it is probable that the Goths concerned comprised more distant groups, who still enjoyed some sort of allied status. The ending of the subsidy may have been part of a policy of projecting the emperor as a strong, efficient and, at least in his dealings with barbarians, thrifty ruler, worthy of presiding over Rome's millennium; but it was ill advised. Early in 248 large numbers of Goths and their allies poured into Moesia Inferior, and so encouraged the Carpi to renew their raids on this province and Dacia.[30]

Philip's response was to send C. Messius Quintus Decius – despite his distinguished senatorial background, a former protégé of Maximinus – to the region. Decius may have been given a special command, encompassing all the Pannonian and Moesian provinces, to enable him to restore order after Pacatian's revolt and expel the barbarian raiders.[31] So successful was he that in May or June 249, supposedly against his will, his troops proclaimed

[27] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.398f.; Scardigli (1976) 225; cf. Wolfram, *Goths* 397.
[28] Wittig (1932) 1265; Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.402; Loriot (1975b) 794; Peachin, *Titulature* 34.
[29] Tudor (1965) 374f.; (1973) 150; (1974) 239, 244ff.
[30] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.399ff.; de Blois (1978–9) 19; cf. Wolfram, *Goths* 44f.
[31] Syme, *E&B* 198ff.; cf. Wittig (1932) 1251.

him emperor. Even before Decius' subsequent march on Rome, Philip was struggling. His failure to renew the Gothic subsidies reflects a wider financial malaise, inherited from his predecessors but exacerbated by his own high spending (including the transformation of his native village into the grand city of Philippopolis). He further debased the *antoninianus*; but the need to avoid the errors of Maximinus will have prevented him from making extraordinary demands on Italy and Africa. Towards the end of his reign, his brother, Priscus, attempted to increase taxes in the east, but managed only to provoke a second ephemeral rebellion led by M. F(ulvius?) Ru(fus?) Iotapianus. Contemporary religious rioting in Alexandria was, perhaps, also stimulated by Priscus' attempts to squeeze more taxation from Egypt.[32] This unrest is likely to have disrupted the supply of wheat to Rome, so undermining Philip's standing in his capital, despite his efforts to avoid unpopularity. There may well be something of the truth in the story that, even before the decisive battle with Decius, Philip was disheartened and ailing.[33]

The emperor moved to meet the usurper in northern Italy, leaving his son in Rome. Their two armies met at Verona in August or September 249. Philip was defeated and killed; on the news of his downfall, his son was murdered.[34]

5. Decius, 249–51

Decius, born near Sirmium, had, despite his provincial origin, reached the highest levels of Roman society. At the time of his victory over Philip he was about sixty.[35] His acceptance of the addition of 'Traianus' to his name, recalling that emperor who had been spectacularly successful on the Danube, reflects his appreciation of the deteriorating situation there, but was to prove ill omened.

Roman civil war encouraged the Carpi to renew their raids on southern Dacia. They again received Gothic help, but the Goths now posed a major danger in their own right, with the emergence of an able war leader, Cniva.[36] In late spring 250, while the Carpi attacked Dacia, eastern Moesia Superior and western Moesia Inferior the Goths invaded central Moesia Inferior. Cniva, repelled from Novae by the provincial governor, the future emperor Trebonianus Gallus, pressed southwards to besiege Nicopolis. Decius returned to the Danube, expelled the Carpi and then moved against the Goths. Cniva moved further south, to Thracian Philippopolis, already

[32] Parsons (1967); *RICH* III xciv; Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents' 545ff.; Paschoud (2000) 147 n. 46. Cf. Bianchi (1983) 195f.; Potter, *Prophecy* 39ff., 248f.

[33] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* xxviii.10; Zos. 1.21.1.

[34] Pohlsander (1982); Rea (1984a) 19; Peachin, *Titulature* 30.

[35] Syme, *E&B* 196f.

[36] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.408ff.; Scardigli (1976) 225ff.; Wolfram, *Goths* 45f. Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 281.

besieged by a second Gothic army that had probably arrived by way of the Dobrudja. Decius pursued him closely but, while resting at Beroea, to the north-east of Philippopolis, was suddenly attacked by Cniva. The Romans were badly mauled, and Decius withdrew to Oescus, temporarily abandoning the land between Haemus, Rhodope and the sea. When Cniva recommenced the siege of Philippopolis, its commander, Lucius Priscus, governor of Thrace, surrendered the city.

Decius' lack of success in Thrace may have been the cause of trouble elsewhere. Early in 251, he received news of a revolt in Rome itself, led by one Iulius Valens Licinianus; and it was perhaps then that there was mutiny on the Rhine.[37] Though his lieutenants were successful in dealing with these rebels, their emergence indicates a loss of confidence in the emperor's capability. That Decius was an emperor under pressure may be deduced from a late series of his *antoniniani* which bore the images of deified emperors and could have been aimed at strengthening his public image by associating him with previous upholders of the old Roman virtues.[38] Much more significant, however, was his persecution of Christianity, which began close to the beginning of his reign and was by the spring of 251 causing great tension in Rome.[39]

Persecution eased in 251, as Decius returned to the fray, in the company of his elder son, Herennius Etruscus, Caesar since 250 and soon to be promoted Augustus. Cniva seems to have decided to let the winter pass before attempting to extricate his army, but as Decius' campaign opened he was already moving north-east. Decius ordered a strengthening of defences along the Danube, and marched along the river to intercept Cniva, scoring some successes over other Gothic raiders *en route*. It was at Abrittus, probably early in June 251, that he finally overtook the main Gothic host. Believing that he had his enemy trapped, he joined battle on unfavourable ground and was killed, together with his son. His body was never recovered.

6. Gallus, 251–3

Again a new emperor had to be elected on the spot, and be suspected of having contrived the downfall of his predecessor.[40] The troops chose C. Vibius Trebonianus Gallus, the senatorial governor of Moesia, a man of about forty-five. Gallus needed to make peace quickly with the Goths both to stabilize the military situation and to allow him to travel to Rome to assure his succession. Indeed, he must have been particularly anxious lest Decius' younger son, Hostilian, who was still alive in the capital and may

[37] Dufraigne (1975) 152; Drinkwater (1987) 21. Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 248.
[38] Elks (1972a) 114f. [39] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 450ff.; Pohlsander (1986).
[40] Hanslik (1958) 1986; Potter, *Prophecy* 285ff.

recently have been promoted Augustus, be exploited to rally opposition to him.[41] The Goths agreed to leave the empire, but on condition that they retain their captives and plunder, and be paid an annual subsidy.[42] Gallus then returned to Italy, and had his proclamation formally confirmed by the senate.

No doubt to emphasize that he was no usurper, Gallus permitted Hostilian to live, and even accepted him as co-Augustus and adoptive son. Gallus' own child, C. Vibius Afinius Gallus Veldumnianus Volusianus, was appointed Caesar. However, within a few months Hostilian died of the plague, and Volusian soon replaced him as his father's chief colleague in office.[43]

Gallus never again left Italy, winning himself a reputation for sloth. He was perhaps distracted by the great plague which had removed Hostilian. This had arrived in Italy around 248, and by 251 was killing large numbers of people. Gallus may have then given vent to his general concern by engaging in a sharp, but localized and unco-ordinated, harrying of the Christians.[44] However, neglect of the frontiers encouraged aggression by Rome's enemies and was unpopular with her troops.

In 251, after having increasingly involved himself in its affairs, Shapur annexed Armenia. That the Roman empire then gave asylum to its king, Tiridates II, could be construed as a violation of the agreement with Philip, and a justification for war. Even before the end of 251, Shapur may have taken Nisibis. In 252, he struck up the Euphrates, initially by-passing such strongholds as Dura Europus and Circesium, and breaking Roman military strength at the battle of Barbalissus. (His son, Hormizd, may have led a co-ordinated diversionary raid into Cappadocia.) Antioch fell to Shapur remarkably easily, thanks to the impetus of his attack and internal treachery. From 252 until well into 253, the Persians terrorized the surrounding area, but met some localized resistance. The high priest Samsigeramus had himself proclaimed emperor (as L. Iulius Aurelius Sulpicius Severus Uranius Antoninus) in his native Emesa, and repulsed a Persian attack on the city; and it is possible that Odenathus, a leading nobleman of Palmyra, mauled this defeated column as it withdrew over the Euphrates. Shapur then departed, having made no territorial gains.[45]

In the meantime, the Roman empire had again succumbed to civil war. The Goths had left Thrace and most of Moesia unharmed after Abrittus. However, they had laid hold of the Dobrudja region; and they remained unpunished for their destruction of Decius. Roman forces on the lower Danube were no doubt anxious to see them humbled, and so felt frustrated

[41] Peachin, *Titulature* 33f. [42] Zos. 1.24.2; Zon. XII.21. [43] Peachin, *Titulature* 34ff.
[44] Frend (1970); Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 550.
[45] Kettenhofen, *RPK* 38ff., 50ff., 60ff., 70ff., 91ff.; Balty (1987); Potter, *Prophecy* 46, 291ff.

by Gallus' continued absence. Early in the summer of 253, M. Aemilius Aemilianus, Gallus' successor as governor of Moesia, seems to have taken matters into his own hands by inciting his men to attack the Goths. As a consequence, he was hailed as emperor by his troops.[46] His subsequent march on Rome encouraged Cniva to renew hostilities. Late in 253, as Roman leaders fought for power, his forces penetrated as far as Macedonia, and caused panic further south: civilians hastily rebuilt Athens' ancient walls, and blocked the pass of Thermopylae and the isthmus of Corinth.[47]

Realizing that Aemilian was bound to invade Italy, Gallus had immediately commissioned a senior senator and fellow-Italian, P. Licinius Valerianus, to bring troops from the relatively quiet transalpine frontier.[48] However, Gallus had to meet Aemilian before these reinforcements arrived. The two armies confronted each other at Interamna, about 100 kilometres north of Rome, around the end of July 253, but before they joined battle Gallus and his son were slain by their own troops, who then went over to Aemilian.[49]

7. Aemilian, 253

Aemilian may have intended to return to the Danube to secure the position there before proceeding against Persia. However, he first had to face Valerian, coming to avenge Gallus. The two met in September 253 in the neighbourhood of Spoletium, where Aemilian suffered a fate similar to that of Gallus and Volusianus: before fighting began, his men killed him, and recognized Valerian as emperor.

8. Valerian and Gallienus, 253–60

The new emperor was an Italian aristocrat of great distinction. Although in his sixties, he was still strong, and could rely on the support of an adult son, P. Licinius Egnatius Gallienus, whom he immediately appointed as his colleague in office. Neither lingered in Italy: there was a speedy division of territorial responsibility, with Valerian taking the eastern frontier and Gallienus the northern and western.

Valerian set out from Rome at the beginning of 254. He had reached Antioch by the beginning of 255, but appears to have established his field-headquarters elsewhere, probably in Samosata.[50] Much had to be done to restore the eastern provinces; and, though the revolt of Uranius Antoninus seems to have collapsed and, for the moment at least, the Persians were

[46] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.413ff. [47] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.414ff.; Scardigli (1976) 241ff.
[48] Cf. Christol (1980) 70ff. [49] Peachin, *Titulature* 36f. Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 322.
[50] Kettenhofen, *RPK* 89ff.; Carson (1990) 94ff.

quiet, Valerian faced a new and difficult enemy, whom it is convenient, if not entirely accurate, to categorize as the 'Black Sea Goths'.[51]

The Black Sea Goths must be distinguished from those on the lower Danube. Like the latter, a confusing amalgam of peoples that eventually comprised both Germanic immigrants and tribes indigenous to the region, not to mention Roman renegades, the Black Sea Goths first made their mark on the classical world no later than 250, when those of them living around the Sea of Azov over-ran the Graeco-Roman cities of the Crimea.[52] This gave them the confidence and naval strength to begin piratical raiding of the Roman empire and its surviving dependencies in the region. In the reign of Valerian I, in either 253 or 254, the Borani attacked down the eastern coast of the Black Sea. A second Boranian raid, in 254 or 255, was extended to include the north coast of Asia Minor. The final, and most dangerous, Gothic incursion under Valerian took a different form and route. In 256, the western neighbours of the Borani sailed down the west coast of the Black Sea, across the Bosphorus to Bithynia, and along the south coast of the Sea of Marmara, taking a number of important cities including Chalcedon and Nicomedia. This forced Valerian to detach troops to secure Byzantium, and to move his main army into Cappadocia. However, in his absence, Shapur again seized Dura and Circesium, and Valerian had to return to meet the threat.[53] There may have been some sort of Roman victory near Circesium, but the strain of the situation (with plague now also afflicting his army) was beginning to tell on Valerian. In summer 257, he and Gallienus issued the first of their two orders of persecution against the Christians (the second followed a year later); and, in his defence of the east, Valerian seems to have relied increasingly from this time on the co-operation of Odenathus of Palmyra.[54]

Disaster struck early in the campaigning season of 260. Shapur launched his last direct offensive against the Roman empire, besieging Carrhae and Edessa, and forcing Valerian to move against him in strength. Valerian apparently initiated negotiation and then, somewhere between Carrhae and Edessa, while the two rulers were engaged in face-to-face discussions, he and most of his general staff were taken prisoner.

Gallienus had been active in defending the west. Africa had to contend with nomadic raids, associated with a native rebellion led by one Faraxen. However, these troubles were localized in Mauretania Caesariensis and Numidia and – no doubt with the help of a reformed legion III Augusta – were suppressed by 259 or 260 at the very latest.[55] The Rhine and upper Danube remained quiet. On the lower Danube, Cniva's disappearance,

[51] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.417ff.; Scardigli (1976) 238; Kettenhofen, *RPK* 89; Wolfram, *Goths* 45ff.
[52] Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 234. [53] Kettenhofen, *RPK* 77ff.; Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 237.
[54] Kettenhofen, *RPK* 72f.; Millar, *Near East* 165. [55] Février (1981).

possibly the receipt of Roman subsidies, and distractions elsewhere seem to have caused the Danubian Goths to leave the Roman empire largely in peace.[56] Gallienus therefore first established himself on the middle Danube, in the region known as 'Illyricum', which comprised the provinces of Dalmatia, the Pannonias and Moesia Superior.

He began campaigning probably early in 254. His headquarters may have been in the city of Viminacium.[57] Here he will have been able to cover Italy, remain in touch with the lower Danube (should his father need his aid), and support the increasingly isolated Roman presence in the highlands of Dacia.[58] Gallienus' success in Illyricum (against the Carpi and the peoples of the Hungarian plain) was owed partly to clever diplomacy and, perhaps, partly to the beginning of his development of the mobile field-army, a permanently detached force which combined infantry and cavalry. It was here that, in 256, he declared his elder son, P. Cornelius Licinius Valerianus (Valerian II), Caesar as successor to both himself and his father. By 257, however, Gallienus had taken up residence near the Rhine, probably at Trier, on the Moselle. He left the middle Danube under the nominal control of Valerian II; real power lay in the hands of Ingenuus, governor of Pannonia.[59]

The most likely stimulus for Gallienus' move was increasing barbarian pressure on the Rhine, in particular by the Franks and the newly emerging Alamanni. These did not pose as great a threat to the security of the empire as the Goths, since they were smaller in number and politically less cohesive. On the other hand, they were pressing against a frontier weakened by recent troop-withdrawals (the men gathered by Valerian accompanied him east), and so menaced the prosperity of Gaul. Additionally, an Alamannic breakthrough on the upper Rhine would expose Italy. Gallienus strove hard to restore the situation. He maintained the upper German/Raetian *limes*, although he may have had to buy Frankish co-operation to hold the lower Rhine. In the meantime, probably early in 258, Valerian II died. Gallienus at once replaced him as Caesar with his younger son, P. Cornelius Licinius Saloninus Valerianus (Saloninus). In 259, however, renewed barbarian pressure on the Danube provoked the revolt of Ingenuus.[60] Leaving Gaul in the charge of Saloninus, who was himself under the guardianship of one Silvanus, Gallienus returned to Illyricum. Here he was successful in suppressing both the revolt of Ingenuus and that of a second rebel, P. C(ornelius?) Regalianus. However, his move from the Rhine seems to have resulted in further Frankish and Alamannic raids on Gaul (the Franks even getting as far as Spain); and, worse still, ensnared by affairs on the middle Danube, he was unable to deal with Iuthungian marauders who

[56] Christol (1975) 810. [57] Drinkwater (1987) 21f.; Carson (1990) 90ff.
[58] Vulpe (1973) 45; Tudor (1973) 150; (1974) 246.
[59] Drinkwater (1987) 21f.; Christol (1990) 310f. [60] Jehne (1996).

penetrated Italy as far as Rome. These were finally defeated during the spring of 260 by a scratch force under the governor of Raetia, as they were leaving the empire. Gallienus finally appeared in Italy in summer 260, and was able to defeat another Alamannic horde near Milan. He subsequently developed this city as the headquarters of a mobile army under the command of Aureolus.[61] By now, however, he will have been made aware of the disaster in the east.

9. Gallienus, 260–8

After capturing Valerian, Shapur took Carrhae and perhaps Edessa. Though he then delayed before Samosata, he may have detached a force to take Antioch for the second time and to rejoin his main army as he eventually led it westwards into Cilicia. Shapur made for Tarsus, then advanced as far as Sebaste and Corycus, before finally turning for home, and withdrawing again by way of Samosata.[62] However, as he marched east through Asia Minor he continued to capture cities; and he left behind a subsidiary force which pushed even further westwards along the coast, to Selinus in Isauria. On its return journey, this force too harassed Roman cities along its route; and, indeed, striking north from Seleucia-on-Calycadnus, it divided into two columns, one of which captured Iconium, the most westerly of the Persian conquests, and the other took Caesarea, provincial capital of Cappadocia. However, although the Persians won remarkable successes, they were not unchallenged; and in the event the principal beneficiary of the fighting was Palmyra.

Shapur may have lingered before Samosata in the hope of negotiating the release of Valerian with the only Roman general officer still at liberty, T. Fulvius Macrianus, commanding the imperial war treasury there.[63] Macrianus refused to co-operate. He first stayed loyal to Gallienus; then, probably late in August 260, being himself disqualified for imperial office by his lameness, he declared his young sons, T. Fulvius Iunius Macrianus (Macrianus junior) and T. Fulvius Iunius Quietus, joint-emperors. With the Persian army now in Asia Minor, Macrianus could transfer his headquarters to more central locations – Emesa, then Antioch – where he organized resistance to the invaders. It was Ballista, praetorian prefect of the new regime, who was responsible for Shapur's first major set-back, in the region of Sebaste and Corycus, which prompted the main Persian withdrawal.[64] The residual force was able to advance further into Asia Minor only after Ballista had returned to Syria. Thus Macrianus senior and Ballista seem to

[61] Kuhoff (1979) 20f., 44.
[62] Kettenhofen, *RPK* 100ff.; *contra* Potter, *Prophecy* 337f. Cf. Millar, *Near East* 166f.
[63] Drinkwater (1989). [64] Christol (1975) 818; Kettenhofen, *RPK* 107ff.

have had a real chance of establishing the rule of the boy-emperors, who were recognized in Asia Minor and, by early autumn 260, in Egypt. However, in 261 the two Macriani were destroyed by Gallienus' leading cavalry-general, Aureolus, as they marched on Italy; and Quietus and Ballista then fell victim to Odenathus of Palmyra.

Septimius Odenathus was clearly always anxious to advance his power and status. In 252/3, impressed by the current demonstration of Persian strength, he had offered Shapur an alliance. Insultingly rejected, he then turned on the Persians, which encouraged Valerian to court his friendship. In 260, having recaptured Edessa, Odenathus again impeded Shapur's homeward progress; and in 261, no doubt emboldened by the disappearance of the two Macriani, he threw in his lot with Gallienus against Ballista and Quietus, overthrowing them at Emesa. (Egypt then reverted to its allegiance to Gallienus, though the move seems to have been resisted for some time by its prefect, L. Mussius Aemilianus, who eventually had to be put down by the emperor's general, Aurelius Theodotus.) For his services, Odenathus was awarded the titles of *dux* and *Corrector Totius Orientis* – 'Marshal of the East' – by Gallienus; these allowed him to exercise far-reaching military and civil power in Syria and its region. Emboldened by his success, in 262 he campaigned against the Persians in Mesopotamia, recovered Nisibis and Carrhae, and may also (possibly also in 262) have reached Ctesiphon. A further deep invasion of Persian territory may have occurred around 266.[65]

Gallienus had to rely on Odenathus in the east because recent events had badly shaken his own position in the west. He was not immediately threatened (it may have been now that he found time to call an end to the persecution of the Christians), but his position remained uncertain. It will have been clear that Macrianus and Quietus must soon despatch an army through the Balkans to Italy; in Italy itself, the loss of Egypt will have threatened Rome's food supply; and on the Rhine, a quarrel developed between Saloninus' guardian, Silvanus, and Postumus, governor of Germania Inferior, which culminated in the latter's usurpation, the death of Saloninus, and the threat of a march on the capital. By late 260, Gallienus' plight must have seemed desperate.

However, 261 saw a major improvement in the emperor's fortunes. Postumus' refusal to extend his power over the Alps allowed Gallienus' forces to face and defeat the Macriani (and, possibly, other enemies in the Raetian and Balkan regions).[66] This in turn allowed Odenathus to secure the east in Gallienus' name. Likewise, Postumus' 'Gallic empire' expanded to include Gaul, Britain and Spain and restored the western frontiers, while

[65] Schlumberger (1942–5) 48f.; Kettenhofen, *RPK* 72f., 122ff.; Potter, *Prophecy* 344ff., 381ff.; Millar, *Near East* 161ff.; Swain (1993); Potter (1996).

[66] Drinkwater (1987) 27. Cf. Kuhoff (1979) 26; Jehne (1996) 203.

posing no direct threat to Gallienus in Rome. Gallienus could concentrate on holding the 'central empire', comprising Italy, north Africa, Egypt, the Danubian provinces and Greece. For example, he rebuilt the defences of the Danube region, paying particular attention to the holding of the Aquileia–Byzantium highway, though not neglecting what was left of Dacia.

This period of Gallienus' reign was, indeed, relatively tranquil. The Danubian Goths were quiet; and although the Black Sea Goths raided along the Aegean coast of Asia Minor around 262, they were the responsibility of Odenathus.[67] Until 264 Gallienus could make Rome his main place of residence. These were probably the years of his greatest activity as a patron of learning and the arts, and those which caused the Latin source-tradition to vilify his slothfulness.[68] Yet he had stabilized a very dangerous situation and, with the taxation of only the central provinces to draw on, may have been inhibited from more ambitious action by financial constraints: the debasement of the *antoninianus* was sharply accelerated. He too may have had to contend with the plague. Gallienus certainly used the time further to strengthen the defences of Italy, and to develop his mobile army. His exclusion of senators from military commands, which can be seen as a continuation of his drive for greater efficiency and professionalism in the army, may also belong to these years.[69]

In later 264, however, he visited Athens and was initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries; and in 265, he finally stirred himself to avenge the murder of Saloninus by attacking the Gallic empire. Initial success turned quickly to frustration and failure, especially after he himself was seriously wounded. He left Postumus undisputed master of the west. The period of relative calm had ended. Gallienus' earlier visit to Greece may have been connected with further efforts to secure the defences of the Balkans, possibly with a view to renewed military activity there following the defeat of Postumus.[70] This suggests a resurgence of the Gothic threat which, in Gallienus' enforced absence, now grew in strength. In 266 the Black Sea Goths made a great sea-raid on Asia Minor. They were halted by Odenathus, but allowed to escape with their plunder and boast of their success.[71] In 267, the Danubian Goths, fired by envy, co-operated with their cousins in a massive, co-ordinated attack by sea and land. The Black Sea Goths used their fleet to force the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, and then ravaged mainland Greece, sacking Athens, Corinth, Argos and even Sparta. Some then entered Macedonia and besieged Potidaea and Thessalonica. The Danubian Goths poured into Thrace and laid siege to Philippopolis.

[67] Robert (1948) 120; Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.419; Scardigli (1976) 241ff.
[68] Kuhoff (1979) 31; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XXXIII.3; Eutr. IX.8.1.
[69] Christol (1975) 827; Pflaum (1976) 113f.; Kuhoff (1979) 31.
[70] Armstrong (1987a); cf. Bland and Burnett (1988) 121ff.
[71] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.420f. Cf. Scardigli (1976) 241ff.

The civil population resisted with some spirit: the Goths gave up Athens in the face of clever guerilla warfare, perhaps organized by the local aristocrat and historian, Dexippus; and they failed to take Philippopolis.[72] But regular military strength was required. Local efforts had already been stiffened by an imperial fleet, operating in the Aegean; and by 268 Gallienus himself was back in Greece. He defeated the Goths who were ravaging northern Macedonia on the river Nestus, but was unable to follow up his victory because he had to return to northern Italy to deal with the revolt of Aureolus.[73] He left the war in the hands of his general, Marcianus.

At the time of his revolt, Aureolus was stationed in Milan, watching the south-eastern flank of the Gallic empire, and protecting Italy from Germanic attack over the Alps. His command, and that of Marcianus, demonstrated that, like the field-armies of the fourth century, Gallienus' mobile force was not a single unit, but was capable of being divided to undertake various tasks. Relations between Gallienus and Aureolus had never been easy, but to the end Gallienus seems to have relied on Aureolus' loyalty. Aureolus, however, was probably increasingly dissatisfied with Gallienus' rule: the Gallic empire remained unsubdued and, as a result, the German/Raetian frontier was ruptured, hamstringing the defence of Italy; following the murder of Odenathus in a family quarrel in 267, the east was in effect ruled by his widow, Zenobia, acting as regent for her son, Vaballathus; Dacia was virtually abandoned; and a single victory would not cow the newly active Goths. He declared against Gallienus probably early in 268, but did not immediately proclaim himself emperor. Gallienus, escorted by most of the members of his general staff, descended on him in strength. Aureolus was defeated in battle, and then besieged in Milan. His subsequent recognition of Postumus was probably an appeal for aid, but it went unanswered.[74]

Thus far, Gallienus had been remarkably successful. However, to judge from what was to follow, his senior officers were equally unhappy with his general policy of *laissez-faire* and, perhaps, also with his non-traditional religious and philosophical inclinations.[75] Furthermore, under Gallienus and, no doubt, encouraged by him, the most important positions within the army had come to be dominated by men from the provinces of the middle and lower Danube. These may have developed a strong *esprit de corps*, and speculated about the benefits to the empire and their hard-pressed home region if one of them were to occupy the imperial throne. It may have been that Aureolus had anticipated this feeling in his show of opposition to Gallienus, perhaps hoping that one of his fellow-marshals would seize the

[72] Thompson (1959); Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.421ff.; Millar (1969). Cf. Scardigli (1976) 241ff.; de Ste Croix (1981) 654f.; Wolfram, *Goths* 53.

[73] *Contra* Alföldi (1939c). Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 57f.; Kettenhofen (1992) 297f.

[74] Drinkwater (1987) 33. [75] Alföldi (1979).

opportunity to take the purple. He was premature, but in the late summer of 268 hostility to Gallienus finally crystallized in a plot, involving most of his senior generals. Around the beginning of September, 268, the emperor was slain in his siege camp as he rushed from his tent in response to a false alarm. He was at the time still only fifty years of age.

10. Claudius, 268–70

Chosen to succeed Gallienus was the cavalry-general, M. Aurelius Claudius, a Danubian in his mid-fifties.[76] Like Maximinus, though not necessarily of simple peasant-origin he had risen by means of an equestrian military career which, thanks to Gallienus, now offered men of talent even more chances of success. Claudius was probably privy to the plot against Gallienus, even though the later Latin source-tradition sought to distance him from the murder.[77]

He quickly overcame a series of problems. The conspiracy was an officers' affair. Gallienus had been popular with his troops, and these at first showed resentment. Claudius appeased them by, for example, having Gallienus deified by the senate.[78] But the senate disliked Gallienus, above all for what it perceived as his destruction of its ancient privileges, and had already been involved in reprisals against his officials and kinsmen caught in the city.[79] Claudius must have combined direction with diplomacy in securing the honouring of his predecessor. In the meantime, Aureolus, now certain that he could depend on no external help, had first declared himself Augustus and then surrendered. He was killed by the troops, who conveniently rid Claudius of an embarrassing prisoner, whose actions he could have neither condoned nor condemned. Finally, Germanic raiders had entered northern Italy, no doubt encouraged by Roman civil war and, in particular, by Aureolus' neglect of Raetia. Claudius defeated them by lake Garda;[80] and, with his army now loyal and his rule established, moved to Rome, where he entered his first consulship on 1 January 269.

Claudius' principal concern was defence, and in this, as in many other of his policies, he seemed content to follow the lines laid down by Gallienus. The west could be left alone: Africa remained quiet; Postumus had confirmed that he posed no threat to Italy, and indeed the Gallic empire was relaxing its grip on Spain. The east, too, could continue to be ignored for the while: Palmyra was successful in excluding Persians and barbarians, and although Zenobia may have begun to display ambition, this was as yet not excessive. There remained only the completion of Gallienus' interrupted Gothic campaign.

[76] Damerau (1934) 39ff.; Syme (1974). [77] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXIII.28; *Epit. de Caes*. XXXXIV.2.
[78] Damerau (1934) 44ff.; Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXX.27. [79] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXX.31; Zon. XII.26.
[80] *Epit. de Caes*. XXXIV.2.

Claudius returned to the Danube in spring 269. Little had changed since the revolt of Aureolus.[81] The Danubian Goths were now besieging Marcianopolis; the survivors of Gallienus' victory were still at large in Macedonia, and may even have resumed the siege of Thessalonica; and the Goths who had ravaged Greece remained unpunished. Marcianus had done his best to control the situation, but was frustrated by the ability of the Goths to call on reinforcements from across the Danube. Claudius therefore re-established control over the Haemus passes, and so forced the Goths to combine and fight a set-piece battle at Naïssus in 269. He won a great victory, which he followed up by forcing the surviving enemy, beset with hunger and disease, to agree a peace. For this he became the first Roman emperor to be honoured as *Gothicus Maximus* – 'Conqueror of the Goths'; and the Danubian Goths remained quiet, more or less, for the remainder of the third century.

Yet his success was not total. Claudius proved unable to deal decisively with the Black Sea Goths, who now simply took ship from Macedonia and, possibly joining forces with others who had earlier broken away from the attack on Greece, indulged in raiding cities and islands in the Aegean, the eastern Mediterranean and the south-western Black Sea. However, some useful measures were taken against these pirates; and from 270 there was no further disturbance of the lower Danube region by these peoples, who began to settle in the Ukraine.

By 270, Claudius had established himself in Sirmium. It is possible that this indicates his intention to reconquer Dacia, but he must have known that such an operation might well unsettle the Danubian Goths, who were now expanding westwards into the former province rather than into the empire: the loss of (if not, as yet, the formal abandonment of sovereignty over) Dacia was part of the price paid for peace.[82] It is more likely, therefore, that Claudius transferred to the upper Danube in order to review a situation that had altered radically since his accession and the beginning of his Gothic campaign. In the west, the relative neutrality of the Gallic empire could no longer be counted on, following the replacement, in 269, of Postumus by Marcus Piavonius Victorinus. In response, Claudius had sent a large reconnaissance force to Grenoble. However, though this had unsettled the civil population of the Gallic empire, it had not shaken the loyalty of the western army.[83] To the north, given what was shortly to follow under Aurelian, Claudius may have discerned a growing barbarian threat to Pannonia and Italy. And he now had cause to worry about developments in the east.

[81] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.425ff. Cf. Scardigli (1976) 242ff.; Kettenhofen (1992) 306.
[82] Damerau (1934) 74; Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.433. [83] Drinkwater (1987) 36f., 90, 120.

Faced by an active soldier-emperor, who will have nurtured traditional Roman prejudices against women rulers, Zenobia and her ministers needed as strong a power-base as possible, while for the moment avoiding any open rejection of Roman sovereignty. Zenobia probably already in effect controlled Syria, and was interfering in northern Arabia, but to confirm her position she had to bring even more territory under her influence; and the two likeliest areas were Asia Minor and Egypt.[84] Egypt was the more tempting, since it yielded considerable tax-revenues and supplied the city of Rome with much of its wheat. Additional attractions will have been that the country was disturbed both by nomadic raiders in Cyrene and that there was a growing inclination on the part of its inhabitants to look to Palmyra for protection. Claudius was fortunate in having a capable and loyal prefect of Egypt, Tenagino Probus, who managed to keep the situation under control. However, he had to order Probus away to suppress Gothic piracy in the eastern Mediterranean, leaving the pro-Palmyrene party free to appeal to Zenobia to intervene in Egyptian affairs.[85]

Had Claudius II lived, it seems likely that he would have moved to the east. In the event, he never left Sirmium: plague broke out in his army, he contracted the disease and died there, probably towards the end of August 270. Despite its early difficult relationship with Claudius, the senate showed its appreciation of his achievements by deifying him and decreeing him extraordinary honours.[86]

11. Quintillus, 270

Claudius was deeply mourned. It is hardly surprising that a close member of his family, his younger brother, M. Aurelius Claudius Quintillus, was then proclaimed emperor, and subsequently recognized by the senate and in the central empire. But Quintillus was no important figure in his own right, and there was a more fitting successor, the senior general L. Domitius Aurelianus, who had been Claudius' colleague on Gallienus' staff, and a prime mover of the plot that had brought him to power.[87] Though Aurelian was probably with Claudius at the time of his death, he appears to have acquiesced in the speedy accession of Quintillus, perhaps out of surprise. Yet in September or October 270, he declared against the emperor, vilifying him as a pretender to Claudius' throne, and immediately marched to confront him at Aquileia. The issue was soon decided without recourse to fighting; Quintillus perhaps took his own life when his troops, fearful of Aurelian's advance, turned against him.[88]

[84] Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 59, 393; Millar (1971) 8 and *Near East* 171.
[85] Zos. 1.44.1f.; Rey-Coquais (1978) 60. [86] Eutr. IX.11.2. [87] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XXX.21.
[88] Zon. XII.26; cf. Groag (1905) 1363; Bland and Burnett (1988) 138ff., 146.

12. Aurelian, 270–5

Aurelian was strikingly similar to Claudius II in background, career and age. After his removal of Quintillus, he went to Rome. In 271, he probably returned to Pannonia to repel a mainly Vandal barbarian incursion. He defeated the Vandals, but then rapidly concluded an alliance with them, in order to return to Italy to face a joint invasion by the Alamanni and Iuthungi. He fought a series of battles, broke the Alamanni and pursued the Iuthungi back to the Danube. Here he destroyed a large part of their host, and then, following a famous display of Roman military strength, refused to treat with the survivors.[89]

Aurelian spent the winter of 271/2 in Rome. The recent barbarian penetration of Italy will have alarmed Italy by recalling the Iuthungian invasion of 259. There are, indeed, suggestions that the unpropitious start to Aurelian's reign provoked opposition, which he ruthlessly suppressed.[90] His initiation of the rewalling of the city, which may be dated to this time, was probably intended to calm local fears. But this programme was expensive and, together with recent campaigns, will have strained a tax-base already shrunken and damaged. Under Claudius II the *antoninianus* had reached the nadir of its fineness and quality – a collapse probably made irrevocable by Aurelian's own early bulk-minting of coins celebrating his predecessor.[91] Aurelian's attempts to increase his resources brought him more unpopularity. It was perhaps his efforts to improve tax collection that inspired charges of rapacity; and his first move towards currency reform resulted in fierce rioting at the Rome mint.[92] In such unsettled conditions, it may be that it was at this relatively early date that Aurelian began to consider strengthening his authority by the promotion of solar henotheism;[93] but what he really needed was a significant military victory, which helps explain why, early in 272, he set out east, against Palmyra.

Not long after Aurelian's defeat of Quintillus, Zenobia's forces had, despite opposition from Tenagino Probus (who was killed), taken over Egypt. Moreover, Zenobia had begun to show a greater willingness to work independently of Rome. It is likely that neither Gallienus nor Claudius ever bestowed upon Vaballathus the imperial dignities and offices granted to Odenathus. Under their rule, he legitimately bore the Palmyrene title 'king of kings'; but that he was also called *Corrector Totius Orientis* and then *imperator* must have been the work of Zenobia.[94] Zenobia exploited the troubles of 270 further to enhance the constitutional standing of her son. She seems never formally to have recognized Quintillus and, probably

[89] Zos. 1.48f.; Dexippus, *FGrH* II no. 100, *fr.* 6.2; Alföldy (1966a); Demougeot, *FEIB* I. 512ff.
[90] Zos. 1.49.2; cf. Eutr. IX.14; *Epit. de Caes.* XXXV.3. [91] Bland and Burnett (1988) 138ff., 144ff.
[92] Carson (1990) 117. [93] Cf. Halsberghe (1984) 2196.
[94] Homo (1904) 48f.; Potter, *Prophecy*, 390ff.

consequent upon the conflict between Quintillus and Aurelian, she styled Vaballathus *consul* and *Dux Romanorum*; at the same time, he was advertised as sovereign of Syria and Egypt.[95] However, it is clear that Zenobia, hoping either to buy time or to obtain a genuine accommodation with Aurelian, did not proclaim Vaballathus as Augustus in his own right, and recognized Aurelian as the (albeit junior) colleague of her son.[96] It is improbable that Aurelian ever positively consented to such an arrangement but, with his position in Rome and Italy at first insecure, he may have tolerated it to ensure continued supplies of grain to his capital. This gave Zenobia the chance to take control of Asia Minor as far as Ancyra; only local self-help prevented a move into Bithynia.[97] By 272, Palmyra posed a threat that could no longer be ignored. Yet Aurelian was taking on no easy task. With the Gallic empire intact, and the east almost lost, he could call upon far fewer reserves of men, money and supplies than any of his immediate predecessors.

His first major confrontation with Zenobia's forces was in the neighbourhood of Antioch. There was a battle, in which he was victorious, and which presently allowed him to enter the city. Zenobia fell back to Emesa, and abandoned any show of a condominium in the east: in spring 272, she and her son were proclaimed Augusta and Augustus.[98] Aurelian pursued Zenobia to Emesa, destroyed her main strength, and forced her to retreat to Palmyra. After a siege, the city capitulated; Zenobia had been taken prisoner shortly before, attempting an escape. In the meantime, during the late spring or early summer of 272, Egypt again fell into Roman hands.[99] Aurelian withdrew from Palmyra the way he had come. At Emesa, Zenobia and her ministers were put on trial; only she escaped punishment. By late 272 the emperor was back in Europe, perhaps wintering at Byzantium.[100]

In spring 273, he began a campaign against the Carpi, only to hear of renewed rebellion at Palmyra. He hurried back, suppressed the rising, and ordered the destruction of the city. He then proceeded to Egypt to put down a further, possibly related, disturbance.[101] With the east secure, Aurelian was able to return to Italy, where he beat off fresh Alamannic incursions. Only one major military task remained – the subjugation of the Gallic empire, now ruled by Victorinus' successor, C. Pius Esuvius Tetricus, and still a power to be reckoned with. Aurelian marched into Gaul early in 274, and defeated Tetricus at Châlons-sur-Marne. The Roman empire was again united, and Aurelian took the title *Restitutor Orbis* – 'Restorer of the World'. However, the old frontiers had not been restored in their entirety. In

[95] Millar, *Near East* 172. [96] Price (1973) 83. [97] Zos. 1.50.1.
[98] Price (1973) 83f. [99] Rathbone (1986) 124.
[100] Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 240. [101] Bowman (1976) 158.

Mesopotamia, the situation remained uncertain; the *Agri Decumates*, given up by the Gallic emperors, were never recovered; and it was probably now, when his prestige was at its highest, that Aurelian dared to order the official withdrawal from Dacia, and the settlement on the right bank of the Danube, in Moesia of those of its population who were willing, or able, to leave.[102]

The wars of restoration had boosted Aurelian's treasury. It is not surprising that 274 saw his second, major, monetary reform, aimed at restoring confidence in the *antoninianus*.[103] He also reorganized and augmented the distribution of basic foodstuffs, free of charge, to the people of Rome; and he cancelled arrears of debts owed to the state. Perhaps the most interesting of his measures at this time was his attempt to establish the worship of the 'Unconquered Sun' – the embodiment of all divine power – and hence the veneration of himself as this deity's earthly representative at the centre of Roman state religion. To this end, he built a magnificent temple to the Sun, the dedication of which probably followed his great triumphal procession of 274, when Tetricus and, probably, Zenobia were displayed in all the humiliation of defeat. Both, however, were spared and released.[104]

Early in 275, Aurelian set out on his final journey, first crushing lingering sparks of dissidence in Gaul, then moving eastward, heading for Byzantium. It is possible that he had intended to renew the war against the Persians, with whom he may have already brushed immediately after the fall of Zenobia. By October 275, he had reached the road-station of Caenophrurium, between Perinthus and Byzantium, where he fell victim to a conspiracy engineered by members of his household and middle-ranking army officers.

13. Tacitus, 275–6

That Aurelian perished in a localized, low-level conspiracy is reflected in the ensuing confusion. None of his marshals claimed the purple; and he was eventually succeeded by the elderly M. Claudius Tacitus – a stop-gap candidate, perhaps a retired Danubian general, persuaded to leave his Campanian estate to take power in an emergency.[105] Although the process did not take the six months claimed by one Latin source-tradition, it probably took some weeks.[106]

The selection of Tacitus may have involved consultation between senior army generals and the senate, and thus was perhaps influenced by the latter's suspicions of Aurelian's autocratic tendencies. Tacitus ought, indeed, to have enjoyed a warmer relationship with the senate than his immediate

[102] Bodor (1973) 34; Horedt (1973) 141f.; Tudor (1973) 151ff.; Vulpe (1973) 46ff.
[103] Callu, *Politique monétaire* 323ff.; Kienast (1974) 547; Weiser (1983); Carson (1990) 117, 235f.
[104] Halsberghe (1984) 219–5ff. Eutr. IX.13. Cf. Zos. I.59; Groag (1905) 1387; Baldini (1978).
[105] Syme, *E&B* 237. [106] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXXVI.1.

predecessors – as a respected and wealthy veteran, he was exactly the sort of person whom, for centuries, the senatorial tradition had absorbed to maintain its strength. Yet the generals who agreed on him as their new supreme commander must have known their man. His rule should not be seen as an attempt to restore senatorial authority; he did not, for example, reverse Gallienus' policies with respect to army appointments.[107]

Tacitus came to power in Rome late in 275. He may have remained in the city to take his first consulship as emperor (he had previously held this office in 273) on 1 January 276, but soon departed for Asia Minor. Here, piracy by the Black Sea Goths was causing great trouble in Colchis, Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia and even Cilicia. Tacitus fought the Goths, and was victorious over them: this proved to be their last major assault.[108] He planned to leave the war to his praetorian prefect and to return west, possibly to the Rhine, where the situation was deteriorating rapidly.[109] However, around June 276, he was murdered by his own men at Tyana, apparently, it would seem, to escape punishment for their recent killing of the emperor's relation, Maximinus, who had abused his power as governor of Syria.

14. Florian, 276

Tacitus' place was taken by his praetorian prefect (who may have been his half-brother), M. Annius Florianus.[110] Florian found immediate acceptance in Asia Minor and the west, but was quickly challenged in the east by Probus, who either commanded the army in Egypt or Syria or, more probably, exercised an extraordinary command over both areas.[111] The two claimants confronted each other near Tarsus in late summer 276, but Florian was killed by his own men before battle could be joined.

15. Probus, 276–82

M. Aurelius Probus was another military Danubian, from Sirmium. However, at about forty-four years of age, he was significantly younger than his predecessors, and probably made his name under Aurelian, rather than Gallienus.[112] Having disposed of Florian, Probus began to move to the west. Here, the destruction of the Gallic empire, Aurelian's likely reprisals against its supporters, and his probable removal of troops for his projected Persian campaign, had dangerously weakened the Rhine and the Danube frontiers; and civil war and the absence of the empire's rulers had subsequently resulted in Germanic invasion. Gaul was devastated as never

[107] Polverini (1975) 1022f. [108] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.430. [109] Zos. 1.63.1.
[110] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. xxxvi.2; Syme, *E&B* 245f. [111] Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 240.
[112] Syme, *E&B* 208ff.; Polverini (1975) 1025.

before by Franks and Alamanni; and, as usual, a weak Gaul undermined the security of Italy.[113]

While crossing Asia Minor, Probus defeated those Goths who had escaped Tacitus. He spent the early months of 277 in the area of the middle Danube, perhaps in Siscia. His Gallic campaign commenced in 277, and lasted until 278.[114] In arduous fighting he restored the Rhine frontier; and he probably initiated both the walling of Gallic cities and the coastal defence system covering the English Channel (known much later as the *Litus Saxonicum* – the 'Saxon Shore').[115] On the other hand, Probus seems to have postponed breaking the main Frankish threat, and given low priority to dealing with developing social unrest (on the part of the Bagaudae);[116] he preferred to concentrate on the Alamanni, who directly threatened Italy. The need to defend Italy also explains why, in 278, he moved to campaign in Raetia, against Burgundians and Vandals. He then continued his eastern progress, spending the winter of 278/9 on the middle Danube, once more in Siscia.[117]

Probus will have been unable to ignore the still unresolved problem of Persia. Valerian's capture had yet to be avenged; the Persians must, as a matter of course, be discouraged from encroaching upon Mesopotamia, Syria and Armenia; and it is possible that during 279 Probus' trusted general and governor of Syria, Iulius Saturninus, was involved in serious skirmishing with their forces.[118] Growing pressure on Rome's eastern frontier would explain Probus' next move, in 280, from the Danube to Antioch. While resident in the east, he ordered a campaign in Isauria against local bandits, whose activities, like those of the Gallic Bagaudae, reflected continuing unsettled conditions within the empire. Probus' lieutenants also quelled trouble in Egypt, occasioned by the nomadic Blemmyes.[119] The emperor's wider plans were, however, frustrated when, early in 281, he was compelled to leave Syria. Saturninus, perhaps resentful of being deserted, then revolted, but was swiftly rejected by the main body of his troops, and killed.[120]

Probus had departed for the Rhine, where there had been a major military revolt, centred on Cologne and led by Bonosus and Proculus. It is tempting to associate this unrest with that which is known to have occurred in Britain during his reign. As in the case of Saturninus, these disturbances may have been caused by resentment of what was perceived as imperial neglect. However, by the end of 281 Probus had personally suppressed the Cologne

[113] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.484, 519ff.
[114] Pink (1949); Vitucci (1952) 37f.; Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 241.
[115] Demougeot, *FEIB* 1.467ff., 525ff.; Johnson, *LRF* 114f., 210f.
[116] Drinkwater (1984).
[117] Pink (1949); Vitucci (1952) 52f.; Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 240f.
[118] Vitucci (1952) 62f.; Chastagnol (1980) 78; Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 241.
[119] Pink (1949) 72f.; Vitucci (1952) 50ff.; Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 241.
[120] Pomeroy (1969) 55f.

rebellion; and Britain was returned to its allegiance through the action of one of his lieutenants. In the same year, he was able to celebrate a triumph in Rome.[121]

Probus' triumph brings to mind that celebrated by Aurelian, and this may have been intentional. Probus seems to have projected himself as the continuator of the Aurelianic autocratic tradition by, for example in the field of religion, reviving the policy of solar henotheism, apparently neglected by Tacitus.[122] He also, though with mixed success, significantly accelerated the settlement of barbarian prisoners-of-war in frontier areas to supplement both agricultural and military manpower there – an expedient already practised by Gallienus, Claudius and Aurelian.[123] On the other hand, he was capable of originality, as was demonstrated in his efforts to encourage viticulture in the northern provinces.[124] Thus it is possible to characterize him as a strong and innovative ruler; and, indeed, it is conventionally held that, having pacified the west, in 282 the emperor returned to Sirmium and concentrated his forces, either to secure the Danubian frontier or, more likely, to prepare anew for a campaign against Persia.[125] However, it was in the neighbourhood of his native city that, in September or October 282, he was killed by his own troops, disgruntled at his insistence on hard work and discipline – he had been forcing them to labour on a variety of agricultural and civil engineering projects, intended to revive the economy of the region – even when there was no fighting.[126]

On the other hand, it is possible to judge his reign somewhat differently. Having noted the number of mutinous generals Probus had recently faced, his growing unpopularity with the troops under his direct command, and his supposed hostility to military spending, one may suspect that, towards the end of his reign, Probus was much less impressive as a war leader, and that his marshals and his men perceived their efforts round Sirmium, perhaps rightly, not as training for war but due to the obsessions of an emperor increasingly given over to novelty and neglectful of military needs. In short, it is possible that he had no great expedition in mind, and that as a result he lost the confidence of his army. Indeed, it is likely that the mutiny in which he was killed arose out of the tension caused by the revolt of another of his most senior officers.

In the autumn of 282, Probus was challenged by his praetorian prefect, the somewhat older M. Aurelius Numerius Carus, at that time commanding a large army in Raetia and Noricum. There is good reason to believe that Carus, dismayed by imperial indolence, claimed the purple well before his patron's death and, indeed, that it was Probus' failure of nerve in this crisis

[121] Pink (1949) 73; Vitucci (1952) 64ff., 75; Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 241.
[122] Polverini (1975) 1024ff. [123] De Ste Croix (1981) 512. [124] Schumacher (1982) 109ff.
[125] Polverini (1975) 1025f.; Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 241.
[126] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* xxxvii.4; Eutr. ix.17.3.

that led to his final rejection by his own men, his death and the accession of Carus as emperor without a fight.[127]

16. Carus, Numerian and Carinus, 282–5

Though clearly a military man, who owed his position to the armies on the Danube, Carus was not Danubian by origin, but came from Narbonne, in southern Gaul.[128] He quickly proclaimed his adult sons, M. Aurelius Carinus and M. Aurelius Numerius Numerianus, Caesars, and moved into Italy. However, he does not appear to have taken up residence in Rome – a circumstance which it is legitimate to associate with his failure to seek the formal approval of the senate either for his own elevation or that of his sons.[129]

As always, civil discord had encouraged barbarian attack, and there were troubled frontiers to be taken in hand. Before the end of 282 Carus had moved eastward, with Numerian, leaving Carinus in charge of the north-western frontier. In 283/4, Carinus seems to have campaigned on both the Rhine and the Danube, and quelled unrest in Britain. However – and especially after the deaths of his father and brother – he also took care to make sure of his hold on Rome, making at least two visits to the imperial capital.[130] Carus fought against Sarmatians and Quadi, but his first priority was the long-awaited expedition against Persia, whose chances of success were considerably enhanced by strife within the Persian empire.[131] By early 283, Carus had reached Antioch; and he then led his forces deep into Persian territory, capturing Ctesiphon. However, in July or August he perished suddenly. The official report of his death claimed that he was struck by lightning, but this may have been an attempt to conceal a more mundane end – caused either by illness or court intrigue.[132]

Carinus, probably already promoted Augustus, was now recognized as senior ruler throughout the empire. In the east, however, administration continued to centre on the resident imperial court, even though, at least to begin with, Numerian still had only the status of a Caesar.[133] Here, real power was exercised by Aper, his father-in-law and praetorian prefect. The Roman army was back in Syria by spring 284; and towards the end of that year it had reached the north-western coast of Bithynia, *en route* for Europe.[134] However, the troops were unhappy with Numerian, and he soon disappeared from the scene. The strange story of Aper's murder of the sickly young ruler, early in November 284, and of his subsequent efforts to conceal

[127] Meloni (1948) 42ff.; Vitucci (1952) 115ff. [128] Syme, *E&B* 249. [129] Polverini (1975) 1028f.
[130] Pink (1963) 63ff.; Carson (1990) 129f. [131] Barnes (1970a) 29. [132] Bird (1976) 125ff.
[133] Meloni (1948) 77ff., 117f.; Pink (1963) 59; Chastagnol (1980) 79; Šašel (1984) 249; Peachin, *Titulature* 49.
[134] Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 242ff.; Kolb, *Diocletian* 13.

the crime, surely reflects the prefect's attempt to retain power in a fast deteriorating situation, but perhaps conceals the involvement of others.[135] Having discovered Aper's misdeeds, the army chose a Dalmatian guards officer, C. Valerius Diocles, to lead it. Diocles was proclaimed emperor in Nicomedia on 20 November 284, and took the name M. Aurelius C. Valerius Diocletianus. Diocletian's immediate public denial of involvement in the death of Numerian, and his killing, by his own hand, of Aper, arouses the suspicion that he took the first opportunity to rid himself of a potentially embarrassing accomplice.[136]

Diocletian moved his army west along the Danube. In the meantime, Carinus acted to meet, not this challenge, but that of one M. Aurelius Sabinus Iulianus who, seeking to exploit current political uncertainties, had rebelled in Pannonia and then marched on Italy. Early in 285, Carinus defeated him in battle at Verona.[137] In spring of the same year, he confronted Diocletian west of the river Margus, near its confluence with the Danube. Carinus at first appeared to be the winner, but he was then slain by his own men because, it was said, he had acted the philanderer.[138] Diocletian had won power, but by the narrowest of margins.

III. DISCUSSION

Between 235 and 285 the Roman empire experienced great dislocation and distress. The principal causes of these disturbances have now been generally agreed by historians and may indeed be inferred from what Diocletian eventually did to bring them to an end.[139] In brief, a new problem arose which exacerbated old weaknesses in the imperial system. The problem was the combination of Persian pressure to the east and Germanic (especially Gothic) invasion from the north. The weaknesses were more complex.

In military terms, the empire was unready to face powerful adversaries. Its strategy was to hold what it had and to neutralize the threat of those who would do it harm. Its tactics, therefore, depended upon the maintenance of the defended frontier lines of the later first and second centuries. On these would break the attacks of raiders; and from them generals and emperors might deploy superior imperial resources to buy off or crush more dangerous opponents. Though Septimius Severus had increased the size of the army, improved its responsiveness and encouraged career-soldiers to become senior officers, the long success of this system of defence had discouraged radical change. In 235 the Roman army was small relative to the demands that were shortly to be made of it; for each major campaign

[135] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXXVIII.7f.; Eutr. IX.18; *Epit. de Caes*. XXXVIII.4f.; Zon. XII.30.
[136] Bird (1976); Kolb, *Diocletian* 10ff., 16ff. [137] Meloni (1948) 166f.; Chastagnol (1980) 79.
[138] Bird (1976) 130; Barnes, *NE* 50. [139] Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 6f.

field-armies had to be assembled piecemeal from garrisons spread along the length of the frontiers; these field-armies consisted for the most part of infantry; and high commands could be allotted to senators with little military skill or experience. In the event, it proved impossible to prevent large, well-led forces, attacking on two fronts, from entering the empire, and difficult to expel them once they were inside. In short, Rome lost the military initiative.[140]

There were also fiscal difficulties. Continual war was expensive, but the empire, accustomed to more peaceful times, was not ready to pay for it. Traditionally, taxation was relatively low, and most of it was already directed towards the army, either for its upkeep and pay or, particularly since Septimius Severus, as bonuses to maintain its loyalty to the ruling house. Thus in an emergency there was little chance of covering a deficit on the military account by cancelling other spending; and to increase taxation was politically dangerous and, given the rudimentary nature of an imperial bureaucracy already stressed by war, practically very difficult. Emperors could meet shortfalls by insisting on the efficient collection of ordinary taxes, or by imposing extraordinary demands, but this too caused popular resentment. It is little wonder, therefore, that in the third century the favoured expedient was debasement of the silver coinage.[141] But war and debasement disrupted an economy that was, by modern standards, profoundly underdeveloped and, in certain regions, perhaps already in recession;[142] and the consequent loss of productivity further diminished the tax base.

It therefore became even harder to hold the frontiers, and this failure sought out yet another flaw in the imperial system. Emperors were still essentially military dictators, legitimized but not created by the Roman senate. They were answerable to no one; but, conversely, theirs was the whole responsibility for defending their empire.[143] If an emperor's generals failed him, he had to campaign in person; and if he failed, or proved less successful than his lieutenants, he could be challenged. In the third century, campaigns against the Persians or Germans continually took emperors to the frontiers and exposed them to capture or death in battle, and to the criticism of their subordinates. Additionally, since an emperor could be in only one place at one time, and since provincial armies and the populations with which they were closely associated were, understandably, ever more willing to entrust their safety to local leaders of whose competence they had direct experience, even a successful soldier-emperor could face rebellion. The strain of the period also produced personal resentment, fear and intrigue, against which the court-etiquette of the day offered little protection: many emperors were simply murdered. Attempts to establish some degree of

[140] Alföldi (1939b) 210ff.; Rémondon (1970) 77f.; MacMullen, *Response* 52ff.
[141] MacMullen, *Corruption* 101ff. [142] Reece (1980) 35. [143] MacMullen, *Response* 26ff.

administrative continuity through dynastic succession, though popular in principle, proved generally unworkable, since the heirs were either too young to consolidate their power, or else were challenged by more able military leaders.[144] Chronic civil war and frequent unsettling changes at the topmost level of the imperial administration invited and facilitated further foreign attacks, completing a vicious circle.

However, if we set this general analysis against our narrative of later third-century history we discover that it is not quite a perfect fit. On the criteria proposed the 'crisis' proper – continual civil war precipitated by, and encouraging the continuation of, invasion on two fronts – did not begin until the late 240s (with the emergence of the Goths as a major threat), and should have been over by about 270 (following the decline of Persian aggression and Claudius' victory at Naïssus).[145]

The preceding period, from the accession of Maximinus to that of Philip, was the final phase of the Severan world. In particular, we must reject Rostovtzeff's characterization of Maximinus as a rude soldier-emperor who immediately transformed the Severan 'military monarchy' into a 'military anarchy' by leading his poor peasant troops against the aristocracy and bourgeoisie.[146] It is now recognized that Maximinus strove to act the conventional ruler, legitimized by the Roman senate. Despite his cool relationship with this body, it is likely that he hoped for an eventual reconciliation with it, based on its appreciation of his restoration of the empire to the early Severan norms of disciplined, fair and manly leadership. As a Severan monarch, he had no need to fear the senate as an institution – he commanded all the power he required – but he should have won the support of the leading senatorial families. Far from being Herodian's cunning tyrant, Maximinus' basic failing was that he gave too little thought to politics.

Of course, the events of these years indicate many of the faults of the imperial system, for example: the problems involved in creating an effective field-army (Severus Alexander, Gordian III); the difficulties of paying for major campaigns (Maximinus, Pupienus and Balbinus, Gordian III, Philip); and the obligation of emperors to lead their troops in battle (Severus Alexander, Maximinus, Pupienus, Gordian III, Philip). On the other hand, political disruption occurred independently of significant barbarian attack, and derived from the failure of Severus Alexander and Maximinus, and their advisers, to identify what was necessary to maintain their power. What resulted was a series of accidents and acts of political self-indulgence, some of which – most notably the accession of Pupienus and Balbinus – appear bizarre, but none of which was really out of keeping with the pattern of Roman imperial history since Augustus. Luckily for the empire,

[144] Alföldi (1939b) 195. [145] Cf. de Blois (1984) 364.
[146] Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE* 452ff.; Loriot (1975a) 677f.; Dietz, *Senatus* 296ff., 305.

the ensuing instability was not greatly exploited by external enemies; and a remarkable facsimile of the old order, complete with a minor as emperor, was soon put in place by the supporters of Gordian III, especially Timesitheus. Though accident again caused disruption, the accession of Philip and his son promised continuity.[147] The Severan age came to an end only with the revolt of Decius. It is perhaps ironical, in view of what was to follow, that the equestrian administrator had to yield to the senatorial soldier-emperor.

That the 'crisis' continued after Claudius II demonstrates that it had developed a life of its own. Continual warfare not only increased the main structural weaknesses of the empire, but also spread or created new agonies, such as disease, social and economic disruption and a decline in morale. This last was marked by the conviction that Rome's misfortunes resulted from her neglect of the traditional gods, attempts by various emperors to rediscover and redefine the right relationship between themselves and the protecting deities and, of course, by the persecution of Christianity. The religion had suffered a little under Maximinus, but this was only incidental to his suspicion of members of the Severan household who happened to have Christian sympathies. The first major damage was done by Decius, but again this represented no systematic attempt to eradicate the faith. Some Christians were hurt (exactly how many actually died remains unclear) as it were, in passing, by an administration whose principal concern in insisting on a general public sacrifice was the maintenance of religious unity, and hence divine favour, in the face of foreign threats: the Christians' refusal to make a single gesture of loyalty exposed them to the charge of treason. On the other hand, Christian reaction will have been predictable, and Decius, the senatorial traditionalist, may have welcomed the opportunity to distance himself from Philip, who had appeared too tolerant of Christianity.[148] It was typical of Valerian, a similar personality ruling in similar circumstances, to renew the attack, and to make it more dangerous by directing it against the church hierarchy rather than against individual believers. It was equally typical of Gallienus, always his own man, to end the Valerianic persecution in 260. Gallienus' toleration gave Christianity almost a generation to renew its strength, but it is significant that towards the end of his reign, and now deeply involved in the sun-cult, Aurelian seemed to be contemplating a new onslaught:[149] the reunification of the empire under a strong ruler was not of itself sufficient to repair imperial self-confidence.

Aurelian is, indeed, perhaps the most puzzling of the third-century emperors. Though much less original than Gallienus, he had ideas and his greater willingness to conform to what was expected of a Roman emperor

[147] De Blois (1978–9) 15, 42.
[148] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 450ff.
[149] Sotgiu (1975b) 1048.

made him politically much stronger. His achievements suggest that he ought to have been able to bring the 'crisis' to a close. His failure might be excused on the grounds that, despite his conquests, there had been little change in the situation: the Gallic empire, the Goths and Palmyra had gone, but only to be replaced by the peoples of the upper Rhine and upper Danube who now posed a dangerous threat to Italy; and Persia remained to be dealt with. Yet it has to be pointed out that these strains were no more than those faced by the fourth-century empire which, until the arrival of the Huns, managed to defend itself remarkably well. An alternative explanation is to refer to the by now excessive political power of the army, and to accuse Roman troops, high and low, of gross indiscipline and selfishness – hence the many wasteful political murders of the period, including that of Aurelian.[150] On the other hand, again, lax discipline should be blamed on poor management: bluntly, if Aurelian was assassinated, he had only himself to blame. Indeed, I would suggest that the main reason for the continuation of disorder was precisely his lack of imagination: he restored the empire and made some important changes to it, but he did not reshape it. The implied comparison is, of course, with Diocletian; and, for example, as Diocletian did immediately he became sole emperor, Aurelian should have shared the burdens of his office. The frenetic activity of himself and, especially, Probus, shows how these had become too many for one ruler to handle; and delegation in the mid-270s may well have prevented subsequent trouble on the Rhine and upper Danube. Carus, thanks to his possession of two adult sons, could repeat Valerian's experiment with dynastic power-sharing, but with only partial success, for the eventual shape of the eastern administration, under Numerian and Aper, bears a striking resemblance to that of Gordian III and Timesitheus, and shows how little progress had been made. The accession of Diocletian was part of the continuing disorder, and promised no end to the 'crisis'.

Yet the Roman empire neither collapsed nor, even after the disasters of 251 and 260, came anywhere near to collapsing. This was in part due to the very threats that precipitated the 'crisis'. It is clear that, despite Roman fears, Sassanid Persia had no real intention of reclaiming former Achaemenid possessions in the eastern Mediterranean region;[151] and the Germans, though troublesome, would have been incapable of permanently occupying territory against determined imperial opposition, even if they had wanted to do so. But equally important was the empire's immense internal strength. Despite its obvious perils, there was never a shortage of able candidates for the office of Roman emperor who, having won power,

[150] Cf. Potter, *Prophecy* 41.
[151] Kettenhofen (1984); Drinkwater (1989); Potter, *Prophecy* 370ff.; Strobel (1993) 287ff.

were recognized over huge areas, and from these areas managed to raise, feed, equip and train armies, and to lead them successfully against the Persian and the Goth in the name of Rome. This unremitting display of power will have depressed the enemy and sustained provincial expectations that, however bad the current situation, help – or, for treachery, retribution – would come in the end, and so have confirmed what may be termed the 'imperial habit'. Indeed, with rare exceptions, it is noticeable that the first instinct of those amongst Rome's subjects who exercised any degree of authority was to preserve the integrity of the empire; in the light of modern experience, perhaps the most surprising aspect of these years is the absence of any significant degree of separatist or nationalistic exploitation of imperial disarray. As is most evident in the case of the 'Danubian' emperors, the provincial upper classes had by this time become highly Romanized, and so provided no leadership for local resistance to Roman control.[152] Efforts at self-help in an emergency generally acted for the good of the empire and, where they were of any size, were articulated in Roman imperial language. Thus, for example, both the 'Gallic' and the 'Palmyrene' empires advertised themselves as 'Roman', and their long-term survival would have necessitated their rulers' becoming emperors in Rome itself, and taking on responsibility for the whole empire.

The prevailing political tendency was centripetal. It is ironical that much of the civil combat of the period took place when usurping generals took their armies off to fight for possession of the capital, there to obtain the formality of acceptance by the senate. Yet even here we must not too easily form the impression of 'crisis' becoming 'anarchy'. In contrast to the bloody conflicts of the fourth century, third-century confrontations often resulted in very little loss of life, thanks to the last-minute disappearance of one of the principals: throughout the period only one legitimate emperor, Philip, fell in pitched battle against Roman troops.

Marching armies caused havoc whether they fought or not, but again we should not assume that imperial experience was uniformly dire. Foreign invasion and civil war affected some regions much more than others. The border provinces will have been worst hit; but even this is no hard rule, since Britain and Africa were little involved in contemporary troubles. Similarly, debasement of the coinage and ensuing price-inflation would have been of only marginal importance to those who, as farmers or landlords, had direct access to the products of agriculture, by far the main element in the imperial economy. And it should be remarked that, even in respect of the wage-earners, the lesser bureaucrats and soldiers, to the end of the century this inflation was, by modern standards, scarcely considerable.[153]

[152] Cf. Millar, *Near East* 155. [153] Cf. Rémondon (1970) 111.

Against this background, it is understandable that the extent to which contemporaries actually perceived themselves as living in an age of 'crisis' is hotly debated by historians.[154] Many prefer to characterize the period as one of change, as developments put in train by Septimius Severus, or even earlier emperors, were simply accelerated to produce a new style of Roman empire. Important aspects of this process were:

1. Experiments in the sharing and decentralization of power (Valerian, Gallienus, Carus).
2. The creation of permanent mobile field-armies with strong, though not exclusive, emphasis on cavalry (Gallienus–Carus).
3. The development, encouraged by the deployment of these field-armies, of important centres of administration away from Rome: the 'sub-capitals' of Trier, Milan, Sirmium, Antioch, etc. (Gallienus–Carus).
4. The eventual acknowledgment that, indeed, 'Rome' was where the emperor was and that, as a result, the city and its senate could at last be ignored (Carus).
5. The realignment of senatorial and equestrian career-structures which allowed equestrians to gain the foremost military and civil posts and which, after Gallienus, resulted in the imperial office's ceasing to be a senatorial preserve.
6. The emergence, in the case of both senatorial and equestrian generals, of extended, flexible commands, that seem to look forward to the military hierarchy of the fourth century (Philip–Probus).
7. The abandonment of indefensible or redundant frontier territories (Gallienus–Aurelian).
8. The move to strengthen the office of emperor by claiming a special relationship with powerful deities or an all-powerful deity (Gallienus–Aurelian).

IV. CONCLUSION

In 285 the Roman empire still faced enormous problems. However, though the 'crisis' had exposed the empire's weaknesses, it had also revealed its underlying strengths. What was needed was a ruler able to recognize and exploit these strengths. That the empire was about to produce such a man proves that it was not in decline. For all its faults, Roman imperial civilization was in the end able to make an accurate calculation of the dangers that threatened it, and to introduce the measures necessary to allow it to shape the future according to its own will.[155]

[154] Alföldy (1974), MacMullen, *Response* 1ff.; and, especially, Strobel (1993), e.g. 1ff., 289ff., 300ff., 345ff.

[155] Cf. Alföldy, *Krise* 469.

V. NOTE ON SOURCES

The main problem is the absence of comprehensive contemporary or near-contemporary narratives of the period. Herodian provides a detailed account of the years 235–8, but from Gordian III to Carinus we have to depend principally on the mid/late fourth-century Latin biographical digests of Aurelius Victor (XXV–XXXVIII), Eutropius (IX.1–22) and the anonymous 'Epitomator' (XXV–XXXVIII), all of which are closely related and stem ultimately from a single lost work of the early fourth century, the so-called *Kaisergeschichte*. The colourful biographies of most of the third-century emperors and usurpers which conclude the *Historia Augusta* are no more than fanciful elaborations of Aurelius Victor and Eutropius, and are usually best ignored. However, they can be of value when shown to preserve material from other reliable sources, in particular the Greek *Annalistic History* and *Gothic Wars* of Dexippus of Athens. Although Dexippus' works were also consulted by Byzantine historians and compilers of compendia, not enough survives to allow a full and coherent reconstruction of their contents. Nevertheless, it is from two of the later Greek writers who drew upon Dexippus, Zosimus (*New History* I.12–73: fifth century), and Zonaras (*Annals* XII.15–31: twelfth century), that we obtain most of the circumstantial detail which allows us to flesh out the meagre information of the Latin tradition. Zonaras also used the work of Petrus Patricius (sixth century) and, possibly, through this, that of a major fourth-century Latin annalistic historian (Bleckmann (1992) 410ff.). Eusebius' pioneering *History of the Church* (VI.28–VII.33) provides the main evidence for the growth of Christianity in the period, but touches on imperial history only in passing. Other historical writings exist, e.g. Festus' fourth-century *Breviary* (XXII–XXIV) and John Malalas' sixth-century *Chronography* (XII), but are idiosyncratic and incoherent and must be used with extreme caution. There is, of course, contemporary literature of other genres: rhetorical (ps.-Aelius Aristides, *Or*. XXXV, *To the Emperor*; *The Latin Panegyrics* VIII.10), prophetical (*The Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*; see now Potter, *Prophecy*), pastoral/apologetical (Cyprian, *Letters*, *To Demetrian*) and polemical (Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* IV–VI). However, the partiality and frequent obscurity of such material makes it very difficult to deploy in establishing an overall picture of its age.

In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that modern historians have been compelled to rely extensively upon other forms of evidence. Although the commissioning of inscriptions became much rarer as the third century progressed, epigraphy can still provide many useful details of social, political and military history. For example, we find a Thracian community appealing to Gordian III for protection against the exactions of government officials (Scaptopara: *CIL* III.12336; *SIG*^{3} 888; *IGRR* I.674; *IGBulg* IV.2236;

Herrmann, *Hilferufe*; Hauken, *Petition and Response* 74–126); and, from an unexpected quarter, Shapur I glorying in his victorious campaigns against the Roman emperors (the Naqsh-i-Rustam inscription, the so-called *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (*ŠKZ*): Sprengling, *Iran*; Kettenhofen, *RPK* and (1983); Frye, *Iran*). An exciting recent discovery has been the Augsburg victory-altar, which has necessitated reconsideration of both Romano-German relations and the chronology of 259/60: Bakker (1993); Jehne (1996).

However, the history of the later third century has traditionally depended to a large extent upon numismatic research. The third century saw an increasing number of imperial coins manufactured at an increasing number of mints. The identification of mints, the analysis of their products and the study of where and how coins were finally lost in the ground has helped to establish the names, titles, sequence and chronology of emperors and usurpers, their general policies, and the location of their military campaigns. For example, the literary sources for the reign of an obscure usurper have been made to make sense by a detailed study of his coinage: Baldus (1971); and it is only their coins which provide a trustworthy means of following the movements of Probus and his successors: Pink (1949), (1963). More generally, Callu, *Politique monétaire* remains useful; a convenient summary of the most modern research is to be found in Carson (1990).

On the other hand, it is now realized that numismatics has its limitations, and that we should be wary of using it to write detailed history. In recent years, indeed, more attention has been given to the papyrological evidence, for the most part from Egypt. The chief contribution of this research has been to provide a more reliable political chronology for the period, taking into account the length of time it would have taken for reports of a change of emperor to have reached the various parts of Egypt and to be used to date public documents there (Rathbone (1986); Peachin, *Titulature*). Yet considerable difficulties remain, for example in reconciling the relatively late death of Maximinus suggested by the papyri with the relatively early one indicated by the literary and epigraphic sources (see Peachin 1989). Finally, though, like the cutting of inscriptions, building activity seems to have lessened during the 'crisis', archaeological evidence can serve to confirm and expand our knowledge. Aurelian's new wall around Rome still stands (Todd 1978); and the hill-refuges of the Moselle valley bear witness to the extent of barbarian penetration following the fall of the Gallic empire (Gilles 1985).

CHAPTER 3

DIOCLETIAN AND THE FIRST TETRARCHY, A.D. 284–305

ALAN K. BOWMAN

Capitoline Zeus took pity at last on the human race and gave the lordship of all the earth and the sea to godlike king Diocletian. He extinguished the memory of former griefs for any still suffering in grim bonds in a lightless place. Now a father sees his child, a wife her husband, a brother his brother released, as if coming into the light of the sun a second time from Hades. Gladly Diogenes, saver of cities, received the favour of the good king and swiftly dispatched to the cities the joyful forgetfulness of griefs. The whole land takes delight in its joy as at the light of a golden age, and the iron, drawn back from the slaughter of men, lies bloodlessly in the scabbard. You too have rejoiced to announce the royal gift to all, governor of the Seven Nomes and the Nile has praised your mildness earlier still, when you governed the towns on Nilotic Thebes with care and righteousness.

These translated hexameter verses were perhaps composed for recital at the fourth celebration of the Capitoline games at the town of Oxyrhynchus in middle Egypt which would have fallen in the summer or autumn of A.D. 285, a few months after the accession of the emperor Diocletian.[1] Poems and other pronouncements heralding the arrival of a golden age, either contemporaneously or in retrospect, are neither unique nor particularly surprising. It is perhaps more unusual that the accession of Diocletian has been more or less universally hailed by posterity as one of the most significant watersheds in the history of the Roman empire, marking the transition from the 'military anarchy' of A.D. 235–84 to the 'dominate' of the later empire. The two decades of Diocletian's reign saw, on the traditional view, the re-establishment of political, military and economic stability after half a century of chaos, at the price of a more absolutist monarchy, a greatly expanded (and therefore greedier and more expensive) army and bureaucracy and a more oppressive tax regime. These features of the period, and that which follows, are explored in more detail in the ensuing chapters. Whether or not the *communis opinio* is to be retained, there is no doubt at all that the institutions, the army, the bureaucracy and the fiscal

[1] *P. Oxy.* LXIII. 4352. The translation and the hypothesis about the date and circumstances (attractive but unproven) are those of the editor, John Rea. The Diogenes addressed here will be the first prefect of Egypt under Diocletian, M. Aurelius Diogenes. For another hexameter poem bearing on events of this reign see below (Heitsch (1963) XXII, pp. 79–81, *GLP* no. 135).

regime (*inter alia*) were by A.D. 305 very different from what they had been twenty years earlier. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the contextual framework of events within which these changes can be studied. This is not as simple a task as it might at first appear.[2] And it is further complicated by questions of motives and intentions. Did Diocletian quickly construct some master plan for the reconstruction of Rome's tottering empire, or were the structures which had been put in place by the end of his reign the result of an *ad hoc* series of responses to particular needs and problems? Both views have found learned adherents.[3]

1. THE ACCESSION OF DIOCLETIAN AND THE APPOINTMENT OF MAXIMIAN

The emperor Carus died in the summer of 283, survived by his sons Numerianus and Carinus. Early in November 284 Numerianus was murdered by his praetorian prefect and father-in-law Aper. Shortly thereafter, at a spot not far from Nicomedia in Bithynia, the army proclaimed a new emperor, a commander of the imperial bodyguard (*domesticos regens*) named Diocles. He is said to have been a native of Illyricum, or Dalmatia, perhaps born in Salona on 22 December of 243, 244 or 245, whose father was a scribe and a freedman of a senator called Anulinus. His name appears in the form Diocles in a papyrus which proves that he was recognized as emperor in Egypt on 7 March 285, and in demotic transliteration, but soon after his proclamation

[2] A major reason for this is the fact that we lack a good, detailed and reliable narrative source for the period (Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, the *Epitome de Caesaribus* and Eutropius, *Breviarium* offer mere summaries). As a result much depends on the necessarily lacunose and scattered evidence of inscriptions, papyri and coins and, on the literary side, Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (here cited as *DMP*), which has often been characterized as biassed and unreliable, various works of Eusebius, principally *Hist. Eccl.*, *Vit. Const.*, and *Mart. Pal.*, and the relevant *Panegyrici Latini*, now provided with translations and exhaustive commentary in the edition by Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*; the numbering and order of these speeches in the collection is confused and it should be noted that they are here cited by the numbers used in the Nixon–Rodgers edition. Much of the enormous modern bibliography on the period is preoccupied, to a greater or lesser extent, with serious chronological problems, many of which have evaded definitive solution and cannot be expounded in detail here. For many events I have been forced to make a choice, which cannot be justified in the space available, between competing chronologies. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this is less arbitrary than it may seem since significant advances have been made in the last two decades in synthesizing and absorbing the evidence of the documentary sources. Particularly valuable are the various works of Barnes, e.g. *CE*, *NE*, and 'Emperors'. Other fundamental discussions are in Kolb, *Diocletian* and Corcoran, *ET*. These largely replace the older treatment by Seston, *Dioclétien*, the first part of a projected work which remained uncompleted. For other recent accounts of the reign see Williams, *Diocletian*, Chastagnol (1994a), (1994b). By far the most important modern thematic treatment, dealing exhaustively with the administration of the later empire from Diocletian onwards but lacking any political history, is Jones, *LRE*. For a chronological summary, which does not indicate all the uncertainties, see Kienast (1996). The frequent references in what follows to attestation of the emperors' presence at particular places are derived from the fundamental collection of material by Barnes, *NE* ch.5.

[3] Notably Kolb, *Diocletian* and Seston, *Dioclétien* respectively. The present account emphasizes the evidence for a series of changes spread over two decades. See below, p. 76.

he took the name by which he was henceforth formally known: C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus. His first public act, the 'execution' of Aper, was ostensibly revenge for the murder of Numerianus but may well have removed an inconvenient co-conspirator who might have proved a 'security risk'. The year 285 was inaugurated by Diocletian and L. Caesonius Ovinius Manlius Rufinianus Bassus, a former proconsul of Africa who was eventually given the key post of *praefectus urbi*, as consuls.[4] Carus' surviving son Carinus removed another pretender to the purple, a certain Iulianus, at Verona early in 285.[5] The issue between Diocletian and Carinus was resolved at the battle of the river Margus in Moesia before the end of May, where Carinus was killed by his own troops. No further rivals remained and by early June Diocletian was in control of Pannonia. He then proceeded to Italy and may have visited Rome.[6]

There was no immediate major change in the ranks of the higher officers, and it is notable that Ti. Claudius Aurelius Aristobulus, Carinus' consular colleague and praetorian prefect, retained the latter post. But it was not very long before a more momentous innovation was introduced. Diocletian appointed as co-ruler a junior colleague, one Aurelius Maximianus who, like Diocletian, had served in the army of Carus in Mesopotamia and had been at Nicomedia, presumably in support, when Diocletian was proclaimed.[7] It is simple to reconstruct a chain of events in which Maximian was first appointed with the rank of Caesar, perhaps on 21 July 285 at Milan and then elevated to Augustus on 1 March (or 1 April) 286.[8] But there are problems with the titulature and the dates, although Maximian had certainly been raised to the rank of Augustus by 24 May 286.[9] Nor is there any secure evidence that Diocletian formally adopted Maximian as his son, as is often stated, although the latter did take the *gentilicium* Valerius. The matter is further complicated by questions of intention. Was this the first stage in a master-plan which was completed in 293 with the formation of the tetrarchy, two senior Augusti and two junior Caesars

[4] Barnes, *NE* 97.

[5] Sabinus Iulianus or M. Aurelius Iulianus (identified as Carinus' praetorian prefect), but the evidence is inconclusive and these may be one (Barnes, *NE* 143) or two (Kienast (1996) 263) persons. There was also a nephew of Carus, Nigrinianus, attested on the coinage (*RIC* v.2 202, 123) and deified after his presumably swift death (*ILS* 611).

[6] Barnes, 'Emperors' 537. The chronology would allow a visit to Rome (Zon. XII.31) if the battle of the Margus was fought in the spring.

[7] A few years younger than Diocletian and also of humble parentage (*Epit. de Caes.* XL.10, mentioning *opera mercenaria*), from Illyricum.

[8] So Barnes, *CE* 6–7; cf. Barnes, *NE* 4 and 'Emperors' 537, opting for 1 April (as in *Consularia Constantinopolitana* (*Chron. Min.* I. 229; Burgess (1993) 234); cf. Kolb, *Diocletian* 33–4, 49. 1 March can be supported by reference to *BGU* IV.1090.34, in which the joint reign appears on 31 March 286 (cf. Worp (1985) 98–9), that can only be explained away by the supposition that it was written at a later date and used an anachronistic formula.

[9] *BGU* III. 922. See Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 44–8.

(see below), or was it a device responding to an immediate need for a colleague to share responsibility? The first view rests on a tendentious source, Lactantius' account of a conversation in 305 in which Galerius put pressure on the ailing Diocletian to abdicate:

> the arrangement made by Diocletian himself ought to be maintained forever, namely that there should be in the state two of higher rank who should hold supreme authority and likewise two of lesser rank to assist them.[10]

The alternative view is better supported, if we accept that Maximian very soon went off in command of a military force to deal with disruption in Gaul caused by the Bagaudae, rural brigands whose leader is attested in issues of coinage bearing the name of Amandus.[11] The destabilization caused by violence on the part of a disaffected peasantry groaning under heavy taxation may be a consequence of the political events of the 260s (see above), but Maximian does not seem to have had too much trouble controlling it, if we are to believe Eutropius.[12] On the chronology which this sequence of events suggests, Maximian will have commenced his activities against the Bagaudae in the summer of 285 and will then have left Gaul to spend the winter in Milan. The evidence suggests a shared responsibility, but no formal territorial division between west and east,[13] to which Diocletian had departed after Maximian's appointment.

II. THE YEARS 286–92

Probably in 286 or 287 (though it must remain uncertain whether directly connected with Maximian's success against the Bagaudae) a new feature of the imperial collegiality emerged: Diocletian and Maximian began respectively to use the adjectival epithets Iovius and Herculius, bringing themselves into some sort of relationship with the cognate deities, Jupiter and Hercules.[14] Simple identification is surely not the point and is undermined by the fact that these adjectives were also attributed to military units and, later, to provincial divisions.[15] The Augusti are brothers, but Diocletian, the senior and Iovius, is the planner, Maximian, Herculius, is his executive:

[10] Lact. *DMP* 18.5.

[11] *RIC* v.2 595; the coins do not attest Aelianus who is named as co-leader by Aur. Vict. *Caes*. xxxix.17 and Eutr. ix.20.3.

[12] Eutr. ix.9.13 (*levibus proeliis*).

[13] This is not the view offered by, *inter alios*, Chastagnol (1994a), (1994b), which seems to the present author unrealistically schematic.

[14] The date and the stimulus are much discussed; for a summary see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 48. Connected with success against the Bagaudae or Maximian's elevation, in the spring/summer of 286, or to promote unity against Carausius (see below) in 287? Implied by the renaming of Perinthus as Heracleia by 13 October 286 (*FV* 284)?

[15] E.g. the *Ala Herculia Dromedariorum* (*P. Panop. Beatty* 2.168–9). For *Aegyptus Iovia* and *Aegyptus Herculia*, see below, ch. 10.

All these things you [*sc*. Maximian] accepted when offered them by your best of brothers [*sc*. Diocletian]. Nor did you put your helping hand to the tiller when a favoring breeze impelled the ship of state from the stern . . . you came to the aid of the Roman name, as it faltered, at the side of the leader, with that same timely assistance as your Hercules once lent to your Jupiter.[16]

Perhaps it is impossible to achieve more precision in describing the relationship between men and gods; the notion of an exact symmetry in the later tetrarchy is definitively upset by the fact that of the Caesars appointed in 293 the senior, Constantius, was Herculius, whereas the junior, Galerius, was Iovius. That precise symmetry was not needed in order to give the panegyrists the opportunity for fulsome characterization. Nor is it necessary to connect this phenomenon with the statements by Aurelius Victor and Eutropius that Diocletian introduced grander expressions of ritual and ceremony at the imperial court, including *adoratio*.[17] The idea that this, in effect, replaced the old ideology, the *civilitas* of the principate, with a grander and more remote orientalizing despotism, possibly reflecting Persian influence, perhaps owes more to modern interpretation.

Maximian's military successes against the Gallic Bagaudae (in 285 on the chronology here adopted) were complicated and undermined by other elements in the situation. One of his officers, a Menapian named Carausius, from the lower Rhine, was given a naval command in the Gallic coastal region (based at Boulogne) to deal with the problem of Saxon and Frankish pirates when Maximian went off to Milan for the winter of 285.[18] Carausius was very successful in this task – in fact too successful.[19] He apparently enriched himself by the capture of booty which he took from the piratical raiders who had penetrated northwest Gaul and were returning to the coast. Maximian, suspicious of his growing wealth and power ordered his execution and Carausius raised the standard of revolt. In the autumn of 286, Gaul and Britain declared for him and he went off to Britain, retaining control of some parts of the channel coast on the Gallic side.

Before Maximian could attempt to deal with this move, he needed to attend to threats to the security of Gaul and the Rhine frontier. During the course of 287 and 288 raids or invasions across the Rhine frontier were conducted by various tribal coalitions including the Burgundiaces/Alamanni and the Chaibones/Heruli. These, and Maximian's actions against them had begun, according to one source, immediately after the suppression of

[16] *Pan. Lat*. x(11).4.2 (trans. Nixon), delivered in 289.

[17] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. xxxix.204; Eutr. ix.26; cf. Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 51–2.

[18] His exact position is uncertain, see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 107; he might have been prefect of the *classis Britannica* or *dux tractus Armoricani et Nervicani*. The full name appears to be M. Aurelius Mausaeus Carausius.

[19] His success might account for the title *Britannicus Maximus* taken by Diocletian and later dropped (*ILS* 615).

the Bagaudae (hence 285 or 286).[20] The year 287 began in an inauspicious fashion when the inauguration of Maximian's consulship in the city of Trier was disrupted by barbarian raids. In the summer Maximian crossed the Rhine into Germany, provoking his panegyrist into the comment 'All that I see beyond the Rhine is Roman',[21] but it seems doubtful that there was anything more than a short-lived presence. Of the three German 'victories' claimed by Diocletian and Maximian between the latter's appointment and 293, this will be the third; the first will be his earlier action against the tribes mentioned above and the second Diocletian's campaign on the Raetian frontier in the summer of 288, after which the two Augusti met for a conference. Maximian had probably already begun the extended process of building a fleet with which to attack Carausius in Britain and hence delegated to his subordinates the activities against the Franks in the area of the Rhine estuary which led to the Frankish king Gennoboudes being restored to his kingdom in the region of Trier.[22] Foremost among these subordinates was Flavius Constantius, born in about 250 of a family from Dacia, who had served as *protector*, then military tribune and governor of Dalmatia. He might well, although there is no unequivocal evidence for the fact, have been appointed as praetorian prefect, a position which he could have held between 288 and 293.[23] He was to be the senior of the two Caesars created to form the tetrarchy in 293 and was probably already Maximian's son-in-law (married to his daughter Theodora) and the father by an earlier marriage to Helena, mother of the future emperor Constantine.

The successes on the German frontier, symbolized for the panegyrist of 289 by the submissiveness of Gennoboudes were not, for the time being, matched by Maximian's efforts against Carausius in Britain. The latter had probably styled himself as consul in the years from 287 onwards and the panegyrist gives the impression of large-scale shipbuilding for the expedition against him and predicts victory against 'that pirate'.[24] The reality appears to have been that Carausius had used his skills as a naval commander to build a strong base. His coinage asserts the allegiance of the British legionary forces and eventually claims collegiality with the legitimate emperors, a claim whose validity they never recognized in any form. That he was able to do this clearly rests upon Maximian's failure to deal with him in 289/90 and the author of the panegyric addressed to Constantius in 297 is normally thought to explain this by reference to a maritime disaster to Maximian's fleet.[25] Whatever the true explanation, Carausius

[20] *Pan. Lat.* x(11).5.1. [21] *Pan. Lat.* x(11).7.7 (trans. Nixon in Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*).
[22] *Pan. Lat.* x(11).10.3, *cum per te regnum recepit.*
[23] Barnes, *NE* 125–6. [24] *Pan. Lat.* x(11).12.1.
[25] *Pan. Lat.* viii(v).12.2. Not universally accepted: see Shiel (1977) 9–10 and cf. Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 130.

was left unchecked for the moment, while Maximian remained in Gaul in 290.[26] At this period it was Constantius who perhaps enjoyed the greater military success, capturing a barbarian king and devastating the territory of the Alamanni as far as the crossing of the Danube.[27]

The years 287–90 had also seen important developments in the eastern half of the empire, to which Diocletian had repaired after the appointment of Maximian and perhaps a campaign against the Sarmatians in the autumn, reaching Nicomedia in Bithynia by 20 January 286. The sequence of events is once again confused but there were important activities involving relations with Persia, events in Egypt and fighting against the Saracens. Diocletian spent the summer of 286 in Palestine. In 287, the Persian king Vahran II (reigned 276–93), grandson of Shapur I, was experiencing internal difficulties in the shape of the revolt of his brother Hormizd and appears to have come to an agreement with Diocletian which involved the restoration to the throne of Armenia of the Roman client Tiridates III, removed by Shapur I in 252/3, and possibly also the restoration of Mesopotamia which had earlier been ceded by Rome. The panegyrist of 289 duly emphasizes the Great King's obeisance to Rome in the form of *supplicatio* and by 290 Diocletian was proclaiming his success with the assumption of the title *Persicus Maximus*.[28] It was perhaps during this episode that Diocletian strengthened the Roman defences against Persian invasion of Syria by the fortification of Circesium.[29] Fort-building is also attested in Egypt, at Hieraconpolis, in 288.[30] Diocletian himself returned to the west in the summer of 288 to conduct a campaign on the Raetian frontier, after which he met with Maximian. His attested movements show him at Sirmium early in January 290 and the campaigning season of 289 may have been occupied by actions against the Sarmatians on the Danube frontier.[31] By the spring or early summer of 290 he was campaigning against the Saraceni who were threatening the security of Syria.

Probably in late December of 290 Maximian crossed the Alps from Gaul and he and Diocletian met in Milan either in December or in early January of the following year. This was surely an important meeting for it is unlikely that the two met merely to exchange pleasantries.[32] It was certainly an impressive public spectacle with some propaganda value. The

[26] Barnes, *NE* 58 for a possible visit to Rome no later than 290; but the phrase *primo ingressu* in *Pan. Lat.* VII(VI).8.7 ought to mean that he did not visit Rome until 299 (see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici, ad loc.*).

[27] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V).2.1 (unless this refers to the earlier expedition of Maximian: see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*, *ad loc.*).

[28] *Pan. Lat.* XI(III).17.2; X(II).10.6–7; *ILS* 618. [29] Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.2.

[30] *P. Oxy.* X. 1252; *ILS* 617. [31] Barnes, *NE* 51; *Pan. Lat.* XI(III).5.4.

[32] *Pan. Lat.* XI(III).12.3, *seria iocaque communicata*.

author of the panegyric composed and delivered in 291 to commemorate Maximian's birthday is fulsome and lavish in his description:[33]

> But when you passed through the door and rode together through the middle of the city, the very buildings, I hear, almost moved themselves, when every man, woman, tiny child and aged person either ran out through the doors into the open or hung out of the upper thresholds of the houses. All cried out for joy, then openly, then openly without fear of you they pointed with their hands: 'Do you see Diocletian? Do you see Maximian? Both are here! They are together! How closely they sit! How amicably they converse! How quickly they pass by!' . . . Indeed she (*sc*. Rome) had sent the leaders of her senate, freely imparting to the city of Milan, most blessed during those days, a semblance of her own majesty, that the seat of imperial power could then appear to be the place to which each Emperor had come. Yet meanwhile, while I conjure up before my eyes your daily conversations, your right hands joined at every discourse, shared pleasantries and serious matters, festivities spent in contemplation of each other, this thought steals over me: with what greatness of spirit did you forsake each other to see your armies again and conquer your piety for the benefit of the state.

But we cannot know what was said or decided and any attempt to infer plans or decisions to reconstruct the framework of the empire is no more than speculation, with the benefit of hindsight. It is legitimate to suppose, however, in view of what happened in 293, that some forward planning took place. In fact, our ignorance of deeds and thoughts applies to the entirety of the years 291 and 292 which are singularly badly documented. In 291 Diocletian is attested at Sirmium and at Oescus, in the Danube lands, Maximian in Durocortorum and Trier in Gaul. For 292 there is no firm evidence at all even of their whereabouts.

III. THE CREATION OF THE TETRARCHY

Whether or not as a result of discussions between Diocletian and Maximian at Milan in the winter of 290/1, a momentous change took place in the spring of 293. The nature of imperial power and its tenure was radically changed by the appointment of two Caesars, junior in rank to the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian. The senior of the two Caesars was Flavius Constantius, already successfully serving Maximian his father-in-law, perhaps as praetorian prefect, in the west; the junior was Galerius Maximianus, a rather younger man about whose earlier career nothing certain is known.[34] Constantius was invested with the purple by Maximian,

[33] *Pan. Lat*. XI(III) (trans. Rodgers in Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*) and adopting the chronology proposed (pp. 76–9); the demonstration that the birthday was Maximian's real birthday (*genuinus*) and not a birthday which he shared with Diocletian (*geminus*) is definitive and important; cf. Wistrand (1964); Barnes, *NE* 58.

[34] Constantius' praetorian prefecture is rejected by Barnes, 'Emperors' 546–7. On the family relationships, cf. Leadbetter (1998) 76–7; Barnes, *NE* 38; the statements about his humble rustic origin

Galerius by Diocletian; but, as has been noted, the symmetry falls short of completeness in that the senior of the two, Constantius, was designated Herculius, the junior Galerius, Iovius.[35]

The implications and the consequences of this change are important and far-ranging. The collegiality and the dynastic nature of Roman imperial power was underpinned by marriage relationships which in at least one case already existed: Constantius was married to Maximian's daughter; Galerius married the daughter of Diocletian (it is not clear when). The Caesars became adopted sons of their respective senior Augusti.[36] Questions of succession, in times when survival was uncertain and life generally short, must have been subject to speculation (at the time, as now) and chance. Maximian had a son, Maxentius, who was later to marry Galerius' daughter. Constantius had an adult son, by an earlier marriage to Helena, namely Constantine. Neither Diocletian nor Galerius had sons (another asymmetry)[37] and in 305 Maxentius and Constantine must surely have seemed the obvious choices for the new Caesars (see below).

The structural and organizational principles are less clear-cut. It is easy to imagine a fourfold division of empire with each ruler having his own territory, imperial court, staff and army,[38] but this is probably too schematic for this early stage of development. Galerius' responsibilities certainly included the eastern frontier defences but both he and Diocletian were active in Egypt and in the war against Persia. In addition to northern Italy, Maximian is attested in Gaul, Spain and Africa between 293 and 300, Constantius in Britain, northern Gaul and the German frontier. It seems likely that the emperors went where they were needed, accompanied by staff and army units not necessarily exclusively their own. It is clear that there were two praetorian prefects only, therefore not one for each of the four rulers – a clear counter-indication to the notion of a schematic fourfold division.[39] Preferred places of residence have been deduced from the evidence for the presence of emperors either frequently or for extended periods of time (or

may be tendentious or simply false. The major archaeological discovery of recent times has been the magnificent palace and mausoleum complex at Romuliana (Gamzigrad), the place in Dacia Ripensis where Galerius was born and buried (Srejović and Vasić 1994 etc.); this was not begun until after 305; see Barnes, 'Emperors' 552.

[35] The places at which these investitures took place is not attested and there has been dispute about the date of Galerius' elevation. Barnes, *NE* 58 assumes that in the case of Maximian and Constantius it was Milan, but there is no evidence; he infers Sirmium as the site of the other investiture (*NE* 52). The problem of dating arises from the fact that the *Chronicon Paschale* (*Chron. Min.* I. 229) states that Galerius and Constantius were made emperors on 21 May at Nicomedia. On the whole, it seems better to conclude that this is simply an error (so Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*, 112, pointing out that *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V).3.1 indicates unequivocally that the *dies imperii* was celebrated in 297 on 1 March).

[36] *Pan. Lat.* VII(VI).14.4.

[37] Note that Galerius is said by Lactantius (*DMP* 50.2) to have had a son, Candidianus, by a concubine, whom his wife, Valeria, then adopted, see Barnes, *NE* 38.

[38] Barnes, *CE* 9. [39] Barnes, 'Emperors' 546–7.

both): Sirmium for Diocletian, Antioch for Galerius, Milan for Maximian and Trier for Constantius but 'imperial palaces' were contructed in various places and there is really no evidence to suggest the establishment of these cities as imperial capitals at this time.[40] As the celebration of the twentieth anniversary (*vicennalia*) of Diocletian's accession was to emphasize, Rome was still very much the single capital of the empire.

It is clear, however, that there were fundamentally important administrative and economic changes which began to take effect around this time. Again, it is important not to be too dogmatic about single acts of 'reform' when it is possible to identify important as well as minor changes which predate the introduction of the tetrarchy (some administrative reforms in Egypt and some changes to the coinage),[41] as well as effects and modifications which stretch over a considerable period after 293. It does seem certain, however, that major changes in the configuration of the provinces were introduced around the time of the creation of the tetrarchy. The most important and far-reaching of these was the grouping of provinces into a number of larger units (twelve dioceses), which were closely connected with new arrangements for the minting of coinage and the fiscal administration.[42] The boundaries of provinces within these dioceses were also subject to modification, in many cases being broken down into smaller units. If these arrangements were introduced in their essential form in 293, although subject to subsequent modification, it will follow that the officials in charge of the dioceses (*vicarii*) will also have been introduced then, although none is attested as early as 293.[43] This is also true of the arrangements for governing the increased number of smaller provinces, the deployment and configuration of the military units and the creation of new financial officers such as *rationales*, *magistri rei privatae* and procurators.[44] These officials evidently played an important role in the Diocletianic fiscal and taxation system, but it is quite clear that this was not, and could not have been, created at a stroke in 293 or any other single point in the reign. It was a result of evolution over the dozen years following the introduction of the tetrarchy and modifications continued to be made in subsequent years.[45]

The coinage was itself reformed. This was the first of two major such reforms which have been identified and it is traditionally dated *c.* 294. It is clear that new silver and copper denominations were issued at that time and

[40] Cf. Haley (1994); Barnes, *NE* ch. 5.

[41] For Egypt see ch. 10; for coinage, below. It is also worth noting that the compilations of the *Codex Hermogenianus* and the *Codex Gregorianus*, whether 'official' or not, are more or less contemporary with the creation of the tetrarchy.

[42] Hendy (1972). [43] Barnes, *NE* ch. 13.

[44] Bowman (1974), (1978); Duncan-Jones, *Structure* ch. 7.

[45] On the taxation reform and other economic measures see below. Important administrative changes occur in Egypt in the few years after 300 as well as the earlier part of the reign, see ch. 10.

probable that the ending of the isolation of the mint of Alexandria, which had hitherto coined tetradrachms for circulation only within Egypt, is also to be dated then (rather earlier than has traditionally been thought). But it is also possible that these changes are part of a programme of coinage reform which in fact commenced before 293.[46] It is now difficult to recover the economic rationale which lay behind this first attempt to stabilize the coinage, but it seems clear that the characterization of the previous half-century as a period of continuous debasement amounting to collapse of the currency, rapid price-inflation and return to a barter economy is seriously flawed. The Diocletianic reform should probably be regarded from an economic point of view as remonetization after not more than two decades of price-inflation which occurred in the wake of Aurelian's revamped coinage, introduced in the early 270s.[47] This first reform was clearly not entirely effective, however, since further action was necessary a few years later (see below).

It is difficult and perhaps misleading to assess what impact the creation of the tetrarchy had at the time. The florid and rhetorical descriptions in the panegyrics benefit from four or five years' hindsight and our major literary source of the early 300s, Lactantius, is writing about the deaths of the persecutors of Christians and with knowledge of the convulsions which occurred in the wake of the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian. Even on the most conservative view, however, we can admit that the year 293 was a very important stage in the administrative reorganization and stabilization of the empire. The creation of a college of rulers with shared responsibility[48] and some plan for the orderly transfer of power from one generation of rulers to the next (whatever its precise details may have been at any given time in the period 293–305) marked a fundamental change of practice within a framework which was essentially dynastic, as Roman imperial power had been since the establishment of the principate by Augustus. The changing 'ideology' of imperial power, austere and somehow massively authoritarian, but without sacrificing strength, energy, military prowess or accessibility, crystallized around the tetrarchy (presumably not at a stroke) and is reflected in various media: architecture, sculpture, coinage as well as the literary artifices of the panegyrists.[49] Court ceremonial and divine patronage had *always* been important to Roman emperors and we must be careful not to posit too profound a change of principle, rather than simply a different emphasis in practice. The rulers were still not gods, but somehow enjoyed the protection and patronage of specific deities and in some sense partook of their characteristics. Hence Iovius for Diocletian and Galerius, Herculius for Maximian and Constantius, epithets which survived (for example) in

[46] Metcalf (1987). [47] Rathbone (1996).

[48] The group solidarity and unity is emphasized in the iconography according to Rees (1993).

[49] For a revisionist view of the characteristics of tetrarchic portrait sculpture and the ways in which it reflects the literary conceits of the panegyrists see R. R. R. Smith (1997); cf. Rees (1993).

the naming of new provincial divisions in Egypt some years after the end of the first tetrarchy. But this did not exclude the deployment of association with other deities: Apollo is conjoined with Jupiter in the description of Diocletian and Maximian setting out to make war on the Great King:[50]

> Even as one divinity goes from Crete, the other from seagirt Delos – Zeus over Othrys, Apollo to Pangaeus – and as they gird their armour on, the throng of giants trembles: in such guise came our elder lord, beside the younger king, to the Orient with the army of Ausonians. Like to the blessed gods they were, one in strength a match for Zeus above, the other for long-haired Apollo.

and the Caesars also claimed a connection with Mars and Sol Invictus. Furthermore, it is important to remember that this 'ideology' was created or evolved at a time when many were forsaking the traditional gods of Rome.

IV. THE PERIOD OF THE TETRARCHY, 293–305

Following the creation of the tetrarchy, the first major task, which fell to Constantius, was to deal with Carausius whose control of Britain and parts of the Gallic channel coast Maximian had failed to dislodge in 288/9. In the early 290s Carausius had proclaimed himself the co-ruler of Diocletian and Maximian, minting coins showing on the obverse jugate busts of all three with the legend CARAVSIVS ET FRATRES SVI and on the reverse the legend PAX AVGGG.[51] There is no evidence that Diocletian and Maximian ever recognized or reciprocated this claim, but the failure to take any action against Carausius between 289 and 292 presumably amounts to a *de facto* acceptance of the situation for the time being. In 293, however, Constantius began to deal with the matter purposefully and energetically and this episode forms the centrepiece of the panegyric delivered in his presence, presumably at Trier, on the anniversary of his accession, 1 March 297.[52] Constantius' first step was to march into Gaul and to lay siege to Boulogne, which Carausius still controlled.[53] A mole was constructed which prevented the besieged from escaping by sea and and from receiving relief from Carausius' fleet. Boulogne fell swiftly to Constantius who then began the construction of a fleet with which to invade Britain. It is possible

[50] *GLP* no. 135. [51] *RIC* v.2 550; see Carson (1959), (1971), (1982); Casey (1977).

[52] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V); see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 104–5, rejecting the traditional identification of the author as Eumenius. The dating of this speeech to 297 rather than 298, and the date of the recovery of Britain (296 rather than 297) is no longer in any doubt; see Barnes, 'Emperors' 540.

[53] The date at which Carausius' control of the area around Boulogne was established is uncertain: either from the inception of his revolt in 286(?) or after the failure of Maximian's offensive of 288/9 (Casey 1977). The argument turns mainly on the significance of the numismatic evidence and the coin finds in the area of Boulogne, Rouen and Amiens. It has been argued by Carson (1971) that the so-called Rouen series was in fact minted at Boulogne.

that he made one attempt at invasion, perhaps in 294, which was foiled by stormy weather conditions in the channel.[54] At about this time, perhaps after Constantius' first attempt at invasion, Carausius was murdered by his second-in-command Allectus, who may have served as his finance minister.[55] Allectus continued to control Britain and it was some time before it was possible to mount a final and effective assault. This came in 296 in the form of a two-pronged naval offensive, Constantius commanding a fleet which set out from Boulogne, and Asclepiodotus, the praetorian prefect, another fleet which left the mouth of the Seine and landed near the Isle of Wight.[56] It was apparently the latter who eventually participated in the decisive action, a battle at an unknown location in the south of England in which Allectus was killed. His death decisively marked the end of the revolt. The panegyrist accords great credit to Constantius for the victory, but he may have had much less to do with it than Asclepiodotus; it is even possible that stormy weather forced him to return temporarily to Gaul, as a result of which he arrived in Britain when the main fighting was over, but in time for his soldiers to deal with survivors from the battle who were looting London. The consequences of the victory are also exaggerated:

> And so by this victory of yours not only has Britain been liberated, but security has been restored to all nations which could incur as many dangers from the employment of the sea in time of war as advantages from it in peacetime. Now, to say nothing of the Gallic coast, Spain is secure, although its shores are almost visible, now Italy too and Africa, now all peoples right up to Lake Maeotis are free from perpetual cares.[57]

In fact, in the autumn of 296, presumably after the victory in Britain, Maximian was campaigning in Spain[58] on his way to Africa where his presence was required by a rebellion of Moorish tribes named in the literary sources as the Quinquegentiani. His activity is attested by inscriptions in Mauretania Caesariensis and Numidia and his presence at Carthage is assured on 10 March 298, by which time the fighting was probably over.[59] On his return from Africa Maximian visited Rome, but it is not known in which year.[60]

[54] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V).12.2. This is the argument of Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 130–1.

[55] The traditional chronology has put this in 293 but see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* VIII(V). Allectus' position is inferred from the fact that some of Carausius' coins bear the letters 'RSR', which have been interpreted as an abbreviation of the title *rationalis summae rei*, but this is by no means certain.

[56] Eichholz (1953); Shiel (1977).

[57] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V).18.4, trans. Nixon in Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*.

[58] *GLP* no. 135. Haley (1994) argues that the remains of a large palace at Corduba should be ascribed to the presence of Maximian at this time.

[59] Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 175, contra Barnes (1976b) 180. Barnes, *NE* 59 suggests a campaign in Tripolitania against the Laguantan after this.

[60] *ILS* 646; *Pan. Lat.* VII(VI).8.7. Barnes, *NE* 59 suggests 299.

The attention of Diocletian and Galerius was also occupied by important military and political matters in the east in these years. After the appointment of the Caesars in the spring of 293 Diocletian and Galerius proceeded to Byzantium. The evidence for Diocletian's movements shows that he was back at Sirmium in early September 293 and still there in the summer of 294. It was in that year, presumably in the summer, that he personally recorded a victory over the Sarmatians in the Hungarian plains, whose threat was perhaps a principal reason for his spending so much time at Sirmium in this period. The panegyrist marvels hyperbolically that 'almost the whole of the people was wiped out and left as it were with only its name with which to serve'.[61] That this is an exaggeration is clearly shown by the fact that the title of *Sarmaticus Maximus* was taken again by the emperors probably in 299 or 300 as a result of further military action.[62] Thereafter, he proceeded down the Danube, doubtless giving attention to the state of the frontier and its military installations. An important campaign against the Carpi followed in 295 or 296, and probably resulted in the transfer of a significant proportion of the tribal population into the province of Pannonia, but the precise chronology and the individuals involved are uncertain.[63] Galerius was almost certainly in Egypt in late 293 or 294, as is strongly suggested by a papyrus attesting the dispensation of rations to an *adiutor memoriae* of Galerius' *comitatus* at Caesarea Maritima in December, 293. His presence may well have been necessitated by a revolt in the region of Coptos – a traditional seat of unrest and disturbance – which he presumably dealt with successfully.[64]

The chronology of the movements of Diocletian and Galerius in 295 is uncertain. Diocletian was at Nicomedia in March and possibly at Damascus in Syria on 1 May when the Edict on Marriages was issued.[65] This, as has often been noted, is one of the key texts in which the *romanitas* – the upholding of traditional Roman values – of the tetrarchic government is emphasized and it falls in a period of important legal activity associated with the names of *magistri libellorum* of whom Arcadius Charisius, Hermogenianus and Gregorius are the most important.[66] The emphasis on the practicalities, as well as the principles, of Roman law is one of the most important hallmarks of the reign. The edict issued in 295 bans incestuous marriages and characterizes them as alien to Roman religion and law,

[61] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V).5.1, trans. Nixon in Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*.

[62] Barnes, *NE* 255; Brennan (1984).

[63] For the transfer, Amm. Marc. XXVIII.1.5. It is unlikely that Galerius can have been involved despite Orosius, VII.25.12 and Jordanes, *Getica* 91, see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 116. It might have taken place on a later occasion (?303 or 304), see below n. 88.

[64] Rea *et al.* (1985); Barnes, *NE* 62; Drew-Bear (1981); Bowman (1978); cf. ch. 10.

[65] *Coll.* VI.4; *CJ* V.4.17. If the issuer was not Diocletian, it will have been Galerius (there is no evidence which rules out his presence at Damascus); see Barnes, *NE* 62; Corcoran, *ET* 173.

[66] See Honoré, *E&L*; Corcoran, *ET* 77–8, 173 n. 15 with other examples, and 345.

appropriate only for animals and barbarians. Subjects of the empire are given until the end of the year to comply with the law. The edict has been compared for its tone and attitude with the Epistle against the Manichees and placed in the context of forthcoming war against Persia (traditionally seen as a site of incest and sexual deviation), which was the major event of the years 296 and 297 in the eastern empire.[67]

There can be no doubt that the approach of conflict will have been foreseen. The accession of Narses in 294 brought to the Persian throne a new monarch whose aggressive attitude was well advertised and open hostilities commenced in 296.[68] We are ill-informed about the details of the war, which seems to have comprised two main campaigns. In the first, described by Eutropius,[69] Galerius was defeated by the Persians in a battle near Callinicum in 296 and forced to withdraw to Antioch. Eutropius and Theophanes record versions of a celebrated story that Diocletian humiliated Galerius for the defeat by making him run in front of or beside the chariot carrying the senior emperor as it entered the city.[70] The situation was retrieved in 297/8 after Diocletian had arrived with reinforcements from the Danube armies. Galerius marched into Armenia Maior and established a base at Satala, Narses came from his camp at Oskha to confront him and was defeated.[71] Galerius pursued the retreating Persians to their camp and captured the king's harem and treasury while the king made good his escape. This episode will have occurred in late 297 and was followed by an expedition which may have lasted a year or more in all. Galerius advanced into Media and Adiabene, took Nisibis and proceeded finally to the stronghold of Ctesiphon which he captured; these events will have occupied the winter of 297 and much of 298 and effectively brought the end of the war and Roman victory.

Diocletian's own involvement must have ceased early in 298, for he was at Alexandria in March, dealing with the end of a serious disturbance in the province of Egypt. Although the interval between the initial defeat of Galerius and the victory over Narses would be a suitable context in which to place the Epistle against the Manichees, a pronouncement whose anti-Persian attitude will have been glaringly obvious to all, it now seems more likely that it should be dated to 302 and that Diocletian himself was not in

[67] See Chadwick (1979).

[68] See Zuckerman (1994); Herzfeld (1924) and Humbach and Skjaervø, *Paikuli* for the important Paikuli inscription. The chronology of the war and its relationship with the chronology of the revolt of Domitius Domitianus in Egypt (see below) is problematic; the view adopted here is basically that of Zuckerman (1994) summarized by Barnes, 'Emperors' 544.

[69] Eutr. IX.24–5.

[70] Eutr. IX.24–5 and Theophanes, *anno* 5793 (de Boor p. 9) (Mango and Scott (1997) 12); trans. in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 127 and 130 respectively.

[71] For the details provided by the Armenian historian Faustus of Byzantium see Zuckerman (1994) and Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 307–8.

Egypt in March 297.[72] Nevertheless, on 16 March of that year the prefect of Egypt Aristius Optatus issued an edict promulgating in the names of all four emperors an important and far-reaching reform of the taxation system, setting out in its Egyptian version the principle according to which taxes would be now calculated on the basis of units of land and individuals (known elsewhere as *iuga* and *capita*).[73]

If the fiscal and social effects of this reform were significant and long-lived, there was also a more immediate and perceptible consequence. By mid-August of 297 a revolt had broken out in Egypt, headed by a usurper named L. Domitius Domitianus, whose right-hand man (bearing the title of *corrector*) was called Achilleus. It has generally been argued that the tax reform should be identified as a major cause of the revolt of Domitianus if it could be established that the one preceded the other. This chronological sequence does now seem beyond any doubt,[74] but it is perhaps prudent to bear in mind that imperial preoccupation with the war against Narses in the early part of the year might have appeared inviting to an opportunist usurper, ready to inflame and exploit discontent over heavy taxation, perhaps exacerbated by heavy demands for food and supplies for the army in the east.[75] The revolt lasted eight months, during most of which the tetrarchs appear effectively to have lost control of the whole of the province. It was brought to an end in the spring of 298, with the siege and capture of Alexandria at which, as noted above, Diocletian was himself present. The emperor famously vowed that the population of the city would pay for their disloyalty with their blood, until the streets of the city flowed with a river of blood deep enough to reach the knees of his horse; fortunately for the Alexandrians, his mount stumbled on its entry to the city, they were spared the threatened massacre and as a gesture of gratitude voted to erect a statue of the horse.[76] In the aftermath of the revolt, Diocletian travelled up-river and visited the southern frontier, withdrawing the frontier from Hierasykaminos, fortifying the island of Philae and negotiating with the tribes in the region.[77]

The emperor was still in Egypt in the early autumn but by late 298 he had returned to Nisibis and he was in Antioch in February 299, when a peace treaty with the Persians was concluded. This effectively set the seal on hostilities between Rome and Persia for the present, very much to the Roman advantage, for the terms were quite punitive for the defeated

[72] Below, p. 85.

[73] *P. Cairo Isid.* 1; cf. ch. 10 below, Corcoran, *ET* 174. For the calculation of the *iugum*, see the *Syro-Roman Law-Book* cxxi (*FIRA* II. 795).

[74] See Thomas (1977); Metcalf (1987); Barnes, 'Emperors' 543–4.

[75] For the organization of military supplies in this period see Bowman (1978).

[76] Malalas, *Chronographia* (ed. Dindorff) 308–9 (trans. in E. Jeffreys *et al.* (1986) 168).

[77] Below, p. 314. Brennan (1989).

Persians. The Persians ceded some territory and the Tigris was set as the boundary between the two empires. Commercial contacts between the empires were to take place only through Nisibis. Armenia was placed under Roman protection, Rome arrogated to herself the right to appoint the king of Iberia and to control a number of dependent territories between the Tigris and Armenia, thus effectively acquiring a zone of influence which stretched deep into the transtigritane area.[78]

Our evidence for the following two years focuses very much on economic measures. The first currency reform and the reorganization of the tax system were undoubtedly responses to the need to restabilize coinage and prices and to rationalize the imposition and collection of taxes in the wake of increasing military needs and (perhaps) the breakdown of the census procedures.[79] Now Diocletian introduced, before 1 September 301, a second and more radical reform of the currency and in December of the same year the famous Edict on Maximum Prices, two measures which are separated by a very short period of time and must be connected.[80] The coinage reform revised the absolute and relative values of the gold *aureus*, the silver *argenteus* (100 *denarii*) and the smaller bronze denominations (25 and 4 *denarii*), which can be linked to the value of bullion. This reform, more comprehensive than its predecessor, must be seen as an effective measure of remonetization, which served reasonably well until the introduction of the *solidus* under Constantine.[81] The Edict on Prices, issued at Antioch or Alexandria or somewhere between the two, is more problematical for a variety of reasons. Its grandiloquent and rhetorical preface describes the destructive effects of price inflation on the purchasing power of the soldiers' pay but this cannot be the whole story. There is perhaps no reason to think the emperors could not have recognized the potential effects of remonetization and attempted to stabilize prices in terms of the new values of the coins, even if the degree of 'real' inflation was less than has generally been thought; that is, price increases follow adjustments to the coinage. As it turned out, apparently, the edict was only ever promulgated in the east, for reasons which are entirely obscure. An inscription from Aezani contains an edict in Greek of

[78] The main source is Petrus Patricius, *fr.*14 (*FHG* IV. 189; Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 133). The names of the dependent territories are given differently by Amm. Marc. XXV.7.9. See Blockley (1984).

[79] At least in Egypt, see ch. 10. We cannot tell how widespread this might have been but there is some evidence elsewhere for the new census in the wake of reorganization of the tax system, see Jones, *Roman Economy* ch. 10; Millar, *Near East* 193–8; Corcoran, *ET* 346–7.

[80] Currency Decree: Erim, Reynolds and Crawford (1971); Reynolds in Roueché, *ALA* 254–65; Corcoran, *ET* 134–5, 177–8, 346. Prices Edict: Giacchero, *Edictum Diocletiani*; Lauffer (1971), Erim and Reynolds (1970) and (1973), Crawford and Reynolds (1977) and (1979), Reynolds in Roueché, *ALA* 265–318; plus Feissel (1995) 43–5 and Corcoran, *ET* 178–9, 347 with further bibliography.

[81] Bowman (1980); Bagnall, *Currency*. The currency reform (the edict on which contains at least two documents) is still not fully understood and there are further fragments of the inscription from Aphrodisias awaiting publication.

Fulvius Asticus, the governor of Caria and Phrygia, which (like the edict of Aristius Optatus on the taxation reform) serves to publish the Price Edict and points rather inaccurately to the fixing of fair rather than maximum prices.[82] The evidence of Lactantius and of the papyri from Egypt has been taken to show that it was totally ineffective, if we can judge by the steep increase in nominal prices attested in the decade after its issuance. However, this should not be the only measure of the success or failure of these economic reforms. It is important that the Price Edict represents an attempt by the imperial government to regulate economic behaviour on an unprecedented scale, at least in principle. Although the precise connection between the Currency Edict and the Price Edict remains unclear, taken as a whole, the reorganization of the currency and the taxes was probably a modest success and the degree of substantive 'price-inflation' is in fact likely to be more apparent than real, as increases followed the changes in the face-value of the retariffed coins.[83]

Other evidence of imperial activity for the years in the last quinquennium of the reign is far from abundant.[84] Diocletian spent much of the time in 299, 300 and 301 in Antioch, whilst the presence of Galerius at Thessalonica in the period between 299 and *c.* 303 is inferred from the transference of minting activity from Serdica. The extensive building programme undertaken at this time included the arch whose reliefs commemorated the Persian victory, a palace and a mausoleum.[85] In these years, military activities are less prominent and the impression is that the threats to Roman security were less severe.[86] In the famous preface to the Price Edict of late 301 the emperors had announced, in rhetorical terms, that peace had been achieved:

> we must be grateful to the fortune of our state, second only to the immortal gods, for a tranquil world that reclines in the embrace of the most profound calm, and for the blessings of a peace that was won with great effort . . . Therefore we, who by the gracious favour of the gods previously stemmed the tide of the ravages of barbarian nations by destroying them, must surround the peace which we established for eternity with the necessary defences of justice.[87]

The rhetoric is cliché and the claim of a profound and pervasive peace seems to be an exaggeration. There was probably still a good deal of work

[82] Crawford and Reynolds (1975); Lewis (1991–2). [83] Bagnall, *Currency*; cf. Rathbone (1996).

[84] There may be other reasons than simple idleness or inactivity on the part of the emperors.

[85] The mausoleum shows that at this stage Galerius had not evolved the plans which were put into effect in the building of the palace at his birthplace Romuliana (Gamzigrad) where he was also to be buried; cf. Barnes, 'Emperors' 552.

[86] It should be noted that none of the *Panegyrici Latini* dates to this period: the next in chronological order is *Pan. Lat.* VII(VI) of 307, addressed to Maximian and Constantine.

[87] Text in Giacchero, *Edictum Diocletiani* 1.134 (tr. Lewis and Reinhold (1990) 422, based on *ESAR* v. 311–12). See Corcoran, *ET* ch. 8.

to be done on the Danube frontier. The victory titles which are recorded for Galerius in A.D. 311 suggest military campaigns by him, for which Thessalonica would be a suitable base, against the Sarmatians and the Carpi (302 and 303?) and by Constantius in Germany (303/4) and in Britain, against the Picts in Scotland (305).[88]

Diocletian was in Alexandria again in March 302 and is said to have organized free distributions of bread for the populace. If, as seems probable, the Epistle against the Manichees is not to be dated in 297, then it will have been issued during this visit, on 31 March 302.[89] It was provoked by a consultation of the emperor by the proconsul of Africa before whom Manichees, the followers of the Persian prophet Mani,[90] had been denounced. The letter in which Diocletian responded ordered that leading Manichees and their books be burned, that their followers suffer capital punishment and confiscation of property and that adherents of higher social status be condemned to the mines.[91] Again, as in the Edict on Marriages and other legislation of the period, the emphasis is on Roman values, traditions and practices. In view of the action which was to follow against the Christians within a year, the action and the sentiments seem appropriate to this date.

The persecution of the Christians is the main topic which dominates our rather meagre accounts of the last few years of the reign of Diocletian and his colleagues. The picture of a sudden and violent outburst has considerable rhetorical and emotional force, as it is no doubt meant to do in the pro-Christian accounts of our main sources, Lactantius and Eusebius of Caesarea, but it is important to bear in mind that the Great Persecution in 303 was not without some recent forewarning. Although there had been no major and concerted action against Christians since the reign of Valerian (258),[92] there is some evidence for the enforcement of pagan sacrifice at the imperial court and for persecution of individuals in the army in the latter half of the 290s, perhaps from 297 onwards.[93] Our main contemporary evidence for the Great Persecution comes from Lactantius and must be evaluated in the context of his clear desire to place the major responsibility and blame on Galerius, who emerges from his account as little short of a monster of depravity. Lactantius' account describes Galerius putting pressure on the senior emperor in private discussion, as a result of which Diocletian consulted his advisers and obtained a consensus in favour of action against the Christians.[94] He was confirmed in his purpose by a response

[88] Barnes (1976b). *Pan. Lat.* VI(VII).6.3–4 (310) mentions three German victories, of which the dates are uncertain, see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 225–6; Britain, *Pan. Lat.* VI(VII).7.2. Barnes, *NE* 56 suggests the possibility that Diocletian was involved with the Carpi in 304, see above n. 63.

[89] Barnes (1976a). [90] Brown (1969).

[91] *Coll.* XV.3; cf. Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 135. [92] See ch. 2.

[93] Lact. *DMP* 10.1 etc.; Woods (1992), refuted by Burgess (1996). [94] Lact. *DMP* 11.3–8.

from the oracle of Apollo at Didyma and the festival of the Terminalia on 23 February 303 was chosen as the date on which government action against the Christians was to be launched.

The first edict against the Christians was issued at Nicomedia on the following day. Its original text does not survive but there is evidence for its enforcement in Palestine in the spring and in Africa in the early summer. It made provision for the razing of churches, the surrender and burning of Christian books, the loss of civil rights by practitioners of the religion. Within a few days of its promulgation there was a fire in part of the imperial palace at Nicomedia and the repercussions for the Christians were very severe indeed. The extent to which the edict was enforced in different areas of the empire clearly varied considerably. There is evidence from Egypt, where one of the most zealous of persecutors, Sossianus Hierocles, was prefect a few years later, for the confiscation of church property and the enforcement of sacrifice to the pagan gods.[95] On the other hand, in the western empire where the Caesar Constantius was active, there appears to have been little or no action taken at all.[96] According to Eusebius a second edict was issued in the summer of 303, ordering the arrest of clergy; this does not appear to have been effective in the west at all. The third edict, again recorded by Eusebius, ordered that clergy who were prepared to make sacrifices to the pagan gods must be freed.[97]

This last measure was undoubtedly intended as an amnesty and must be connected with the inception of the twentieth year of Diocletian's rule (*vicennalia*), celebrated on 20 November 303. Diocletian had come to Rome from the east to celebrate the anniversary and Maximian appeared in the city too. The occasion was also marked by the celebration of the tenth anniversary (*decennalia*) of the appointment of the Caesars and the triumph over the Persians, in which the harem of Narses was paraded in effigy in front of the imperial chariot. It is uncertain whether the two Caesars were present on this occasion (Lactantius alleges that Galerius did not come to Rome before 307[98]), but there must have been some discussion of future plans either between the two senior emperors or all four rulers now or around this time. The abdication of Diocletian and Maximian (see below) must have involved some degree of premeditation and the tradition is that Diocletian enforced his plan upon a less than enthusiastic Maximian, making him swear an oath in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus during this visit to

[95] *P. Oxy.* XXXI. 2601; XXXIII. 2673.

[96] Lact. *DMP* 15.7; contrast Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.13; *Vit. Const.* I.13.2. It must be borne in mind that the credit given to Constantius for this in pro-Christian sources must owe something to the fact that he was the father of Constantine.

[97] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.2.5; VIII.6.8–10; *Mart. Pal. pr.* 2; cf. Corcoran, *ET* 181–2.

[98] Lact. *DMP* 27.2.

Rome.[99] Diocletian left Rome very soon after the *vicennalia*, assuming the consulship on 1 January 304 at Ravenna, while Maximian remained in Rome. At some point in the first few months of 304 a fourth edict against the Christians was issued, demanding universal sacrifice to the pagan gods (although it was probably again only enforced in the east). Diocletian spent part of the summer on the Danube frontier and his presence is attested at Nicomedia again on 28 August.

Our account of the remaining few months of the tetrarchy is derived almost exclusively from the account of Lactantius. Its reliability has been questioned, particularly because of the inclusion of a verbatim discussion, which must be fictional and is certainly at the very least tendentious, between Galerius and Diocletian in which the Caesar puts pressure on his Augustus to resign the supreme power. Even granted that, however, there seems no good reason to reject the basic factual account which can be teased out.[100] Diocletian had been ill during the summer of 304 and his health had further deteriorated by the time he reached Nicomedia. On 20 November (the twenty-first anniversary of his accession) he dedicated the circus at Nicomedia but collapsed not long afterwards. Rumours of his death abounded; public mourning was decreed in Nicomedia on 13 December in the belief that he had died, but suspended in the wake of a counter-rumour the following day. Diocletian did not appear in public again until 1 March 305, when the effects of his illness were all too apparent.

On 1 May 305 Diocletian summoned an assembly of officers and soldiers to meet at the precise spot, a few miles from Nicomedia, at which he had been proclaimed emperor on 20 November 284. Galerius was present, as was Constantine, the son of Constantius Caesar. Diocletian delivered an emotional address in which he asserted that he was now too old and ill to sustain the burden of rule and must entrust it to younger and stronger men. He and Maximian would resign as senior emperors in favour of the Caesars, Constantius and Galerius. The general expectation appears to have been that the new Caesars would be Constantine and Maximian's son Maxentius. But a surprise was in store, generally credited to the pre-planning of Galerius. Constantine and Maxentius were set aside. The new Caesars were to be Maximinus, a nephew of Galerius, who was invested by Diocletian there and then, and Severus, an experienced soldier and associate

[99] Barnes, 'Emperors' 545–6 postulates a meeting between all four in northern Italy prior to the *vicennalia*, after which Galerius went off to the Danube to fight the Carpi. For the oath see *Pan. Lat.* VI(VII).15.4ff., with Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 188–90. The degree of forward planning with which the tetrarchs (Galerius in particular) should be credited will be affected by the date of the planning and execution of the building of Galerius' palace at Romuliana (Gamzigrad); see Barnes, 'Emperors' 552; Srejović and Vasić (1994).

[100] Lact. *DMP* 17–19. Cf. Rougé (1989).

of Galerius who was simultaneously invested on 1 May by Maximian in Milan.

Diocletian retired to the magnificent palace which he had built at Split on the Dalmatian coast, there to cultivate cabbages.[101] Apart from one occasion (the conference at Carnuntum in 308) he resolutely refused to take any further part in imperial politics. The date and manner of his death are uncertain: either suicide or illness in either 311 or 312. Maximian retired to Italy (Campania or Lucania) and survived until the middle of 310. He had not yet had his final say in the political power-game.[102]

V. CONCLUSION

To generations of historians the empire appears to have undergone a radical transformation in the reign of Diocletian. The foregoing account is intended to suggest that the transformation was effected through a judicious blend of conservatism and reaction to pressing problems which demanded an immediate solution. Clearly the authority of the Roman emperor had been re-established by means of an enhanced scheme of collegiality, but pre-planning for the next generation of rulers was not effective enough to avoid political and military convulsion in the half-dozen years between the abdication of Diocletian and the proclamation of Constantine the Great. Serious military threats had been averted or defeated, the civil and military bureaucracy had been reorganized, provincial administration reformed, the economy (to some extent) stabilized. Legislation of the period, it has been noticed, displays a tenor which is deeply traditional, rooted in 'Roman' moral values. The supposed descent of the monarchy to a form of 'oriental despotism' marked by an exaggerated and ritualized ceremonial looks like a serious distortion of the facts, although the architecture and the iconography of the period certainly does have new and distinctive features. There was no foreshadowing of the two most significant developments of the first half of the fourth century: the toleration of Christianity and the foundation of Constantinople. None of this need minimize the achievement of Diocletian and his colleagues. But it must be recognized that the radical vision of a 'new age' owes something to the rhetorical tradition which dominates our contemporary sources, in comparison with the preceding epoch which is singularly ill-documented by any standards. That this was not simply hindsight is shown by the verses which are quoted at the beginning of this chapter and such rhetorical pronouncements can easily be paralleled at other periods.[103] There can be no doubt however that it was in

[101] Lact. *DMP* 19.6; Barnes, 'Emperors' 551; Wilkes (1993).
[102] See below. He suffered *damnatio memoriae*, probably late in 311. Barnes, *NE* 34.
[103] Edict of Tiberius Julius Alexander (*GCN* no. 291, ll. 3–11).

this period that the foundations of the later Roman empire were securely established. Some modern scholars have seen this as the result of deliberate and prescient planning on the part of Diocletian and his colleagues, having a master-plan for the reformation of the Roman state which was put into effect in stages. This view – perhaps also owing not a little to the rhetoric of the panegyrists – is not the one adopted here. Reaction to individual needs and problems is in general more characteristic of Roman statesmanship and does not preclude the notion that rulers might have some coherent vision of what they wanted the state to be; in that respect too Diocletian compares with many of his predecessors from Augustus onwards.

CHAPTER 4

THE REIGN OF CONSTANTINE, A.D. 306–337

AVERIL CAMERON

Outside the great medieval cathedral in York there is a modern statue of Constantine cast in bronze. The emperor is seated, wearing military dress, and holds a broken sword which can be taken as a cross; the inscription on the base of the statue reads (in English) 'Constantine, by this sign conquer'. Hailed at York as Augustus by his father's troops on 25 July 306, Constantine himself was cautious: he assumed only the title of Caesar and waited for that of Augustus to be conferred in the following year by the senior emperor Maximian along with a new imperial bride, the latter's daughter Fausta. It is difficult not to view the years 306–13 with the benefit of hindsight. We know, of course, that Constantine, the son of Constantius Chlorus, emerged as victor first over Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in the late autumn of 312, and then over his erstwhile ally Licinius at Cibalae in 316 and Chrysopolis in 324; however, as so commonly happens, most of the surviving literature also favours and justifies his success. While the available source-material for the reign of Constantine, and particularly the literary record, is very different from the meagre narrative sources for Diocletian, the two emperors are frequently treated in the sources that do refer to both as stereotyped opposites.[1] Constantine was to reign as sole emperor from 324 until his death in May 337. We possess abundant, if often one-sided, contemporary accounts, and these have certainly helped to reinforce the idea of the inevitability of Constantine's rise and his subsequent casting in the role of the first Christian emperor. Yet in 306 neither his future military and political success nor his later religious policies would have been at all easy to predict.

[1] Such is the case with Lact. *DMP*, probably composed in A.D. 314, and Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX–X and *Vit. Const.*; Zos. II.9–39 gives the fullest pagan and largely hostile account of Constantine, but his narrative of the reign of Diocletian is missing. Ammianus preserves some traces of a hostile version of Constantine, and see Libanius, *Or.* 59 (trans. in Lieu and Montserrat (1996)); for 'oppositional' views of Constantine see Fowden (1994). The surviving anonymous Latin *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* gives an early, detailed and mainly secular account of Constantine, though with later Christian influence based on Orosius; see König (1987). Seven of the surviving Latin Panegyrics concern Constantine and his political career, the latest of them being that by Nazarius, written in 321 but relating the events of 313; see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*, with L'Huillier (1992). The most detailed modern treatment of Constantine is Barnes, *CE*, to be used with Barnes, *NE*.

The so-called *Vita Constantini* by Eusebius of Caesarea gives the most detailed narrative available,[2] and Eusebius did his best when he wrote (years later) to imply that Constantine's father Constantius Chlorus was as good as Christian himself; he surrounded himself with men of the church and gave his children names such as Anastasia. Yet though it seems that Constantius was not enthusiastic about the persecution of Christians, Eusebius goes too far here as elsewhere; he also claims that Constantius' son was unfamiliar with his father's religion and needed to take instruction from Christian clergy when he was the recipient of a divine vision. We are not therefore compelled to follow Lactantius when he claims that Constantine passed enactments in favour of Christianity as early as 306 (*DMP* 24), and indeed, as a Christian himself and the chosen tutor of Constantine's eldest son Crispus, Lactantius too had reason to enhance the record;[3] the fact that the Latin panegyrist of 310 could claim that Constantine had recently been granted a vision of Apollo merely illustrates the eagerness of all parties to make claims on the rising star. These years were tense, and realism was needed: thus in 307 Constantine styled himself by the tetrarchic appellation of Herculius,[4] but the inclusion of the alleged vision in the panegyric of 310 may indicate that by then he wished to distance himself from the dynastic ideology of the tetrarchy. Moreover he continued to represent himself as the adherent of Sol Invictus even when he had involved himself strenuously in Christian affairs, just as, having allied himself with Licinius for as long as was expedient, he then took the initiative in mounting a campaign against him.

For the early years from 306 to 312 Eusebius is not well informed and Lactantius' interest lies elsewhere; we must rely heavily for chronology and motivation on such numismatic and documentary evidence as exists,[5] and on the tendentious but valuable Latin Panegyrics. Of these, the panegyric of 307 presents us with the disingenuous picture of a Constantine at last united with his childhood sweetheart, and demonstrating a prudent deference to Maximian, the senior emperor, father of Maxentius, who had recently threateningly re-emerged from the reluctant 'retirement' enforced by Diocletian in 305; in a trope that was to recur both in later Latin panegyrics and in the *Vit. Const.*, the dead Constantius is envisaged as rejoicing from heaven in his son's good fortune.[6] Events moved quickly in these years. Maximian attended the Conference of Carnuntum in 308, only to

[2] On the *Vit. Const.* see Cameron and Hall (1999), with previous bibliography. The authenticity of all or parts of the *Vit. Const.* has long been suspect, but see Cameron and Hall, 4–9.

[3] For the *DMP* see Creed (1984); Moreau (1954). [4] Barnes, *NE* 24.

[5] For the coin evidence see *RIC* VI. For the complex relationships between members of the imperial college over the years A.D. 306–13, see Barnes, *NE* 3–8; for the evidence for their movements; *ibid.* 64–71, 80–1.

[6] *Pan. Lat.* VII(VI).14.3; Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 209–10.

be forced to retire a second time;[7] he rose in revolt against Constantine in Gaul in 310 but was quickly overcome by him, committed suicide and suffered *damnatio memoriae*; he was later rehabilitated.[8] The historical sources present different versions suited to their own agendas: as disingenuous as the argument of the panegyric of 307 is the attempt in the *Vit. Const.* to give Constantine all the credit for ending persecution, when in fact Galerius called it off in 311;[9] this edict provided the precedent for the joint declaration by Licinius and Constantine in 313 which has misleadingly come to be known as the Edict of Milan and associated with Constantine alone.[10] Like Licinius, Maxentius was not averse to courting Christians, despite his blackening in Christian sources after his defeat;[11] Constantine was successful and persistent, but he was no less ruthless in his own interest.

After the Conference of Carnuntum in 308 there were four members of the imperial college: Galerius (Caesar 293, Augustus 305), Licinius (Augustus 308), Maximinus (Caesar 305) and Constantine.[12] When Galerius died after calling off the persecution of Christians in 311, Constantine embarked on his southward progress with the aim of defeating Maxentius, who was holding Rome. The episodes of Constantine's campaign are famously depicted on the arch of Constantine: these include his progress through northern Italy and the siege of Verona, as well as vivid scenes of the defeat of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge and his army's dramatic engulfment in the Tiber. Constantine had had to fight to gain northern Italy before he could make his way south, and Eusebius locates his vision of a cross in the sky, told for the first time in the *Vit. Const.* (1.28) as an addition to the earlier narrative in *Hist. Eccl.* IX, at some point on the southward march, whereas Lactantius' quite different account of Constantine's dream in *DMP* 44 is located on the eve of the battle against Maxentius. The two accounts differ in detail as well as in location and chronology; in Lactantius, Constantine is told in a dream to paint what seems to be the chi-rho on the shields of his soldiers, whereas in Eusebius' account, written many years later, he sees a cross of light in the sky with the words 'By this conquer', followed by a dream in which Christ himself appears to him in order to reinforce the message.[13]

[7] Barnes, *NE* 13. [8] Barnes, *NE* 35; Lact. *DMP* 29.3–30.6.

[9] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.17; Lact. *DMP* 34. The edict is ascribed by both authors to Galerius' remorse when struck by a horrible illness, described in graphic detail.

[10] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.5.2–14; Lact. *DMP* 48.2–12, described by Lactantius as a letter.

[11] De Decker (1968); Barnes (1981) 38; Christian blackening of Maxentius: Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.14; *Vit. Const.* 1.33–6 (see Cameron and Hall (1999) *ad loc.*); cf. Lact. *DMP* 38, similar language about Maximinus (known as Daza, Caesar 305, Augustus 310). The inverse appears when Nazarius congratulates Constantine for not presenting any threat to respectable married women: *Pan. Lat.* IV(X).34; Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 379.

[12] Barnes, *NE* 6.

[13] For attempts to explain the vision as a form of solar halo or the like, see Cameron and Hall (1999) 206–7. No chi-rho appears on the shields of the soldiers depicted on the arch of Constantine (Tomlin (1998) 25).

Whatever the truth in either of these versions, it was essential for Constantine's propaganda for Maxentius (as later also Licinius) to be depicted as tyrannical and debauched,[14] and the senate of Rome as longing for liberation. A grand *adventus* into the capital followed his victory, and was duly depicted on the arch, as was the bestowal of the expected largesse by the victor. Some senators may have viewed Constantine's entry more with apprehension than with joy, but all went well in the event and all sides, pagan and Christian alike, could reasonably represent the victory as divinely inspired, and Constantius as sharing in heaven in his son's success on earth.[15] However, while the battle of the Milvian Bridge dominates most modern impressions of Constantine's rise to power, Maximin and Licinius still ruled, and the former issued an edict in 312 renewing the active persecution of Christians in the east.[16] Constantine's first move during the winter of 312–13 was to strike an alliance with Licinius, cemented by a marriage at Milan between Licinius and Constantine's sister Constantia.[17] Licinius' defeat of Maximin in 313 is given as much space by Lactantius in the *DMP* as Constantine's defeat of Maxentius, and invested with an equally religious tone; according to this version, Licinius himself was visited by an angel on the night before battle and given the words of a prayer to copy and distribute to the troops, just as Constantine had had his soldiers' shields painted with the divine emblem.[18] The interpretation is predictable from a Christian author, but the emphasis on Licinius is somewhat surprising in view of Lactantius' connection with Constantine. Given such an atmosphere of competitive religion, however, it was only a small step when the orator Nazarius, author of the panegyric of 321, imagined that heavenly troops had ridden to Constantine's aid on the battlefield in 312.[19]

The second phase of Constantine's drive towards achieving sole rule, from 312 to the final victory over Licinius in 324, is told by Eusebius, first hastily in his revision to the *Hist. Eccl.* and later in more considered (and far more tendentious) terms in the *Vit. Const.*; a plainer narrative, though with more circumstantial detail, is given in the *Origo*. If we are to believe the *Vit. Const.*, Constantine's campaigns against his remaining rival and former ally were conducted almost as a religious duty, with constant reference to the miracles wrought by the emperor's *labarum* or imperial standard, and to his prayer tent, in conscious recollection of Old Testament precedent, and especially of Moses. The truth is as before: Constantine himself was the aggressor,[20] first in 316 and then again in 324, but this is naturally as far

[14] For his character, see Lact. *DMP* 18.

[15] Compare the panegyrics of 313 and 321 (Nazarius) with the equally panegyrical account in Eus. *Vit. Const.* 1.

[16] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.7.2–16; Mitchell, 'Maximinus'.

[17] *Origo* 13. [18] Lact. *DMP* 46.

[19] *Pan. Lat.* IV(X).14.5–6; Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 358–59.

[20] Grünewald (1992) 609–12; Constantine's treachery: Zos. II.18–20.

as possible obscured by his apologist Eusebius. Like Maxentius before him, Licinius, the victor over Maximin, is now himself depicted by Eusebius as a persecutor, and, like the other persecutors before him (but unlike Constantine), as one who failed to recognize the clear signs given to him by God.[21] So distorted is the record indeed that it is extremely hard to reconstruct the actual legislation of Licinius or to arrive at a fair appreciation of it.[22]

Most of our sources for the period from 312 to 324 focus on Constantine rather than on Licinius, about whom even the pagan sources have little positive to say. The *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* describes the pretext for the first battle at Cibalae in Pannonia as consisting in the rejection of an attempt by Constantine to introduce Bassianus, the husband of his sister Anastasia, as Caesar with responsibility for Italy, and Licinius' subsequent plotting with Bassianus' brother against Constantine.[23] The campaign ended in a truce and the appointment as Caesars of Constantine's sons Crispus and Constantine, and Licinius' son Licinius, the last two of whom were mere children, and the taking of the consulship by Constantine and Licinius together.[24] After this Licinius allegedly embarked on the persecution of Christians in his domains, defined as Oriens, Asia, Thrace, Moesia Inferior and Scythia.[25] His defeat by Constantine in 324, first at Adrianople on 3 July and then at Chrysopolis, near Chalcedon on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus on 18 September, owed much to the efforts of Constantine's eldest son Crispus as naval commander,[26] and was commemorated by Constantine by the renaming of Byzantium as Constantinople, the 'city of Constantine', while Licinius' acts were formally annulled by Constantine as the laws of a tyrant.[27]

During these years Constantine had found himself heavily involved with the Donatist controversy in North Africa, and increasingly unable to find a solution; indeed, in 321 he wrote to the Catholic population of the province telling them that they must trust to the 'heavenly medicine' of God to help them and to punish the Donatists – he had tried and could do no more.[28]

[21] *Vit. Const.* I.49–59; II.1–18; with Cameron and Hall (1999) *ad locc.*

[22] As shown by Corcoran (1993) and Corcoran, *ET* ch. 11. [23] *Origo* 14–15.

[24] *Origo* 19. For the chronology and evidence for these events see Barnes, *NE.*

[25] *Origo* 20 (from Orosius). Only Eusebius reports Licinius' alleged edicts, *Vit. Const.* I.51.1, 53.1–2; Corcoran, *ET* 195, 275 (on the invisibility of Licinius in the sources and the stock nature of the Christian accusations against him).

[26] *Origo* 23–30. Licinius was at first spared, following his wife's pleas, and sent to Thessalonica, but Constantine soon ordered him to be killed.

[27] *CTh* XV.14.1 (324), 2 (325); Corcoran, *ET* 274–9 on the process, which was not straightforward, for Licinius' laws were technically also issued in the name of Constantine. The evidence for Licinius' legislation is discussed *ibid.*, 277–92.

[28] Optatus, *App.* 9; in 330 he even conceded that practicality demanded that the church he had himself built at Constantina (Cirta) should be allowed to stay in Donatist hands, and another place be found for the Catholics (*App.* 10; see Edwards, 1997).

Constantine first heard in the winter of 312–13, apparently to his surprise and indignation, that the church in North Africa was divided between the hardliners, followers of Donatus (hence Donatists), and those who were prepared after due penance to readmit into the church Christians who had lapsed or handed over the Scriptures in the recent persecution. The split had come to his notice as a result of his own order of a grant to the church of Carthage and his legislation exempting Christian clergy from civic responsibilities, in response to which the proconsul Anullinus wrote to the emperor informing him of the Donatist challenge to the election of Caecilian as bishop of Carthage, and forwarding a petition from them.[29] Constantine's immediate and passionate reaction quickly led him into the complexities of church politics, for the Donatists refused to accept either the first judgement against them in Rome in 313 or the similar verdict of the church council called by Constantine at Arles in 314.[30] Thus within two years of his victory over Maxentius Constantine had not only taken the momentous step of calling a church council about internal church affairs, but had also found its decision and his own wishes defied. He learned from this to be more careful when he later decided to settle the question of Arianism and the dispute over the date of Easter, but meanwhile he tried everything he could think of, including threats and force, to no avail; Christians in North Africa remained divided, under rival church hierarchies, until the time of Augustine and even beyond. The affair reveals Constantine as already determined to carry out what he sees as his duty of defending the Christian faith in his territories, and even as accepting personal responsibility if he fails; partly, indeed, he is using the familiar moralizing language of late Roman imperial pronouncements, but his letters to the African clergy show a very personal involvement and an unhesitating resort to the use of state resources and officials to implement his religious aims.

The advent of hostilities with Licinius put an end to the idea of a personal visit to North Africa, and to further use of force there. The year 315–16 was also that of Constantine's *decennalia*, the tenth anniversary of his accession, and according to the *Vit. Const.* (1.48) the occasion was celebrated in Rome with prayers instead of sacrifices. The arch of Constantine was erected near to the Colosseum, ostensibly by the senate and people of Rome, with its remarkable evocation of earlier 'good' emperors and its celebration of Constantine's recent achievements. The arch is deeply political in its ideology,

[29] Aug. *Ep.* 88.2. The documents are mainly preserved in Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* x and the *Appendix* to Optatus, *de Schismate Donatistarum*; see von Soden (1950); Barnes, *NE* 238–47; Maier (1987); Corcoran, *ET* 153, 155–57, 160, 167–169; Edwards (1997).

[30] For the petition and the emperor's response see Millar, *ERW* 584–90. Barnes, *NE* 72, believes on the basis of Eus. *Vit. Const.* 1.44 and Opt. *App.* 4, *fin* that Constantine himself was present at the Council at Arles.

and deliberately used the traditionally established vocabulary of imperial victory and victory arches (a recent example could be found in the arch of Galerius at Thessalonica), even to depicting Constantine and Licinius in the act of pagan worship.[31] The phraseology of its famous inscription, recalling the language of the *Res Gestae* of Augustus, seems deliberately ambiguous: Constantine had emerged victorious 'by divine inspiration' (*instinctu divinitatis*). The words were both traditional and apt. Already however church buildings were being planned in Rome, in a programme that would ring the city with martyr-shrines and see the imposing Lateran basilica rise on imperial ground adjoining the razed barracks of Maxentius' cavalry, and St Peter's built on a difficult site on the Vatican hill over a pagan and Christian necropolis which was traditionally the burial place of St Peter.[32] Yet Constantine himself left Rome in 315 and did not return except for a brief and unhappy stay at the time of his *vicennalia* in July 326,[33] the year which saw the unexplained death of his eldest son Crispus at Pola followed by that of his wife, Fausta, in Rome.[34] These events are obscured or ignored in the Christian sources, but pagans argued (and later Christians denied) that Constantine's Christianity had its origin in his need for absolution.[35] Perhaps significantly, they were followed by severe legislation on adultery and divorce.[36] It is unlikely that Constantine left Rome because he had quarrelled with or offended the still pagan senatorial aristocracy, since we now begin to find Roman senators back in the administration and holding offices such as that of prefect of the city. Some of these office holders were indeed Christian, but it is the presence of the aristocratic families that is the more striking feature. At the same time, it is true, membership of the senatorial order was opened much more widely, and no longer limited to those with Roman ties, in an important initiative that was to lay the foundation for the new empire-wide senatorial class of late antiquity, and in time for the development of the senate of Constantinople.[37] How much personal intervention came from the emperor after 316, either in Roman church-building or in the matter of the elevation of individuals to offices, is of course unclear, but after 324, and no doubt still more after 326, Rome was no longer at the forefront of his mind, displaced first by the pressing need to defeat Licinius and then by his new foundation in the east.

[31] From the large literature on the arch, see Pierce (1989); and Elsner (2000).

[32] Constantine's Roman churches: see the account in the *Liber Pontificalis* (Davis (2000) 14–24), with Krautheimer (1980) 3–31; (1983) 14–15 (early dating of the Lateran basilica); and Curran (2000).

[33] Constantine's movements and journeys: Barnes, *NE* 68–80.

[34] Amm. Marc. XIV.11.20; *Epit. de Caes.* XLI.11; Zos. II.29.2.

[35] Julian, *Caes.* 336b; Zos. II.29, rebutted by Soz. *HE* I.5.

[36] Piganiol (1972) 35–6; Evans-Grubbs (1995) app. 2.

[37] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.1; Roman senatorial office holders: Barnes, *NE* 110–22, see also 99–109 on holders of the consulate; the late Roman senate: Heather (1994), (1998). Christians holding office under Constantine: von Haehling (1978) 507, but see now Barnes (1994a), (1995) (Christian aristocrats in the majority as *praefecti* and among consuls after 316).

Just as the victory over Maxentius had been followed by a joint decree proclaiming religious toleration for Christians and the restoration of their property, so in Eusebius' narrative the victory over Licinius at Chrysopolis is followed by a series of general measures of religious settlement, whereby Constantine regulates the affairs of Christians in his newly acquired eastern territories.[38] The letter to the east, which Eusebius cites in full at *Vit. Const.* II.24–42,[39] presents Constantine's success as proof of God's intentions. The emperor goes on to call for the restoration of exiles, the freeing of prisoners and the return of their property; churches are confirmed in the right to own property and in their ownership of the burial places of martyrs. The emperor also made provision for state payment for church-building and for the restoration of churches. A second long letter, quoted by Eusebius at *Vit. Const.* II.48–61, harangued pagans on the evils of polytheism and the folly of their ways, though it fell short of requiring them to convert; the admiring Eusebius says that reading it was like hearing the very voice of the emperor.[40] Bishops were encouraged to build churches and sacrifice was suppressed, if only in theory.[41] The emperor himself was ready to lead the way with a building programme, but had to deal first with another dispute between Christians that was to be more serious than Donatism, because more widely spread and less easily defined. In an attempt to play down their seriousness and his own involvement, Eusebius links Arianism and Melitianism as the work of factious troublemakers (the latter, like Donatism, was a rigorist movement, the former more fundamental in that it was held to challenge established christological formulae), but this time Constantine was determined to settle matters more successfully, even though he claimed to think that the points at issue were trivial and to want only to be allowed a good night's sleep.[42] However from this point on until the end of the reign Constantine was to struggle with these issues with only moderate success; his three sons all favoured Arianism, and the reign of Constantius II (337–61) was punctuated by his own attempts to control differing groups within the church, and by the repeated exiles of Athanasius, for which his father had set a pattern in 335.[43]

[38] Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.20–21; it is at this point that the *Vit. Const.* departs from Eusebius' earlier treatment in the *Hist. Eccl.* and changes format, leaving aside the panegyrical (if only temporarily) for the documentary. The fifteen documents which Eusebius cites in the *Vit. Const.* all belong to the latter part of the work. For the structure and composition of the *Vit. Const.* see Barnes (1989), (1994b); Cameron (1997).

[39] Corcoran, *ET* 315; Silli (1987) no. 16; at II.20–1, Eusebius describes a similar letter to the churches, which he does not cite. Parts of this law were identified in 1954 on a London papyrus: Jones and Skeat (1954).

[40] Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.47.2; Corcoran, *ET* 316; Silli (1987) no. 18.

[41] Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.45, on which see Cameron and Hall (1999) *ad loc*. and further below.

[42] Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.63, followed by Constantine's sharp letter to Arius and Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria (II.64–72). For the origins and definition of 'Arianism', see Hanson (1988); R. Williams (2001).

[43] For the Council of Tyre (335), see Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.41–2; for Constantius II, Barnes (1993).

The Council of Nicaea, summoned by Constantine in 325, was on the face of it a success. Nicaea was not the first choice of venue, but this time the attendance was much higher than it had been at Arles, even though preponderantly from the east. Later tradition made the count of the fathers of Nicaea match the number of the servants of Abraham, reported as 318 in Gen. 14:14, but Eusebius set it at 'more than two hundred and fifty' and Athanasius at 'about three hundred'; the actual figure was probably lower than either.[44] On any count, the summoning of the council in the presence of the emperor was a major event and required the mobilization of resources on a large scale; all the requirements of the participants and their attendants were provided by imperial order. Constantine was not likely to allow so great a gathering to founder. Our main reporter, Eusebius of Caesarea, went to Nicaea under condemnation by a synod recently held at Antioch, but he and doubtless many other bishops were overwhelmed by the emperor's condescension and the prospective advantage of a ruler who was on the side of the church. He describes Constantine's first appearance at the council, which cleverly combined deference and authority, in unforgettable terms:

> he finally walked along between them, like some heavenly angel of God, his bright mantle shedding lustre like beams of light, shining with the fiery radiance of a purple robe, and decorated with the dazzling brilliance of gold and precious stones. Such was his physical appearance. As for his soul, he was clearly adorned with fear and reverence for God: this was shown by his eyes, which were cast down, the blush on his face, his gait, and the rest of his appearance, his height, which surpassed all those around him . . . by his dignified maturity, by the magnificence of his physical condition, and by the vigour of his matchless strength. All these, blended with the elegance of his manners and the gentleness of imperial condescension, demonstrated the superiority of his mind surpassing all description. When he reached the upper end of the rows of seats and stood in the middle, a small chair made of gold having been set out, only when the bishops assented did he sit down.[45]

With amazing speed and harmony, we are led to believe, deep-seated regional differences over the date of Easter were declared resolved and a confession of faith agreed and signed by nearly all those present. The clinching word *homoousios* was produced by the emperor himself. Only a few refused, among them Arius, and they were exiled. The compliant bishops (who included Eusebius of Caesarea) were entertained to an imperial banquet which served also to celebrate Constantine's twentieth anniversary.[46] But within a short time the emperor's mind changed and the exiles

[44] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.8; Athan. *Hist. Arian*. 66; see Brennecke (1994) 431.

[45] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.10.3–5; contrast the implied criticism of Constantine's rich dress in *Epit. de Caes*. XLI.11–18.

[46] Eusebius' disingenuous account at *Vit. Const.* III.4–24 is the only connected contemporary version, though it can be supplemented by the equally partisan works of Athanasius, who attended as a deacon, and by a handful of other sources: see Stevenson (1987) 338–55.

were allowed to return. When Constantine was baptized shortly before he died it was by Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was pro-Arian. The emperor left a double-edged legacy on this matter, and one that was to continue to cause difficulties for most of his fourth-century successors.[47] Constantine himself made further shows of deference to bishops, and proclaimed himself to be almost one of them ('the bishop of those outside', *Vit. Const.* IV.24, cf. 44). He was enthusiastic about theological matters, and would regularly preach to his courtiers on Fridays (*Vit. Const.* IV.29), as well as being the author of the surviving apologetic *Oration to the Saints*.[48] Constantine has been much maligned by later generations both for being insufficiently 'religious' and for leading the church into a damaging alliance with the state, but there is no reason to doubt his sincerity on matters of faith, even though the surviving sources, whose writers are all in different ways so anxious to lay claim to imperial support and precedent, make it difficult to estimate his true motives.

A major church-building programme followed the Council of Nicaea and Constantine's *vicennalia*. The 'Golden' octagonal church or *Domus aurea* at Antioch was one of the new showpiece churches said to have been begun by Constantine in this period,[49] but attention centred on Jerusalem and other holy places in Palestine such as Bethlehem and Mamre, where Abraham encountered his divine visitors. Constantine did not make the journey himself, but his mother Helena, elevated to the rank of Augusta in 324, made an unusual imperial progress to the holy places in 326 and is reliably credited with church-building at Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives, where she built the church known as the Eleona, although the resources came from the emperor himself.[50] The idea is said by Eusebius to have been her own, ostensibly to give thanks for her son and her two grandsons, the current Caesars (Crispus' death was fresh in 326, and Constans did not become Caesar until 333), but this expedition and her advancement so soon after the death of Fausta (she was already elderly, and died shortly after this journey, probably in 327) tells of political expediency and could easily be taken as prompted by Constantine's need for expiation or at least as a reaction to the political crisis.[51] But the most important church was the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and this the *Vit. Const.* attributes firmly to Constantine himself.[52] The church was dedicated with great pomp in 335, and Eusebius of Caesarea was among those who pronounced laudatory

[47] Whether there was a 'second council of Nicaea' is disputed, but Arius had returned by 335; see further below.

[48] Below, n. 107. [49] Downey (1961) 342; Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.50 (Antioch and Nicomedia).

[50] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.41–3.

[51] *Epit. de Caes.* XLI.12; Zos. II.29.2; see Barnes, *CE* 220–1. Motivation for Helena's journey: Holum (1990); Hunt (1992); Drijvers (1992); Walker (1990) 186–9, pointing out that the churches at Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives are credited to Constantine at *Laus Constantini* 9.16–17.

[52] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.29–40.

orations.[53] This time the *vicarius orientis* was required to co-operate with the bishop in arranging for the construction, which was on a lavish scale. The focus was on the cave believed to have been the site of the Resurrection, which was enclosed in a covering structure later known as the Edicule.[54] The rock identified as that of Calvary also lay within the complex of the main basilical church, which was known as the Martyrium, and within a dozen or so years of Constantine's death fragments of the Cross of Christ were already being claimed; by the end of the fourth century Helena had been firmly identified as the finder of the Cross, and in later legend she almost eclipsed Constantine in this role.[55] By any standards the building of the church was heavily political in intention: as Eusebius puts it, 'New Jerusalem was built . . . facing the famous Jerusalem of old'.[56] The area of the Temple Mount was allowed to remain in ruins, in fulfilment of scriptural prophecy, and the new church rose on the site of one or more pagan temples, built as part of the inauguration of the Hadrianic Aelia Capitolina.[57] The church-building thus reclaimed Jerusalem from the pagan Aelia, and canon 7 of the Council of Nicaea made appropriate provision for the status of its bishop. The church at Mamre, too, was built on a site of pagan worship, and much is made of the clearing and sanctification of the site.[58] Indeed, Eusebius' account of all of this church building in book III of the *Vit. Const.* is deliberately juxtaposed with anecdotes about the official destruction of pagan temples at Aphaca and Heliopolis (temple of Aphrodite), as well as the Cilician Asclepium at Aigai.[59] The intention is clear, though each of these examples is carefully chosen; we are told that Constantine removed the temple treasures and took away their statues, removing some to his new foundation of Constantinople, and the symbolic importance of such measures was indeed great.[60] However, not even Christian writers could find more than a few specific examples to cite, and not even these temples were put out of action permanently. Like Constantine's church-building, his attacks on pagan shrines were probably few and carefully targeted for maximum effect.

[53] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.45, apparently not referring to the surviving speech which is attached in the manuscripts to the Tricennalian Oration (see Drake (1976)).

[54] Biddle (1999).

[55] *Contra* those scholars who believe that the Cross was indeed found during the building, and that Eusebius is deliberately silent about it, e.g. Rubin (1982); Drake (1985); Walker (1990). For Helena's legendary association with the finding of the True Cross see Drijvers (1992).

[56] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.33.1.

[57] Local tradition seems to have identified this as the site of the Resurrection, though Eusebius suggests that the cave was discovered contrary to all expectation: Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.28. For the site, see Biddle (1994), (1999).

[58] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.51–3. [59] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.55–8; cf. *Laus Constantini* 8.

[60] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.54; *Laus Constantini* 8. Despite Eusebius' extravagant claims it is difficult to estimate the scale of the confiscations, and one suspects that they were not in fact widespread. The motivation for the removal of famous statuary to Constantinople was probably quite different, namely the adornment of the city, again *pace* Eusebius, who claims that they were put there to be ridiculed.

The building of Constantinople does not quite fit the model set out above. Despite Eusebius' claim that the city was wholly Christian, and that no trace of paganism remained,[61] the Christianization of Constantinople was a gradual process, and Constantine was at least as determined to give the city the proper accoutrements of an imperial centre as he was to build churches there.[62] The former included an oval forum with an imperial statue on a high porphyry column, linked by a main thoroughfare to the palace and main square. As in other such centres of the tetrarchic period, a hippodrome closely adjoined the palace. The first church of S. Sophia, on the existing site, may have been begun by Constantine, but it was completed by Constantius II, and Constantius may also have been responsible for the church of the Holy Apostles. But like other Roman emperors before him Constantine took care to build his own mausoleum. Its plan was familiar enough, but the difference – breathtaking enough – was that it contained twelve empty sarcophagi ringed round his own tomb, one for each of the twelve apostles; naturally enough his son and successor later took the step of securing some relics to place inside the empty containers.[63] The city was dedicated on 11 May 330, and thereafter Constantine himself spent much of his time there; Eusebius gives us a few glimpses of life in Constantinople at the end of the reign in the last book of the *Vit. Const.* It was of course to become a city with a long and glorious future. The *Origo* says that Constantine wanted it to equal Rome (30), and it was indeed known as New Rome. It required citizens, who were allegedly enticed there by the promise of houses and a bread distribution like that of Old Rome; critics like Zosimus claimed that the houses were so badly built that they were only too likely to fall down.[64] Yet even though Constantine ordered Eusebius to arrange for fifty copies of the Scriptures to be produced for the city,[65] the idea that it was founded as a new Christian capital is not clearly borne out by the contemporary evidence. Paradoxically, it was Rome, which Constantine never visited after 326, which became the site of important Constantinian churches, while at Constantinople building perforce concentrated on the secular and imperial.

It is Zosimus who tells us that there were in fact pagan temples in Constantinople, even new ones allegedly built by Constantine himself, and it is also Zosimus, representing pagan hostility to Constantine's memory, who writes of the jerry-building there.[66] If we are to believe Zosimus, Constantine alienated Roman tradition when he refused to participate personally in a religious ceremony on the Capitol, and it was for this reason that he founded Constantinople; these events followed on from

[61] Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.48. [62] See Dagron, *Naissance*; Mango (1985). [63] Mango (1990).
[64] Zos. II.32, 35 (the latter referring to post-Constantinian expansion). Bread distribution: II.32; Dagron, *Naissance* 530–5; Durliat (1990).
[65] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.36. [66] Zos. II.31–2.

Constantine's conversion to Christianity, which came in the aftermath of his responsibility for the deaths of Crispus and Fausta.[67] However, Zosimus' logic fails when he also makes him responsible for building pagan temples in the new city, and his story about the Capitol is probably either fictional or misplaced.[68]

It is also Zosimus who gives the fullest, though indeed extremely biased, account of Constantine's secular policies. According to this version, Constantine unnecessarily disturbed ancient practice in the administration by increasing the number of praetorian prefects[69] and destroyed army discipline by separating its financial organization from that of the civilian government, and by moving troops from the frontiers to the cities where they became enervated by urban pleasures; he was also extravagant in largesse, while taxing merchants in gold and silver (the *chrysargyron*) and senators with a new tax (the *follis*).[70] In contrast, as we have seen, Constantine's largesse appears in the *Vit. Const.* more than once in the guise of his generosity, a standard panegyrical theme, and indeed Eusebius' brief statements about his secular policies are made in the context of the stock praise of emperors.[71] But while the charges made against Constantine by Zosimus and other writers clearly belong within a rhetoric of imperial condemnation,[72] they nevertheless raise important questions about the administration and the economy in the period after the retirement of Diocletian and need to be carefully weighed against other available evidence. There is also a need to unpick the strong contrast that is being drawn in the sources between the pagan Diocletian and the Christian Constantine, a contrast which places Constantine in the wrong in secular as well as religious matters. This is particularly obvious in relation to military and fiscal policy, where a conservative critique from the perspective of later defeat and economic difficulty joins with an easy focus on Christianity as the decisive factor in the later problems of the empire. A less prejudiced view suggests in contrast that many of Constantine's measures, whether in relation to the army, the administration or in financial matters, were continuations and developments of what had been begun under Diocletian.[73] For example, while it is commonly stated that Constantine created a field-army, the *comitatus*,[74] steps had already been taken in this direction under

[67] Zos. II.29–30.

[68] It may refer to Constantine's *decennalia* in 315, when Eusebius claims that he avoided sacrifice: *Vit. Const.* I.48. But there is no need to believe the claim that the Romans were alienated (above, p. 96).

[69] Zos. II.33. See Barnes, *NE* 131–9.

[70] Zos. II.32–8. Further below, n. 72.

[71] Generosity: Eus. *Vit. Const.* I.41–3; IV.1–4, 28. He was considered generous to a fault (IV.31, 54). Constantine's secular policies are mainly described in *Vit. Const.* IV.

[72] So Zos. II.31; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XL.15; *Epit. de Caes.* XLI.16; Julian, *Or.* I.6.8B; *Caes.* 335B; *Or.* VII.227C–228A; Amm. Marc. XVI.8.12.

[73] Cameron, *LRE* 53–6.

[74] Jones, *LRE* 95; Zos. II.34; this view has become a main prop of the policy of so-called 'defence-in-depth' attributed to Diocletian; see however Jones, *LRE* 52 for Diocletian's moves in the direction of a field army, with Isaac (1988) 139.

Diocletian. For the most part, Constantine kept and built upon the military and administrative changes, retaining Diocletian's provincial organization and the separation of military and civil offices; changes were mainly of detail,[75] and new posts came into being as the administrative system was further refined.[76] However the evidence is much sparser for such changes than for Constantine's religious policy, and as in the case of Diocletian, it is often impossible to judge how much the changes resulted from deliberate intention and how much from a gradual process of development. At an early stage Constantine introduced a new gold *solidus*, which was to remain in use long into the Byzantine period, but debasement of the *nummus* and the *denarius* nevertheless continued; silver ceased to be issued by 310, and was recommenced *c.* 320 in different form.[77] These changes, especially the issue of the gold *solidus*, which began in 307, should again be considered as developments in the Diocletianic system rather than as original to Constantine himself. Writing in the late 360s, the anonymous author of the *de Rebus Bellicis* complains of Constantine's greed and extravagance and claims that his source of gold was the treasure he plundered from the temples, but this is unlikely, and any gradual improvement in the economy is more likely to be the result of the improvement in overall stability than a direct result of Constantine's policies.[78] Similarly, the sparse surviving evidence of Constantine's interventions in the life of cities in the empire seems to represent the continuation of traditional policies rather than any new departure.[79] But Constantine was indeed criticized from an early date, as can be seen even from traces in the *Vit. Const.*, and an opposition view developed early. It was not limited to pagans, or necessarily influenced primarily by religious motives.[80]

Many problems surround the dedication of Constantinople, largely deriving from the lack of contemporary accounts and the later distortion of the historical record. The sixth-century antiquarian writer John the Lydian claims that pagans took part in the inauguration ritual, but the Christian tradition celebrated the later dedication, or 'birthday' of the city on 11 May 330. Later writers told elaborate stories of annual ceremonies thereafter involving a procession to the Hippodrome with Constantine's statue.[81] Constantine's palace no longer stands, but the emperor was

[75] Jones, *LRE* 100–4. [76] Jones, *LRE* 104–7. [77] Hendy (1985) 466–7.

[78] Anon. *de Rebus Bellicis* 2. Actual confiscation was probably limited, and it seems more probable that the introduction of the *solidus* was made possible by the government's policy of calling in gold and making repayments in *denarii*; Jones, *LRE* 107–8.

[79] Mitchell (1998). Cf. *MAMA* VII.305 (Orcistus); *CIL* XI.5265 = *ILS* 705 (Hispellum).

[80] Some aspects of this later criticism of Constantine, and of attempts by later writers to rewrite the record, are discussed in Fowden (1994). Apart from Zosimus, by the sixth century the historical Constantine had all but receded into legend, and the emperor soon became the subject of Christian hagiography; see briefly Cameron and Hall (1999) 48–50, with bibliography; Lieu and Montserrat (1998).

[81] Dagron, *Naissance* 37–41.

responsible for the ceremonial layout of Constantinople which is still apparent today, with its great square, the Augusteum, the senate house and the processional way to the oval forum where Constantine's statue stood on a great pillar.[82] It marked a departure, in that it was to have its own senate, and as we have seen, the existing population was deliberately enlarged by giving settlers inducements. But in essence, and not surprisingly, given Constantine's own background, Constantinople was a tetrarchic capital, comparable with Thessalonica or Serdica, with its palace, its hippodrome and its walls.

It was from Constantinople that Constantine ruled during the last years of his reign. Although he had three sons surviving, besides other potential claimants, he took no steps to secure the succession until 335. His youngest son, Constans, born in 323, was made Caesar on 25 December 333, and in 335 Constantine also promoted to the rank of Caesar Dalmatius, the son of his half-brother Fl. Dalmatius, in a settlement later described by Eusebius with deliberate 'editorial' falsification, giving each of the four Caesars a territorial oversight; Dalmatius' brother Hannibalianus was soon after named 'King of kings and of the Pontic peoples'. This was part of a broader attempt to reinforce the regime: Constantine's two surviving half-brothers were made consuls in 333 and 335, and the settlement of 335 was followed by dynastic marriages.[83] But Constantine's late attempt to secure the future did not work, as was shown by the events of the months after his death in May 337, when his own sons eliminated their rivals. He encountered other difficulties: revolt in Cyprus, successfully dealt with by the elder Dalmatius, resistance from Jews to his hostile measures against them, and the accusation of treason against the pagan philosopher and friend of Constantine, Sopater, whom the emperor ordered to be beheaded.[84] But Constantine's *tricennalia*, the thirtieth anniversary of his reign (25 July 336) was celebrated in style at Constantinople, with a florid surviving speech by Eusebius of Caesarea in which he set out a theory of Christian monarchy which was to serve the Byzantine empire for centuries. Eusebius glowingly describes the ceremonies and the pageantry in book IV of the *Vit. Const.* In the previous year, Constantine's great church in Jerusalem had been dedicated, built over the site of the tomb of Christ, with Eusebius also among the orators on that occasion, but the emperor himself never travelled to see it.

These years saw an apparent reversal in Constantine's ecclesiastical policies, in that Arius was allowed to return, while Athanasius and Marcellus of Ancyra, who had emerged as the champions of the Nicene position, were both exiled, after councils held at Tyre in 335 and Constantinople

[82] The column base still stands ('the burnt column'), and the statue itself survived until the twelfth century; Mango (1993) II–IV.

[83] Barnes, *CE* 251–2; Barnes, *NE* 105, 108, cf. also 138–9 on praetorian prefects.

[84] Barnes, *CE* 252–3.

in 336.[85] In these matters Eusebius of Caesarea aligned himself with Eusebius of Nicomedia, who found himself in the position of baptizing Constantine when the emperor fell ill near Nicomedia in 337 while on his way to campaign against Persia. Eusebius of Nicomedia had been one of those exiled after the Council of Nicaea, but he now went on in the months after Constantine's death to become bishop of Constantinople, and to attract the increasing enmity of Athanasius. By the time that the emperor died, although the Creed of Nicaea was not revoked, ecclesiastical politics had effectively been reversed, a development which has clearly influenced Eusebius of Caesarea's retrospective account of the Council itself. He himself had accused Athanasius before the emperor after the Council of Tyre in the autumn of 335 and was one of the council of bishops which deposed Marcellus of Ancyra in Constantinople in 336. One of the first acts of the sons of Constantine after their father's death was however to restore the exiled bishops, and even to assist the restoration of Athanasius to his see in Alexandria.[86] Together with their elimination of their rivals during the summer of 337 this was taken by Eusebius of Caesarea as representing a major threat to Constantinian policy, and his introduction and conclusion to the *Vit. Const.*, written before his own death in 339, constitute an earnest and not-so-veiled exhortation to the sons of Constantine to continue in their father's path.

In his later years Constantine had also resumed military operations, first in 332 against the Goths and then in 334 against the Sarmatians, notwithstanding the fact that it was they who had called in the Romans in 332. The title *Dacicus*, taken by Constantine in 336, recalled the conquests of Trajan and asserted some renewal of Roman control in Dacia.[87] In 337, now in his early sixties, Constantine prepared for a bigger campaign, this time against Persia.[88] Eusebius of Caesarea records an earlier letter sent by him to Shapur in which he asserts the claim to patronage over Christians in Persia, and in 337, after border incidents and after rebuffing a Persian embassy, Constantine set about leading the campaign himself, and he may have been at the start of this ambitious expedition when he fell ill in Constantinople on Easter day 337, from where he proceeded to Helenopolis in Bithynia and thence to the outskirts of Nicomedia.[89] Here he submitted himself for baptism and having received it he died on Whit Sunday, the day of Pentecost, 22 May 337.[90] The aftermath of his death was difficult to manage: soldiers

[85] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.41–2; Barnes, *CE* 253; Hunt (1997). For Athanasius' version of his first exile, see Barnes (1993) 25–33.

[86] Barnes, *CE* 263. This show of toleration was short-lived: Barnes (1993) 34–46.

[87] Barnes, *CE* 250. [88] See Barnes (1985).

[89] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.56–7, 61–4, with Cameron and Hall (1999) *ad locc.* The extent to which this was a religious war is unclear, as is the exact chronology; see also Barnes (1985). Fowden (1994) supposes that Eusebius' text has been deliberately expurgated.

[90] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.62–4.

escorted the body to Constantinople, and Constantine's son Constantius, the first of his sons to arrive, acted quickly, seeing to its lying-in-state under military guard and the funeral at the mausoleum which Constantine had built for himself adjoining the later church of the Holy Apostles.[91] This was a Christian service, and Constantine was the first Roman emperor to be inhumed. There may have been competition over what was to be done; at least, Eusebius records the dismay of the people of Rome that the obsequies did not take place there, and a version of the traditional rite of *consecratio* seems to have taken place there, after which *consecratio* coins were certainly issued.[92]

More than any other Roman emperor, Constantine has been the subject of intense scrutiny by later generations who have wanted to claim him for their own side. Many generations have accepted Eusebius' claims, while on the other side stand Edward Gibbon, who denounced him as an autocrat acting in the name of Christianity, and all those who have followed Jacob Burckhardt's scathing criticism of Eusebius and doubted the authenticity of the *Vit. Const.*[93] The tendentiousness of the sources and the lack of any full and contemporary narrative to set against that of the *Vit. Const.* has encouraged these approaches. Praxagoras' history no longer survives, while the Latin panegyrical poems of Porfyrius Optatianus remain just that, for all that their author fell foul of Constantine and was exiled.[94] But there are deeper problems in which the question of personality also intrudes, among them that of Constantine's legislation. A few of Constantine's laws have been held to show signs of Christian influence. But the Christian interpretation of his removal of the Augustan marriage legislation, for example, depends on a statement of Eusebius, who as well as being partial can also be shown in this passage to have extracted for his own purposes a small part of Constantine's general legislation on marriage and family.[95] Again, Eusebius claims that Constantine legislated to ban sacrifice, an initiative in which he was followed by later Christian emperors, but the law itself does not survive, and Eusebius has been widely disbelieved.[96] Constantine legislated to promote Sunday as a day of rest, justifying it as the 'day of the sun', and here again the Christian motivation has been doubted.[97] Gladiatorial games

[91] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.65–71.

[92] MacCormack (1981); Arce (1988) 159–86; Dagron (1996) 148–54. See Cameron and Hall (1999) on *Vit. Const.* IV.72–3. On the coins see *Vit. Const.* IV.73, with Bruun (1954); Eusebius does not seem to be worried by them, even while himself implying that Constantine shared in Christian resurrection.

[93] See Cameron and Hall (1999), 4–6.

[94] Praxagoras, *FGrH* no. 219; Porfyrius: Barnes, *CE* 47–8, 67.

[95] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.26; Evans-Grubbs (1995). Hunt (1993) 144 concludes that 'any general Christian input [in Constantine's legislation] is remarkably elusive'.

[96] Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.45; IV.23; against, see recently Digeser (2000) 130, with bibliography at 168–9.

[97] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.18–20, also laying down a prayer for soldiers to say on Sundays, similar to the prayer enjoined on his troops by Licinius in Lact. *DMP* 46–7.

were ended,[98] and strict penalties laid down for conversion to Judaism, although clerical exemptions were extended to the Jewish hierarchy.[99] Reasonably enough, perhaps, Christian writers emphasized what they could find of pro-Christian measures brought in by Constantine, and may have gone too far in some cases. It is also as well to remember that the extent of actual imperial involvement in law making is often unclear. Yet some of Constantine's measures were undoubtedly pro-Christian, as when he forbade slaves to be tattooed on the face, which bore the image of God, and outlawed the practice of crucifixion.[100] Constantine also forbade statues of himself to be placed in temples, though he allowed the erection of a new temple to the *gens Flavia* at Hispellum in Umbria, so long as no 'contagious superstition' was actually practised there.[101] This and the rest of the evidence of Constantine's measures in relation to religious practice is difficult to interpret if one is looking for complete consistency, and a lively case has been made recently for the emperor as the promoter of religious concord, motivated by the desire for religious toleration.[102] This is partly based on the argument that he was influenced by the *Divine Institutes* of Lactantius, who became tutor to Constantine's eldest son, Crispus, *c.* 310, but it also depends on a particular reading of the emperor's own words as reported in the edicts included in the *Vita Constantini*; however, while it is right to be sceptical of many of Eusebius' own claims for Constantine's Christian fervour, this 'tolerant' reading involves downplaying others of his own pronouncements which seem to contradict it.[103] The relevant texts need to be read with care: for instance, the vaguely philosophical language which Eusebius employs about Constantine in the *Tricennalian Oration* does not imply hesitation about Christianity on the part of the emperor.[104] In addition, a number of other factors need to be considered in the attempt to evaluate his religious policy. One may reasonably allow, for instance, for some overlap between the religious ideas of Christianity and pagan monotheism in Constantine's continued use of solar images on his coins, and some historians have undoubtedly projected onto him an anachronistic expectation of consistent and unequivocal Christian policy and legislation. But the harsh tone of many of Constantine's utterances makes his Christian sentiments abundantly clear; rather than indicating a conscious desire for religious toleration, the discrepancies in his legislation and the fact that, for instance, relatively little real destruction of temples took place are rather to be explained by reference to the practicalities of imperial rule.[105] Constantine legislated over a period of twenty-five years, in an empire in which Christians were overwhelmingly outnumbered. He

[98] *CTh* XV.12.1. [99] *CTh* XVI.8.1–5. [100] *CTh* IX.40.2; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XLI.4; Soz. *HE* I.8.13.
[101] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.16; *CIL* XI.5265. [102] Drake (1999); Digeser (2000) 115–38.
[103] Moreover Lactantius's *DMP* (314) is hardly a tolerant work. [104] So Drake (1976).
[105] Jones (1949) 172–3; conspectus of modern views: Digeser (2000) 169.

was as constrained as any other emperor by the weight of late Roman law and the machinery of law making, and historians, for their part, must not make unrealistic assumptions about what was possible.

The date at which Constantine decided to support the Christians depends on weighing against each other the conflicting evidence of Lactantius, who says that Constantine began to take measures in support of Christians immediately on his accession in 306, and the panegyric of 310, which claims that he saw a vision of Apollo in Gaul in that year. Whatever the truth in either of these claims (and they are not strictly incompatible), his victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in late October 312 was followed by immediate practical action in the shape of granting clerical privileges to the church and to clergy,[106] and from then on Constantine never deviated in his direct concern for the church. He soon got into difficulties in his attempts at dealing with the Donatists in North Africa, but this did not deter him from personal intervention in church affairs at the Council of Nicaea and on many subsequent occasions. He himself composed the so-called *Oration to the Saints*, which is appended to the *VC* in the manuscript tradition, an earnest exhortation to the Christian faith which would have taken at least two hours to deliver,[107] and in an age before infant baptism became the norm, his own late baptism is no proof of hesitation. In a complex society, an emperor who is also a man of energy and intellectual curiosity may be allowed to have some pagan friends, even though in the case of Sopater the friendship came to grief, and though he also ordered the books of Porphyry to be burnt along with those emanating from Christian sects.[108] That the man who expressed himself in the violent language used in the letters preserved in the Appendix to Optatus' *De Schismate Donatistarum*, the lengthy harangues recorded by Eusebius or the virulent language attributed to him by Athanasius[109] was really a devotee of religious toleration is hard to believe.

That does not mean however that Constantine's reign in itself brought the dramatic shift that has often been attributed to it, nor is it to accept the sharp dichotomy made in most contemporary sources between the reigns of Constantine and Diocletian. Constantine himself was a product of the tetrarchic system and in many respects he behaved no differently from his colleagues and rivals. Once he had secured sole power he benefited from the many useful institutional changes which had been begun during the reign of Diocletian, and was able to continue and consolidate them into a system

[106] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* x.6–7 (winter 312–13).

[107] Many problems surround the *Oration*, including its date, place of delivery and even its original language: Barnes, *CE* 74–6; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 629–35; Edwards (1999). Others have questioned Constantine's authorship.

[108] Execution of Sopater: Barnes, *CE* 252–3; Porphyry's books burned: Soc. *HE* 1.9.20.

[109] Admittedly a hostile witness, but cf. e.g. the letter to Arius and the Arians, see Barnes, *CE* 233.

which remained essentially stable until at least the reign of Justinian. It is entirely fair to regard this system with T. D. Barnes as a 'new empire'. But Constantine's promotion of Christianity, and his personal adoption of the Christian faith, were indeed to have even greater repercussions in future centuries.

CHAPTER 5

THE ARMY

BRIAN CAMPBELL

1. CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

When Maximinus (235–8) erected in front of the senate house a picture showing his personal bravery on campaign, it was a striking indication that the Roman emperor might now fight in the battle line.[1] Unfortunately the advice given to Severus Alexander by his mother, that it was the responsibility of other people to take risks for him, was no longer entirely valid.[2] Augustus, after campaigning in Spain (26–5 B.C.), shrewdly removed himself from the conduct of military operations; the risks and the responsibility for failure could be delegated to others while he monopolized all the glory. However, from the time of Domitian, emperors increasingly took personal charge of campaigns and so became more closely associated with their soldiers, and more directly responsible for military success or failure. By the time of Maximinus it had long been accepted that the emperor would direct all major campaigns, though Maximinus' personal intervention in battle added a new dimension. This close identification between the emperor and his military duties encouraged the belief that to be an effective emperor a man needed to be an effective leader in war. Moreover, there were in the third century more threats to the emperor's personal security, and at the same time his wider military duties were more pressing; the army, pampered and repeatedly bribed, was more difficult to control and had an enhanced importance in imperial affairs, usurpers were increasingly ready to try their luck, and the strategical outlook for the empire was worsening. Indeed the disloyalty of army commanders in this period and the feeble ineffectiveness of many ephemeral emperors, drawn in the main from the senatorial class, may have raised doubts about the competence and suitability of senators in top military posts.

While there were only twenty-seven emperors between 31 B.C. and A.D. 235, there were at least twenty-two between 235 and 284. This instability was increased by an unprecedented number of raids and serious incursions into Roman territory in the third century, the death of one emperor and

[1] Herod. VII.2.8. [2] Herod. VI.5 9.

the capture of another in battle, plague, and substantial economic and social disruption. Yet the empire held together remarkably well. Significant territorial loss was confined to the *Agri Decumates* between the Rhine and the Danube, Dacia and Mesopotamia. The empire survived partly because its army was still capable of winning substantial victories, and because the military structure did not disintegrate despite the frequent civil wars. The important question is how the Romans attempted to cope with new strategical and tactical problems and how they adapted the role and organization of the legions and auxilia.

The legions had remained the backbone of the Roman army through the first two and a half centuries of the imperial period. Their command structure, tactical organization and fighting methods – based on the use of the throwing spear (*pilum*) and the short stabbing sword – had remained substantially unchanged. Only the adoption of the long Greek thrusting spear (*contus*) combined with a tightly packed infantry formation to deal with attacks by heavy cavalry, and the development of a more mobile bolt-firing machine for use in open warfare, suggest a sensitivity to changing circumstances.[3] In addition, the total complement of legions had remained remarkably stable, rising from twenty-five at the end of Augustus' reign to thirty-three by the end of the Severan era.[4]

By contrast, the role and numbers of the auxiliary troops were steadily increasing. Over four hundred units are known by Severan times, although it is not clear how long a life such units had, and the old division between the citizen legionary and the non-citizen auxiliary had been eroded as more and more Roman citizens enlisted in the auxilia. Although some auxiliaries were perhaps paid less than legionaries, in status they were not far behind and were an integral part of the army.[5] Though many regiments were now recruited in the areas where they served and had therefore lost their national character, specialized auxiliary units still existed. For example, *ala I Ulpia Contariorum* was established by Trajan as a heavy cavalry force, perhaps to act as a counter-measure to massed armoured cavalry charges. Similarly, the *ala I Ulpia Dromedariorum* (camel riders) and the *cohors I Ulpia Sagittariorum* (mounted light archers) stationed in Syria, were obviously intended to cope with desert terrain and Parthian tactics.[6] A further development was the creation of milliary units, which consisted of between 800

[3] Marsden (1969) 187–90; Campbell (1987) 24–8; weapons: Bishop and Coulston (1993).

[4] Mann (1963) 484 argues that a thirty-fourth legion – IV Italica – was raised by Severus Alexander. The evidence for this is very weak. MacMullen (1980) 451–4 estimates the total strength of the Severan army at around 350,000, allowing for depletion below paper strength and wastage in auxiliary units.

[5] Cheesman (1914) app. 1; Saddington (1975); Holder (1980); Roxan (1976), (1978), (1985), (1994); auxiliary pay: M. P. Speidel (1973); M. A. Speidel (1992); cf. Alston (1994), arguing for parity between auxiliary and legionary infantry pay rates.

[6] See Cheesman (1914) 161–2; Eadie (1967) 167–8; note also the Osrhoeni, who served as archers: *ILS* 2765; armoured cavalry: *ILS* 2540, 2771.

and 1,000 men. The first reference to such a unit is in A.D. 85, and they came eventually to make up about 10 per cent of the auxilia.[7] These larger units will have assisted the tactical organization of the army in that they reduced the numerical disparity between legions and auxilia and therefore made it easier for them to operate together as a coherent unit. The command of the auxilia probably still rested in the main with equestrian prefects from the more civilized parts of the empire.[8]

In the third century the Romans made increasing use of troops from particular ethnic groups which were kept together and seem to have remained outside the usual organization of the auxilia. In this context, the word *numerus* is often regarded as a technical term designating a small unit of perhaps 200–300 men formed from un-Romanized tribes, who had looser organizations of a more barbarous character, and retained their national ways of fighting and war cries. But it seems more in keeping with the evidence to suppose that the word *numerus* was used by the Romans in a non-specific way to refer to a 'unit', and that it should not be attached exclusively to a particular type of unit.[9] In any event the ethnic units in the army were made up from racial groups (*nationes*) like the Palmyreni or the Moors, some of whom had long been known to the Romans, such units were distinct from the *alae* and cohorts and each had its own organization, sizes status, tactical purpose and degree of permanence.[10] For example, Moorish tribesmen had fought for Rome since the Punic wars, and they were frequently recruited at least from the second century of the imperial period. Some of them became regular ethnic units like that stationed in Dacia Apulensis for over fifty years.[11] Others were used in a more mobile role. The Moorish chief Lusius Quietus led his mounted javelin men as allies of Trajan during his wars in Dacia and Parthia. Thereafter these skilled horsemen were to the fore in major campaigns and distinguished themselves in the wars of Severus Alexander and Maximinus against the Germans. Their ferocious charge helped Philip to defeat the Carpi and they continued to serve in the armies of Valerian, Gallienus and Aurelian.[12] Such units because of their repeated presence on imperial campaigns may have come to be regarded as élite. The career inscription of Licinius Hierocles

[7] E. B. Birley (1966); Holder (1980) 5–12. [8] Cheesman (1914) 99–101.

[9] The traditional view is that *numerus* was a technical term used to describe ethnic units – Cheesman (1914) 86–90; Rowell (1937); Mann (1954); Callies (1964); M. P. Speidel (1975) has argued convincingly for a non-technical meaning of *numerus*. See also the comments of Le Roux (1986) 360–74.

[10] Ps.-Hyginus, *De Munit. Cast.* 19; 30; 43 mentions as *nationes* Palmyreni, Getuli, Daci, Brittones, Cantabri and also *symmacharii*, who may be defined as temporary allies, defeated enemies, prisoners of war, mercenaries and other groups who did not belong to the regular *nationes*. See M. P. Speidel (1975) 204–8.

[11] *AE* 1944.74 (A.D. 204) – celebrating the restoration of a shrine to their national gods.

[12] Herod. VI.7.8; Zos. 1.20. See in general M. P. Speidel (1975) 211–21.

(A.D. 227) records his command of *equites et pedites iuniores Mauri* with the rank of former tribune of the urban cohorts. The high rank suggests the élite nature of this irregular unit.[13] The fact that the troops were called *iuniores* indicates that there was an earlier unit recruited from the same people and that the recruits were kept together in their ethnic group, not distributed to other units. In time, some of the distinct ethnic units could become regular *alae* and *cohortes*. But others remained as élite ethnic troops who eclipsed the regular auxiliary formations in prestige and status. There is perhaps a link here with the gradual emergence of the concept of a field-army including élite or specialist units.[14]

Moreover, two related themes – the increasing importance of the cavalry in the army as a whole, and the developing use of detachments from larger units (*vexillationes*) – also point the way to the military organization of the later empire, and show that even in the uncertainty of the mid-third century the Romans were still capable of bringing about change in the army. As many as seventy auxiliary *alae* and *cohortes* from pre-Severan times certainly or probably retained their name and provincial station in the late Roman army, although it seems that in some cases *cohortes equitatae* (part-mounted units) had been changed into full cavalry *alae*, presumably to increase the army's mobility and capacity for rapid and varied response.[15] It had long proved convenient for the government, when it needed to transfer troops to another province, to move not whole legions but legionary detachments, which could be put under the command of junior officers. Salvius Rufus, a centurion, is found in command of *vexillationes* from no fewer than nine legions at the end of Vespasian's reign.[16] This system allowed the flexibility of brigading units and facilitated the rapid transfer of legionaries who could march without all the usual accompanying gear. In addition, the framework of military deployment in the provinces was left undisturbed if *vexillationes* and not whole legions were moved. In the Marcomannic wars Marcus Aurelius made extensive use of detachments drawn from the legions that defended the permanent camps in the area, while Septimius Severus had to put expeditionary armies together to fight his civil war campaigns.[17] Severus also stationed a legion at Albanum and probably increased the size of the garrison in Rome. But all these actions, while important for the future, were a response to immediate circumstances and should not be seen as a deliberate attempt to create the nucleus of a strategic reserve or develop a field-army.[18]

Rome's supervision of her territories, the management of frontier zones, her relationship with peoples outside the empire and the deployment of

[13] *ILS* 1356; *PIR*² L202; Pflaum, *Carrières*, no. 316. [14] See below, pp. 120–2.
[15] Roxan (1976) 61. [16] *ILS* 9200.
[17] Parker (1958) 168; Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* 124–5; Saxer (1967) 33–49.
[18] See above, pp. 9–10. Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* 184–5 argues that Severus created the nucleus of a field-army. See also E. B. Birley (1969).

the army underwent gradual change in the third century. However, this is difficult to evaluate. It is probably incorrect to define Roman military policy in terms of long-term strategical objectives, which saw the emergence of various systems designed to achieve 'scientific' defensible frontiers.[19] For one thing, the Romans lacked a high command or government office capable of giving a coherent direction to overall strategy, which was therefore frequently left to the decision of individual emperors and their advisers. Indeed the consistent application of an empire-wide strategy in the mid-third century was impossible, since many emperors were rapidly overthrown, central control was often feeble, and at various times parts of the empire were ruled independently of Rome, namely the Gallic empire of Postumus and the city of Palmyra under Odenathus. Military decisions were probably *ad hoc*, as emperors were forced into temporary defensive measures to limit damage, and then counter-attacked when circumstances and resources allowed.

In any case, the Romans lacked the kind of intelligence information necessary to make far-reaching, empire-wide decisions. Indeed they probably did not have a clear-cut view of frontiers, and came only slowly to the idea that a frontier should constitute a permanent barrier and a formal delineation of Roman territory.[20] Such delineation shows a remarkable variety. For example, in Germany and Britain an artificial barrier was erected, though even here the exact purpose is disputed; elsewhere a river or patrolled road seemingly formed an obstacle to hostile peoples. But rivers and roads and the whole military organization of roads, watch towers, guard posts, palisades and forts were not merely a defensive shield. They also served to assist the control of internal and lateral communications, facilitated the movement of Roman troops, and allowed the concentration in camps of large forces, which were available both to police the local population, and to repel major incursions or launch attacks. There was no prevailing defensive strategy, and no notion that the empire had abandoned all ambition for conquest.[21]

The disposition of the army in 235 shows in general terms the main strategical pre-occupations of the empire. Twelve legions and over 100 auxiliary units were concentrated along the Danube from Raetia to Moesia Inferior, while a further eleven legions and over eighty auxiliary units guarded Rome's eastern territories from Cappadocia to Egypt. The emergence of the Sassanid dynasty in Persia changed the balance of power, both in the east, by providing a direct if rather uneven threat to Roman influence and

[19] As argued by Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* ch. 2 *passim*.

[20] For the meaning of *limes* and the Roman concept of frontier, see Isaac (1988); Isaac, *Limits of Empire* ch. 9.

[21] Discussion of frontiers and military deployment in Mann (1979); Isaac, *Limits of Empire* ch. 9; Whittaker, *Frontiers* chs. 2, 3.

control on a long-term basis, and also in the empire as a whole, since Rome now had to deal with an offensive threat on two fronts. For the Danube tribes had combined into dangerous conglomerations and could sometimes threaten Italy itself and east–west communications.

Although Rome was seemingly slow to respond to these threats, some emperors did have the opportunity to give a measure of direction and coherence to military affairs. From his proclamation as Augustus in 253, Gallienus faced serious military problems and much of his reign was spent on campaign. The Gallic provinces were lost to the secessionist movement of Postumus, his father and joint emperor Valerian was captured by the Sassanid king Shapur and a semblance of Roman control in the east preserved only by the activities of Odenathus of Palmyra, Italy had to be defended against the Germans, there was a serious revolt by Ingenuus, and a catastrophic invasion by the Heruli.[22] Gallienus was not content to fight for his own survival but seems to have taken positive steps to reorganize his forces, by introducing an independent cavalry unit, by strengthening threatened territorial areas, and by changing the command structure of the legions. Later sources held that Gallienus was the first emperor to establish cavalry regiments (*tagmata*), presumably as a special force, since they had their own commander, Aureolus, who was considered to be very powerful and influential with the emperor.[23] Indeed Aureolus tried to overthrow Gallienus, and the next two emperors, Claudius and Aurelian, rose from the position of cavalry commander. This helps to show the status of the cavalry, which in the first instance Gallienus stationed at Milan. The whole force was designated as *equites* and a series of coins minted in Milan celebrates 'the loyalty of the cavalry'.[24] Gallienus recruited or assembled it from Dalmatians, Moors, *equites promoti* (seconded legionary cavalry) and *equites scutarii*, who may have retained a distinctive mode of fighting.[25] These *equites*, under the personal command of the emperor when present, seem to have operated independently of provincial governors and other army units, and it is to the strength of these troops, then commanded by Aureolus, that Zonaras ascribes the defeat of Ingenuus.[26] In addition, Milan itself, Verona and probably Aquileia were fortified on Gallienus' orders, and in a number of cases *vexillationes* were assembled from several legions and stationed at a central point in vital areas. Aquileia with its key role in the defence of northern Italy, received *vexillationes* from the legions of Pannonia Superior, Sirmium received detachments of legionaries from Germany and Britain along with their auxiliaries, Poetovio (Ptuj)

[22] De Blois, *Gallienus* 1–8; Mitford (1974) 169–70.

[23] Cedrenus 1, p. 454 (Bonn); Zon. XII.24–5 – describing Aureolus as *hipparchon*; Zos. 1.40.

[24] *Fides Equitum*: *RIC* V.1, p. 169, no. 445; note *ILS* 569, dated 269, showing troops designated *equites* in a composite force.

[25] Zos. 1.43.2; 52.3–4; Saxer (1967) 125. [26] Zon. XII.24.

on the river Drave guarding the approaches to Italy and east–west communications, and Lychnidus (Ohrid; now in the republic of Macedonia) in an important position for roads leading to Thessalonica and southern Greece, also had a garrison of legionary detachments.[27] In the development of the cavalry and fortified strong points garrisoned by legionaries, Gallienus perhaps aimed at a radical new strategy for dealing with waves of marauding tribes.[28] Yet the evidence hardly allows such a sweeping assertion. For instance, the creation of a mobile force at Milan was directed at a particular tactical and strategic problem. The widespread breakdown of Roman control in the Gallic provinces and the secessionist movement of Postumus threatened Italy itself. Meanwhile the Alamanni, who were particularly noted for their cavalry, had occupied the *Agri Decumates* and could also threaten Raetia and Italy. Significantly, Aureolus had orders to guard the Alps against Postumus but was also commander throughout Raetia.[29] So, Gallienus may not have intended his new *equites* to serve as a field-army including detachments of infantry, permanently removed from the normal structure of provincial commands. By 284 the force which he had concentrated at Milan had been scattered to different locations. Indeed there is no way of knowing how permanent the dispositions described above were intended to be, or if they had been assembled for a counter-offensive, or if the motives for a particular disposition were shared by an emperor's successor. Nevertheless, the significance of Gallienus' activities was that he demonstrated clearly the great value of strong cavalry units operating out of fortified strongholds, and the possibilities created by the independent existence of such forces under a separate commander, who could in turn be someone outside the traditional command structure. An atmosphere was being created in which more radical measures could be envisaged in dealing with Rome's military problems, and a series of individual responses by emperors to serious crises could gradually assume the status of a permanent solution.

Augustus had employed able equestrians to assist in the administration of the empire by giving them official posts. Either this was an example of the open-minded vigour of an emperor willing to widen and improve the group of available administrators, or necessity compelled him to use men from whose numbers many of his early henchmen had come, especially since in 31 B.C. many senators were dead, hostile or patently incompetent. Of course Augustus knew the traditions of Roman office holding and so proceeded carefully. From the start equestrians were used to supplement senatorial administrators in jobs that senators would perhaps be reluctant

[27] Discussion in *RE* XII.2 *s.v. legio*, cols. 1340–6; 1721–2; Saxer (1967) 53–7, and nos. 102–7; Pflaum, *Carrières* 919–21; de Blois, *Gallienus* 30–4.
[28] See de Blois, *Gallienus* 30–4. [29] Zos. 1.40.1; Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXXIII.17.

to hold. This fundamental trend was to continue and develop through two and a half centuries. A *senatus consultum* of A.D. 19 confirmed the status and responsibilities of the upper classes including the equestrian order, which was itself more formally organized by Tiberius in 23. Socially there was little to distinguish equestrians from senators and gradually more equestrians entered the administration, though they continued to perform the same kind of duties. Occasionally an equestrian could take over a senatorial post on a temporary basis, generally in an emergency, and the Severan emperors furthered this process though with no deliberate intention of undermining senatorial prerogatives.[30] Nevertheless, the civil wars (193–7) put great pressure on the relationship between emperor and senate, with the probable result that fewer senators were willing to serve in demanding and perhaps dangerous posts. The way had been prepared for Gallienus to review the role of senators and equestrians.

The deployment of *vexillationes* had long been part of Roman tactical thinking and had become especially common from the time of Marcus Aurelius, as both external and civil wars swept across provincial boundaries. These detachments were generally commanded by an equestrian (designated as *praepositus*) with a rank from the *equestris militia*, though centurions were increasingly used, presumably for small forces or low status functions.[31] Gallienus made great use of *vexillationes*, and so more equestrians were placed in responsible military commands. This was hardly a deliberate policy to advance men of equestrian rank, although it is clear that they were regarded as perfectly competent to assume more demanding duties. Similarly it made sense to promote centurions or senior centurions, men of proven competence to command a *vexillatio* and thence to an equestrian civil or military post.[32] However, Gallienus went further, by using an equestrian in areas normally reserved for senators, as commander of a legion and as *dux* in control of bodies of troops. Aurelius Victor claims that the emperor out of hatred for the senatorial class and fear for his own position, excluded senators from military service by edict. Victor is obviously hostile to Gallienus and it is open to doubt that a formal edict excluding senators from commands was ever published. Nevertheless, evidence from career inscriptions does suggest that after 260 senators were no longer appointed to command a legion (*legatus legionis*). They were replaced by equestrian prefects, and equestrians also took over the duties of the senatorial military tribunes (*tribuni laticlavii*), of whom there was one in each legion.[33] The

[30] The earliest known case of an *eques* taking over from a senator is probably in A.D. 88 – *ILS* 1374; see also Campbell, *ERA* 404–8; above, pp. 12–13.

[31] Saxer (1967) nos. 63–86; pp. 120–1, 129–31. More substantial bodies of troops were commanded by senators.

[32] De Blois, *Gallienus* 38.

[33] The other five tribunes in the legions were *equites*. The removal of senatorial *legati legionis*: Ensslin (1954) 1326.

status of the new prefects was distinguished by the title *vir egregius* and an individual was often designated *agens vice legati* (acting in place of the *legatus*); they were promoted probably from a variety of different posts, prefect of the camp, the equestrian *militia*, or chief centurion for the second time.[34] Such men will certainly have had more military training and experience than the non-specialist senators, who on many occasions had seen little military action, and who in a period of increasing military crisis were obviously not up to the duties required and who may even have been reluctant to serve in sufficient numbers. It seems that Gallienus decided unofficially not to consider senators for legionary commands. In time this became accepted practice.

One result was that the military experience of senators was still further restricted and it will have made less sense than before to appoint a senator with scant military service as governor of a province where he was commander-in-chief of several legions and auxilia, with authority over the much more experienced equestrian legionary prefects. Now, from the mid-third century men of equestrian rank were appointed to more senior posts with the title of *dux*. The *dux* had charge of a substantial body of soldiers and a certain initiative of action, and in previous practice would normally have been a senator.[35] It is likely that Gallienus furthered this trend by phasing senators out of provincial governorships involving the command of legionary troops and replacing them with *equites*. Undoubtedly several provinces continued to receive senatorial governors regularly, while in others there was no consistent policy of excluding senators.[36] However, the presence of a senatorial governor does not necessarily mean that he exercised military responsibilities. The last clear example of a senator in command of a campaign is Decianus, governor of Numidia probably in 260, who defeated the Bavares 'who were routed and slaughtered and their notorious leader captured'.[37] The career inscription of M. Aurelius Valentinianus who was *praeses* of Hispania Citerior with the rank of *legatus Augusti pro praetore* in the reign of Carus (282–3) does not prove that he had a military command; he may have remained in charge of the civil administration of the province, while retaining for reasons of tradition and prestige the usual title of a senatorial governor.[38] At the beginning of his reign Gallienus had no policy of removing senators from military responsibilities in the

[34] See *ILS* 545, 584; de Blois, *Gallienus* 39–41.

[35] Role of the *dux* in the earlier empire: Smith (1979); Saxer (1967) 53–7; see for example no. 107, an *eques* in charge of a *vexillatio* from four Pannonian legions; de Blois, *Gallienus* 37–8; the enhanced opportunities open to *equites* in army commands – ibid. 41–4.

[36] Malcus (1969) 217–26; Arnheim, *Senatorial Aristocracy* 34–7.

[37] *ILS* 1194; cf. 5786 – Numidia was governed by an equestrian prefect by Diocletian's time.

[38] *ILS* 599. Arnheim, *Senatorial Aristocracy* 35–6 argued that the designation of Valentinianus as *legatus pro praetore* indicated a military command.

provinces, but he was prepared to use and promote equestrians as the situation demanded, did not feel constrained by the old traditions of senatorial appointments, and found it easier to innovate because the relative success of his armies demonstrated the competence of equestrian commanders, and because senators had now perhaps less desire to assume demanding military duties. In addition, he may have found it easier to make changes precisely because of his unimpeachable senatorial background. He clearly advanced a number of trends which had already developed by the early third century, and by 268 had effectively decided that equestrians should command the bulk of Rome's armies. Moreover, the equestrians so employed tended to be schooled in military affairs and often promoted from highly experienced centurions and senior centurions.

Another trend that first appeared in the mid-third century and developed under Gallienus was the use of the title *protector* by military officers – legionary prefects, *tribuni militum* of the urban troops, and also sometimes commanders of *vexillationes*.[39] At this early stage the word seems to imply special association with the emperor and may have served largely as a mark of honour to favoured men, particularly those attached to the bodyguard in Rome. There is no evidence to suggest that Gallienus intended the *protectores* to serve as a kind of college or training school for officers. The fact that some *protectores* had distinguished careers in Gallienus' service means only that those who had caught his eye for whatever reason and had been marked out by receiving the title of *protector*, benefited from the emperor's continuing interest and support. Indeed there are fewer typical careers in these years, and less of a pattern, with more scope therefore for the emperor to intervene and promote. But there was a line of advancement for non-commissioned officers to *praepositus*, *dux* of a small group of *vexillationes*, and then the command of an auxiliary cohort or *ala*. From here or from the post of senior centurion, the way was open to commands of special responsibility, then the military tribunates in Rome, and then the command of a legion and provincial governorships.[40]

Despite the absence of reliable evidence, it is likely that Gallienus' major achievements were confirmed by Claudius II (268–70) and by Aurelian (270–5), a competent and conscientious emperor who coped splendidly with the empire's continuing military problems. He maintained a separate cavalry force, based on a nucleus of Dalmatians and Moors, which played a vital part in the defeat of Zenobia. The Romans lured on the heavy Palmyrene cavalry by pretending to flee and then counter-attacked with devastating results.[41] It is indeed a plausible suggestion by the

[39] See in general *RE* Suppl. XI *s.v. protector* cols. 1113–23; *ILS* 545, 546, 569, 1332; *AE* 1965.9.

[40] See de Blois, *Gallienus* 37–44.

[41] Zos. 1.50.3–4; 1.52.3; in a second battle the infantry won the day. Heavy cavalry units in the third/fourth century Roman army: Eadie (1967) 168–71.

Historia Augusta that Aurelian himself had commanded the cavalry under Claudius.[42] However, the army which he assembled in the east, apart from the cavalry, consisted of Pannonians, Moesians, the Gallic legions, praetorians and detachments of the eastern troops including 'club bearers' from Palestine. This force, clearly assembled from different parts of the empire for a special purpose, can hardly be described as a field-army, yet it did contain crack troops and specialist units which were to be part of the field forces from Diocletian onwards, and here Aurelian may have extended the work of Gallienus. Marcellinus, who was appointed as prefect of Mesopotamia in the aftermath of the Roman victory, had responsibility for 'all the east'.[43] Here is another example of the continuing practice of appointing an equestrian to a post of special responsibility. Marcellinus was adlected into the senatorial order, becoming consul in 275, and may be identical with the Aurelius Marcellinus whom Gallienus had appointed as *dux* in charge of fortifying Verona in 265.

Aurelian further strengthened the army by recruiting two thousand horsemen from Rome's erstwhile enemies the Vandals, and also received offers of troops from the Iuthungi and the Alamanni.[44] This was very much in the Roman tradition of recruiting good fighting peoples from the periphery of the empire and channelling them into the Roman system.[45] By 284, despite the continuing civil wars and usurpations, the military structure of the empire had survived and had indeed been strengthened and developed in some ways. Thanks to the efforts of some of their predecessors, Diocletian and his colleagues had the means and the opportunity to reassess the deployment and organization of the Roman army.

II. THE MILITARY REFORMS OF DIOCLETIAN AND CONSTANTINE

Diocletian inherited a long-established military structure, in which many key provinces contained two legions and auxilia; there was also at least the nucleus of an independent force which contained a large body of cavalry. Unfortunately the evidence for Diocletian's activities is scanty and indeed the source problems for the period 235–84 sometimes make it difficult to say who was responsible for innovations. The *Notitia Dignitatum* has great value since it reflects Diocletian's general arrangements, but much of it was written at the end of the fourth century and it does not record losses incurred during that century.[46] In a famous comparison of Diocletian and

[42] *SHA, Aurel.* 18.1. [43] Zos. 1.60. [44] Dexippus, *FGrH* no. 100 F6.

[45] See above, pp. 112–13.

[46] See Jones, *LRE* 1417–50; Goodburn and Bartholomew, *Notitia Dignitatum*. For a general survey of the late Roman army, see Jones, *LRE* ch. 17; Southern and Dixon (1996); in the east: Isaac, *Limits of Empire*.

Constantine, Zosimus praises the former because through his foresight the frontiers of the empire were everywhere defended with cities, garrisons and fortifications which housed the whole army. No one could breach these defences because at every point there were forces capable of resisting any attack. Constantine by contrast, withdrew many troops from the frontiers, presumably to build up his field-army, but merely succeeded in destroying their discipline by an easy life in the cities.[47]

Yet the evidence suggests that Diocletian may have tried to preserve the role of an independent field force. A papyrus of 295 concerning the collection of chaff for imperial troops on campaign in Egypt, refers to 'Martianus *optio* of the *comites* of the emperor'.[48] Similarly in 295, Dion, proconsul of Africa, in judging the Christian Maximilianus, was able to point to the Christian soldiers serving in the *comitatus* of Diocletian and Maximian and the two Caesars.[49] Then, an inscription which must be earlier than the abolition of the praetorians by Constantine in 312, celebrates a soldier who served as a *lanciarius*, apparently ranking above the legionaries but below the praetorians. Elsewhere the *lanciarii* are associated with the imperial *comitatus*.[50] Now, the *Notitia Dignitatum* ranks cavalry units called *comites* high in the field–army.[51] This evidence suggests that the *comitatus* was rather more than the emperor's personal entourage and that Diocletian certainly had a field-army, though it may not yet have been central or crucial in his overall strategy. For instance, the papyrus of 295, which seems to refer to soldiers assembled for an expedition in Egypt, mentions detachments from the legions IV Flavia, VII Claudia, and XI Claudia under *praepositi*, and also an auxiliary *ala*, and therefore suggests that by itself the *comitatus* was not large enough to sustain a campaign but required the addition of frontier troops.[52] Moreover, when apportioning privileges to his veterans, Diocletian distinguished only legionaries and cavalry *vexillationes* as deserving special privileges, and those serving in the auxiliary cohorts as inferior. The field-army was not important enough at this stage to warrant the privileged treatment it received later.[53] In fact it may have been

[47] Zos. II.34.1–2.

[48] *P. Oxy*. I.43, recto, col. ii, ll. 17, 24, 27. Diocletian himself was not present until 297/8: see Bowman (1976) 158–9.

[49] *Acta Maximiliani* II.9 (Knopf and Krüger, 86–7); Musurillo (1972) 246.

[50] *ILS* 2045; cf. 2781, 2782.

[51] *Occ*. VI.43; *Or*. VI.28.

[52] *P. Oxy*. I.43, recto, col. ii, ll. 21–3; col. iv, ll. 11–17; col. v, ll. 12–13, 23–4. Jones, *LRE* 54–5 surmises that detachments from I Italica, V Macedonica and XIII Gemina were also present in this army; note also Seston (1955); van Berchem, *L'Armée* 113–18 argued that the *comitatus* was merely the traditional escort of the emperor.

[53] *CJ* VII.64.9; X.55.3 – 'Therefore exemption from offices and personal obligations is properly conferred on veterans only if, after twenty years service in a legion or *vexillatio*, it can be shown that they have received either an honourable or a medical discharge. Since you say that you served in a cohort, you must understand that it is pointless for you to demand such an exemption for yourself.' For the later period, contrast *CTh* VII.20.4.

limited in size, though the evidence does not explicitly suggest that the emperor reduced it. In reality the *comitatus* had not been formalized in Diocletian's time, and units could therefore be removed from it to perform another function if required; it would then depend on circumstances if they could be returned to service in the *comites*. This field-army included some high standard legions, the *Ioviani* and the *Herculiani*, which were named after Diocletian and Maximian and appear as the most senior Palatine legions in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.[54] Second, there were *equites promoti* and *comites seniores*, who perhaps preserved elements of Gallienus' special cavalry force (see above, p. 116). Third, the *protectores*, of which Diocletian had been commander at his accession, now had much more the role of a personal bodyguard.[55] The army on campaign in Egypt included *protectores*, who are found ordering chaff, and an inscription found at Nicomedia, which was often the imperial headquarters in the tetrarchy, records an 'account keeper of the *protectores*'.[56] The *protectores* in fact seem to have been a corps serving with the emperor, consisting of junior officers, or men with officer potential, who had the expectation of higher posts.[57] Finally, the *scholae* of *scutarii*, *clibanarii* (mailed soldiers), and non-Roman troops who made up the fourth-century imperial bodyguard in attendance on the emperor, perhaps originated in the tetrarchic period, and accompanied the *comitatus*.[58]

Diocletian's primary interest, nevertheless, was to strengthen the permanent military presence in the key provinces. The top ranking elements of his army were the legions and cavalry *vexillationes*, then the infantry cohorts and cavalry *alae*.[59] Throughout the eastern territories there were probably 28 legions, 70 *vexillationes*, 54 *alae*, and 54 cohorts. In the west, the Danube area had 17 legions, the total number of *alae* and cohorts is difficult to recover, but Raetia had 3 *vexillationes*, 3 *alae*, and 7 cohorts; in Britain there remained 2 or 3 legions, 5 *alae*, 17 cohorts, 3 *vexillationes*, and about 16 other formations; Spain contained 1 legion and 5 cohorts. Germany had 3 legions that can certainly be identified, with perhaps 7 more. These dispositions show the same anxiety as in the early third century. The rich eastern provinces needed protection against the Persians, while in the west, the Danube and the approaches to Italy itself absorbed much of the empire's military resources. Africa, however, with 8 legions, 18 *vexillationes*, 7 cohorts, and 1 *ala*, stands out as a new area of imperial

[54] Jones, *LRE* 1437; see also 52–3. The Palatine legions were closely attached to the person of the emperor.

[55] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXXIX.1.

[56] *P. Oxy*. I.43, recto, col. ii, l. 7; col. iv, ll. 18–20; *ILS* 2779 (probably of tetrarchic date).

[57] *ILS* 2781 may give a fairly typical career – 'Valerius Thiumpus served in legion XI Claudia, was chosen to serve in the divine *comitatus* as *lanciarius*, then served as *protector* for five years, was discharged, and became prefect of the legion II Herculiana.'

[58] Lact. *DMP* 19.6; *CTh* XIV.17.9. [59] See above, n. 53.

concern. In all, by 305, the 33 legions of the Severan era had been increased to at least 67, and, on the example of Egypt and the eastern provinces, it is likely that the auxiliaries had been increased in proportion.[60]

Diocletian continued the process established in the third century of increasing the number of existing provinces by subdividing them. The intention was primarily to enhance the control of the central government and improve tax collecting, rather than to alter the strategical lay-out of the empire or to prevent revolts.[61] The military infrastructure of the empire remained intact in that there was a combination of armed and unarmed provinces, the armed forming a kind of protective ring. Many of the armed provinces still contained one or two legions with a mixture of other troops, cavalry *vexillationes*, *alae* and cohorts, though in others the garrison had been greatly increased. The military responsibility lay as usual with the provincial governors, who were now all of equestrian rank, although there were still senatorial proconsuls in Africa and Asia who did not command troops. Senior officers appear in the tetrarchy with the title *dux*, apparently with military duties covering more than one province. For example, an inscription dated 293–305 mentions one Firminianus, *vir perfectissimus*, who was *dux* of the frontier zone in Scythia; Carausius is described by Eutropius as responsible for the defence of the district of Belgica and Armorica.[62] The appointment of a *dux* was unusual at this time and may have been a temporary response to a local emergency.

The number of troops used by Diocletian to defend the increased number of provinces is much disputed. Undoubtedly he greatly augmented the number of legions and also probably the auxiliary units.[63] But each legion and auxiliary unit may have had a smaller complement than those of the Severan period. The evidence is inconclusive. Of our literary authorities, Lactantius alleges that each of the tetrarchs sought to have a larger number of troops than earlier emperors had employed when they were sole masters. The army was certainly not quadrupled, but Lactantius' view that it was substantially increased gains a little support from John Lydus who gives precise figures of 389,704 for the Diocletianic army and 45,562 for the fleets, although it is not clear if he refers to the beginning or end of the reign, and from Zosimus who remarks that in 312 Constantine had 98,000 and Maxentius 188,000 men (of whom 80,000 were in Italy) – a total of 286,000 presumably for the western part of the empire. Moreover, Agathias, writing in the period after Justinian, says that in the times past the army had contained 645,000.[64] The precision of some of these figures

[60] Jones, *LRE* 56–60. [61] Jones, *LRE* 42–6; Williams, *Diocletian* 104–6; Barnes, *NE* 201–25.

[62] *ILS* 4103; Eutr. IX.21; in general see van Berchem, *L'Armée* 17–18, 22–4, 53–4, 59; Jones, *LRE* 44.

[63] See above, n. 60. For the Severan army, see above pp. 4–10.

[64] John Lydus, *De Mensibus* I.27; Zos. II.15; Agathias V.13 – referring to the period before 395; Lact. *DMP* 7.2. The orator in *Pan. Lat.* XII(IX).3 says that Maxentius had 100,000 troops (perhaps an

suggests the use of official records, but the difficulty here is that these may have been inaccurate because of fraud and because they were not drawn up on rigorous criteria. So, the paper strength may have far exceeded the real numbers, and in the late army the size of units was perhaps not always consistently maintained.[65] However, a papyrus listing the distributions of donatives and payments in kind to legionaries and auxiliary troops in Upper Egypt between 299 and 300 offers an opportunity to calculate numbers precisely by dividing the totals disbursed by the amount individuals received.[66] Unfortunately the papyrus refers only to legionary *vexillationes* and does not reveal the strength of a full legion. Moreover, the papyrus itself is not explicit and interpretation depends on external evidence and a number of assumptions. In particular the norm for payments in kind can be established only by comparison with conditions in the sixth century. Therefore estimates of the strength of the units vary widely, from Severan levels to a little over a quarter or a third of these totals.[67] Archaeology cannot help much, since, although the site and lay-out of some Diocletianic forts for auxiliaries have been discovered and seem to be smaller than those in the principate, there is no way of knowing if a section of an auxiliary unit was stationed there for a special purpose, or if one unit was divided up among several forts.[68] In the Constantinian period units called legions in the *comitatus* apparently numbered 1,000 men. But there is certainly no reason to suppose that Diocletianic legions were as small as this; indeed, the balance of probability is that most units were roughly of the same size as in the principate. First, on the Danube some of the legions were stationed in up to six different places and such detachments would have been ridiculously small had the basic legionary establishment not itself been substantial. Similarly, the III Diocletiana legion had one base in Egypt and three in the Thebaid.[69] Secondly, it seems unlikely that Diocletian would organize so many new legions and auxiliary units of a much smaller size than the usual establishment. If he merely wanted to retain the total army size, then it would have made more sense to build up the existing units to their full complement. If a legion continued to have about 5,280 men and most cavalry *vexillationes* and auxiliary units 500 men, the Severan army may have been at least doubled, though doubtless the real establishment rarely matched the paper strength.

The development of Roman fort building in these years produced more easily defensible structures with thicker walls, more towers, fewer gates

exaggeration of the 80,000 in Italy mentioned by Zosimus), and that Constantine's army consisted of one quarter of his total forces.

[65] See MacMullen (1980) 456–8. [66] *P. Panop. Beatty* 2.

[67] Jones, *LRE* 1257–9, 1280 nn. 171, 173; Duncan-Jones (1978); note the cautionary remarks by MacMullen on the use of this papyrus (1980) 457; see also Alston (1994) 119–20.

[68] Duncan-Jones (1978) 553–6. [69] Jones, *LRE* 681, 1440–1, 1438.

and fighting platforms where large numbers of men and artillery could be stationed.[70] These forts were intended to protect communications along roads and rivers, and to facilitate defence. Some of the best preserved are the British forts of the Saxon shore to protect the east and south-east coasts from sea raiders like the Frisii, Franks and Saxons.[71] The best example of a network of fortified posts is the *Strata Diocletiana*, which ran from north-east Arabia to Palmyra and the Euphrates. Here a chain of forts at twenty-mile intervals guarded the limits of Roman occupation, linked by a military road whose rear was protected by mountains. The forts were garrisoned by infantry cohorts, though two contained cavalry *vexillationes*. In addition, the legion I Illyricorum was on the frontier at Palmyra, with III Gallica just behind at Danaba. Further north, frontier posts at Oresa and Sura were held by the IV Scythica and XVI Flavia respectively, while in Osrhoene the crucial point of the frontier at Circesium was occupied by the IV Parthica. The intention was apparently to hold the line of Roman territorial control by stationing the legions on the frontier. This arrangement could cope both with nomadic raiders and more substantial incursions from the Sassanids without permitting serious damage to Roman territory. The forts in the area behind the frontiers, when they can be identified, are too small to be a serious impediment to a major incursion, and were presumably intended as a rallying point for troops if they were forced to retreat.[72] Roman practice in Syria and Arabia under Diocletian had complex motives, and cannot be taken to indicate that a policy of shallow and structured defence-in-depth had been adopted throughout the empire.[73]

If Diocletian had a policy, it was to hold the limits of Roman territory, prevent barbarian incursions, and attack where appropriate. This looked back to the days of Hadrian and the Antonines. The differences between Diocletian and his predecessors of the mid-third century should not be exaggerated. What he achieved was doubtless the ambition of all emperors, but circumstances, not policy or doctrine had prevented them. Diocletian was in control of the whole empire, and the creation of the tetrarchy temporarily ended the disruption of civil war and ensured that responsibility for the military affairs of the empire was shared. He seized the opportunity to reassert Roman influence, according to the needs and circumstances of each area of the empire, but largely by establishing sufficient troops permanently stationed in strategically sensitive provinces. A field-army existed, which

[70] See von Petrikovits (1971).

[71] Williams, *Diocletian* 99–101; Frere, *Britannia* 224, 242, 337–8; Salway (1981) 299–300; Johnson, *Saxon Shore*. The date of these forts is disputed. It is likely that they were begun by Probus and perhaps modified later by the usurper Carausius.

[72] Evidence and discussion in van Berchem, *L'Armée* 3–6; Bowersock (1971) 236–42; Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* 176–7; Mann (1979) 180–1; Isaac, *Limits of Empire* 161–71.

[73] As argued by Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* ch. 3.

could be increased by detachments from territorial troops if necessary, and the large number of cavalry *vexillationes* in the east and in Africa show that in these areas security was not conceived of as a defensive or static operation; greater mobility and the proximity of the high-status legions to the frontiers permitted counter-attacks in order to disrupt potential enemies, and expeditions of aggrandisement to keep Roman prestige high.

Diocletian's changes may have made the empire militarily more secure, but the increased number of soldiers also posed serious problems for recruitment. The government's response was to develop conscription and insist that veterans' sons joined up. A decision by Constantine in 313 probably confirms the practice under Diocletian – 'Of the veterans' sons who are fit for military service, some indolently refuse to perform compulsory military duties and others are so cowardly that they wish to evade the necessity of military service by mutilation of their own bodies.'[74] Lactantius, criticizing the great increase in the soldiery, also points out the intolerable burden of providing men for the levy.[75] Diocletian apparently made it the responsibility of the city government (the city being responsible for its territory) or individual landowners to produce recruits annually. By the fourth century, landowners combined in groups to meet this obligation – the *protostasia* or *prototypia*, and these technical terms were already current in Diocletian's day.[76] These levies were a great incubus which people paid to avoid; so, the government accepted money in lieu of recruits (*aurum tironicum*), which may also date from the late third century.[77] Money raised in this way could be used to encourage the enlistment of fighting peoples from outside Roman territory. In the east many *alae* and cohorts are listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* bearing the names of tribes who had fought Rome, for instance, Alamanni, Franks, Vandals. The practice of settling barbarians inside Roman territory on specially provided lands and then enjoining military service on their descendants was already established in the Tetrarchy, as pointed out by the anonymous Gallic orator in 297: '–now the barbarian farmer produces corn . . . and indeed even if he is summoned for the levy he presents himself speedily, reduced to complete compliance and totally under our control, and is pleased that he is a mere slave under the name of military service'.[78]

It is unlikely that in the disturbed conditions of the third century emperors had been able to keep much consistency in the payment of the army's emoluments. Evidence from Diocletian's reign is confined to the Egyptian papyrus which requests the authorities in Panopolis to provide payment for

[74] *CTh* VII.22.1. [75] *DMP* 7.5.

[76] *CJ* X.42.8; 62.3. Note also Vegetius, 1.7 – *indicti possessoribus tirones*. Cf. *Acta Maximiliani* 1.1 (*temonarius* – the agent who collected the *temo* or recruiting tax).

[77] Rostovtzeff (1918); Jones, *LRE* 615. [78] *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V).9.1–4; de Ste Croix (1981) 509–18.

the *stipendia* of military units in Upper Egypt, and details the total amount of *stipendium*, donatives and corn ration for the different units.[79] However, interpretation of this document is problematic, not least because it is unclear if the payments involved represent the entire cost of the soldiers' upkeep.[80] In any case, the military pay scale was only nominal in view of the rate of inflation, but regular donatives celebrating the birthday and the accession of the ruling emperors, and smaller donatives for the consulships of the Caesars will have significantly boosted soldiers' income.[81] In addition, legionaries received an allowance of meat and salt, while auxiliaries received corn. Diocletian himself, in the preamble to his edict on prices, complained that his soldiers consumed most of their salary and donatives in a single purchase. This of course was an exaggeration, but emperors needed the enthusiastic loyalty of their troops, and so no effort was spared to requisition from the populace the materials needed to pay the army in kind and provide for other state needs. However, Diocletian organized this on an orderly basis so that the tax system of the empire could be geared to the collection of essential items according to the assessment of each province.[82]

Constantine significantly altered the balance of Rome's military forces established by Diocletian. He increased the size and importance of the field army, the *comitatenses*, distinguishing it clearly from the frontier troops (*ripenses* or *limitanei*) and conferring on it certain privileges.[83] The earliest mention of this distinction is the law of 325, but it may date from about 312 when Constantine, who controlled the Gauls, withdrew about one quarter of his troops to fight Maxentius.[84] For in the *Notitia Dignitatum* many of the foremost units of the field-army came from Gaul and western Germany. Constantine's *comitatenses* consisted of infantry legions (perhaps some only 1,000 strong), new infantry *auxilia*, and cavalry *vexillationes* (probably 500 strong), and was certainly based on elements of the Diocletianic field force – the *comites*, *equites promoti*, *lanciarii* (veteran legionaries), and the *Ioviani* and *Herculiani* (recruited by Diocletian).[85] To these were added the *Divitenses*, a detachment of the II Italica from Divitia in Noricum, the *Tungricani* who presumably had been stationed in the land of the

[79] *P. Panop. Beatty* 2.

[80] For earlier pay rates see Brunt (1950); Jahn (1983); M. A. Speidel (1992); Alston (1994). The papyrus: see above, n. 67; Duncan-Jones (1978).

[81] E.g. soldiers in legions and vexillations received 1,250 *denarii* for the birthday of an Augustus.

[82] Jones, *LRE* 61–6, 626–30.

[83] *CTh* VII.20.4–17, June 325. *Cohortales* and *alares* are now classed as third grade troops. Cf. Brigetio Table *FIRA* I, no. 93 (*ARS* no. 301 and Campbell (1994): no. 393); van Berchem, *L'Armée* 83–8; Wolff (1986) 110–11. I take both *limitanei* and *ripenses* as referring to territorial troops, the latter indicating that, in some areas, rivers served to delimit Roman territory; but cf. Isaac (1988) 141–2.

[84] *Pan. Lat.* XII(IX).3. [85] See above, pp. 120–2.

Tungri, the *Primani*, *Undecimani* (units made up from old legions), and detachments from various provinces, like the *Moesiaci*. The *auxilia* were apparently newly constituted units, some of them named after elements of their military dress (the *cornuti*), many others bearing the names of tribes in Germany or on the Gallo-German frontier.[86] The *comitatenses* were placed under the command of two new officers – the *magister peditum* (infantry commander) and the *magister equitum* (cavalry commander), although the emperor was usually present to take personal command of campaigns.[87]

Constantine continued his military reorganization by abolishing in 312 the praetorian guard and the *equites singulares*, which Diocletian had reduced to the status of a military guard for Rome.[88] In Constantine's eyes the guard had disgraced itself by supporting Maxentius. The protection of the emperor's person was now increasingly the preserve of the *scholae palatinae*, which Constantine reorganized and developed. At some date after 324 the emperor laid down that the *scholae* of shield-carrying troops and mailed shield-carrying troops should receive food rations in the city of Constantinople.[89] There was also a *schola* of foreign bodyguards (*gentiles*) which had existed under Diocletian. All these troops were personally associated with the emperor and were under the administrative control of the *magister officiorum*. Moreover, the *protectores divi lateris* also attended the emperor's person and were divided into two corps with the *protectores domestici* having higher rank than ordinary *protectores*. They were apparently divided into *scholae* of infantry and cavalry and the membership was varied, ranging from promoted soldiers like Valerius Thiumpus to sons of officers, and members of well-off families.[90] Emperors hoped that such men would serve them in further posts. So as well as providing protection and building up personal loyalty and affection, the *protectores* helped to provide more senior officers for the army.

Constantine's development of the field-army may have weakened the forces available for permanent deployment in the provinces.[91] However, many of the units in the *comitatenses* had existed in Diocletian's time or were new creations. From time to time units could be withdrawn from the frontiers on a temporary basis to supplement the field-army – hence the name *pseudo-comitatenses*. This does not mean that the basic policy of military deployment was altered. The *ripenses* or *limitanei* (territorial troops)

[86] *ILS* 2346, 2777; Jones, *LRE* 98, 1437.
[87] The earliest known *magister* (*equitum*) is Hermogenes in 342.
[88] Lact. *DMP* 26.3; Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XL.25; Zos. II.17. [89] *CTh* XIV.17.9.
[90] Jones, *LRE* 1265, n. 64 argues for a Constantinian date for the *protectores domestici*; two corps: *CTh* VI.24.5 (392); Thiumpus: *ILS* 2781.
[91] As alleged by Zosimus; see above pp. 120–1.

were organized for the most part as they had been under Diocletian, and their status remained high since in the law of 325 Constantine classes them with the *comitatenses* in respect of most of their privileges.[92] Furthermore, in the provinces of Scythia, Dacia, Valeria, the two Moesias and the two Pannonias, the emperor modified existing arrangements by removing *alae* and organizing all cavalry in *vexillationes* or new *cunei equitum*; most of the cohorts were replaced by the new infantry *auxilia*.[93] It is difficult to say how far this was simply a reorganization of existing units and also how many new units were created. Some of the *auxilia* seem to have been recruited locally from the area where they were stationed. But in general Constantine's army was probably little bigger than that of Diocletian. The command of the *ripenses* was entrusted to *duces* each of whom was responsible for a section of the frontier, which might include the territory of several civil provinces.[94] These officials were responsible to the *magistri peditum* and *equitum*, the praetorian prefects having lost all active military duties after 312, and through them to the emperor.[95] The provincial governors (*praesides*) were normally responsible only for the civil administration of their provinces.

Zosimus believed that Constantine's overall policy had led to the military break-up of the western empire by his own day. This judgement is too harsh. Roman rule in some form survived in the west into the fifth century and such momentous events as the fall of an empire can hardly be ascribed to the actions of an individual. Zosimus has been excessively influenced by his dislike of Constantine as a propagator of Christianity. To traduce an emperor's military ability and achievements was especially effective. Constantine indeed was not a dramatic innovator; he preserved the essential features of Diocletian's approach but recognized that neither the men nor the resources were available to concentrate on a static territorial deployment of the army. So, a substantial field-army was developed to move relatively quickly to a threatened area and provide a high status force to intimidate the enemy and impress the provincials. This army, personally commanded by the emperor, naturally became the principal guarantor of his power, especially from the late fourth century onwards, but this was not necessarily the main motive of Constantine. Nor did he barbarize the army. The recruitment of foreign peoples into the army was not new and there is no definite evidence that he substantially increased this. He was assisted in his war against Licinius by the Frankish commander Bonitus, but this

[92] *CTh* VII.20.4. Jones, *LRE* 635. The major distinction is that *comitatenses* received an honourable medical discharge if invalided out for any reason at any time during their service; *ripenses* received this only if they were discharged because of wounds, after fifteen years service.

[93] For the date of these changes, see Jones, *LRE* 99.

[94] E.g. *ILS* 701 – *dux* of Egypt, the Thebaid and the two Libyas.

[95] Zos. II.33.3.

does not prove that he had a policy of using Germans in army commands. Rather, he was prepared to employ men of talent whom he could trust where they could best serve the state. In the context of the early fourth century, Constantine's arrangements probably provided the best chance of preserving the territory and prestige of the Roman empire.

CHAPTER 6

THE EMPEROR AND HIS ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 6A

GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS

ELIO LO CASCIO

A long tradition of studies has represented the third century as a watershed, or at least as a moment of intersection separating two radically different, even opposed, worlds.[1] More specifically with regard to the imperial authority, it has identified two different ways of governing the empire, of legitimating the exercise of imperial power and even of providing a self-representation.[2] According to this view, the clean break took the form of a 'crisis', which to a certain extent already revealed some of the weaknesses that eventually brought about the dissolution of a unified imperial organism in the west during the fifth century.[3] It has also been held that such contrasting methods of exercising power corresponded to equally radical differences in how the administration was organized, at both central and peripheral levels. Indeed, it has even been claimed in a general way that it was during the fourth century, with the increasingly autocratic developments in imperial power, that we begin to detect a sharper distinction between government and administration, between political directive and administrative implementation – a distinction so characteristic of modern states with their division of powers.

According to this traditional view, therefore, the difference between the administrative organization of the principate and that of the late antique empire was both qualitative and quantitative. The second-century empire was run by provincial governors of senatorial rank, equestrian procurators and an extensive *familia Caesaris*. That of the third century, on the

[1] In terms of constitutional history, the difference is conceived as a contrast between 'principate' and 'dominate': though see the concise criticism of this formulation in Bleicken (1978). On the problems of defining 'late antique', and in general on the periodization, see the acute comments of Giardina (1999).

[2] On this last aspect, see Kelly (1998); on e.g. the *adoratio purpurae*, see Avery (1940).

[3] Among the more recent discussions, dealing also with contemporaries' perceptions of the 'crisis', see MacMullen, *Response*; Alföldy, *Krise* and Strobel (1993). For a recent and updated treatment of the political and military events (with attention also to recently published documentation), see Christol (1997a). A somewhat traditional picture of the economic and social developments is given in K.-P. Johne (1993), though see also the essays collected in Schiavone, *Storia di Roma* III.1, and now Witschel (1999).

other hand, saw not only the increasing importance of staff from the army ranks, such as the *beneficiarii* operating in the legates' *officia*,[4] but also the exclusion of senators from military command, a process that eventually – during the subsequent tetrarchic period – led to a clear separation of duties between the civil and military staff involved in provincial government. At the same time, there was an alleged militarization of the bureaucracy, at least formally, while the *familia Caesaris* and its role disappeared altogether. The changes were also quantitative. The 'Deficit an Verwaltung',[5] which characterized the principate, was thus followed by a proliferation of positions at both central (see the creation of the various *scrinia*) and peripheral levels. Not unconnected with the increases in staff was another important trend, though in fact it had already started at the beginning of the principate: the decline of tax-farming in those areas where the system was still applied.[6] What these qualitative and quantitative transformations in the organization of the empire's administration showed (so it was thought) was intensified centralization – a trend that not only increasingly jeopardized the local autonomies, but also provided a key to understanding certain changes in the actual 'political' rule of the empire, such as the failure of a unified management of imperial power under the tetrarchy.

For some time, however, the idea that the imperial government and administration underwent traumatic change after a severe crisis has been radically challenged. The first aspect to be disputed was the notion that the presumed break in continuity can be legitimately considered as the result of a crisis. Even the very idea of a 'third-century crisis' is contested. (Indeed rejecting the notion of a 'third-century crisis' is consistent with the general reassessment of late antiquity and the abandonment of Gibbon's model, which presents the overall history of the empire in terms of 'decline and fall'.)[7] More generally, it is also observed that for such a polyvalent word as 'crisis' to have any justification, the boundaries of the situation it describes must surely be more clearly defined.[8] Undeniably, there were occurrences that can be summarily described as symptoms of 'crisis': the lack of continuity in imperial power,[9] above all during the fifty years of the so-called 'anarchy'; the threats of disintegration to the great unified state (from both outside attack and abundant recourse to usurpation); and the

[4] Jones (1949); von Domaszewski (1967) 61ff.; Ott (1995); Nelis-Clément (2000); see also Dise (1991) 110ff.

[5] Eck (1986) 117, with reference to Italy.

[6] For an approach that contests the traditional view that tax-farming was gradually replaced with systems of direct management, particularly through imperial functionaries, see Brunt, *RIT* ch. 17.

[7] See, for example, Bowersock (1988) and (1996) and Cameron (1998). In this respect I believe one can speak of a 'new orthodoxy'; i.e., one that aims to replace the terms 'decline' and 'fall' with that of 'transformation'.

[8] Cameron (1998) and, from a specific perspective (and with reference to Italy), Giardina (1997) ch. 5.

[9] Hartmann (1982).

collapse of the old financial and fiscal system, as well as the monetary system sustaining it.[10] In themselves, however, these factors do not seem sufficient to account for the radical transformation of a political organization and social structure.

Also questioned is the very idea of a break in continuity in the empire's administration, in the relationship between centre and periphery and in the routine existence of the various local cells. In this regard, due consideration must be given to the differences (both qualitative and quantitative) in the documentary evidence used to reconstruct the history of the empire in the second, third and fourth centuries. For the first decades of our period, those of the Severan age, there are only two contemporary histories: those of Cassius Dio (through much later, and partly fragmentary, extracts) and Herodian (up to the year 238). There is also a serious gap in the continuous narratives, if we exclude the much later biographies of the *Historia Augusta.* And there is even an interruption in the juridical evidence, at least as far as the works of the jurists are concerned: Justinian's *Digesta* contains no excerpts from the jurists active between the end of the Severan age and Diocletian, though the *Codex Iustinianus* does include a relatively high number of imperial constitutions from the central decades of the third century. As a result, the evidence we rely on is largely epigraphic and papyrological, as well as numismatic (helpful for establishing the chronology of the various imperial successions,[11] as well as, obviously, for studying the gradual depreciation of the currency and the various attempts at reform). For the fourth century the situation improves. There are many more literary sources (both pagan and Christian). And above all, the juridical documents are more abundant and much more informative, thanks to the nature of the fourth-century legal texts collected by the emperor Theodosius II in the following century. In fact it is largely due to the fragments of the imperial constitutions in the *Codex Theodosianus* of general application – the *leges generales* – that we can reconstruct the administrative organization and, to a certain extent, outline its gradual creation. By their very nature and composition, the collections of imperial legal texts prior to the *Codex Theodosianus* fail to offer the same possibilities, for they are private collections of imperial rescripts and do not concern the procedures of government and administration.

Naturally, the novelty of the constitutions in the *Codex Theodosianus* within the overall context of the sources has often unconsciously led historians to believe that the procedures of government and administration attested from the age of Constantine onwards were always genuine fourth-century innovations. Frequently, however, the only novelty is the fact that this specific category of document has survived for this period only.[12] It is largely to these constitutions that we owe the traditional view that the

[10] Lo Cascio (1993a). [11] Peachin, *Titulature.* [12] Turpin (1985).

empire's administrative organization became much larger and more sharply defined, and also more corrupt and oppressive: a view consistent with the idea that imperial power was increasingly authoritative and even despotic, with distinctly totalitarian features. Again, it is to these constitutions that we owe the traditional notion that the economy was dominated, much more than in the past, by the presence of a state affected by dirigisme. Yet how much of this traditional image depends on the different character and quality of the sources? To what extent can we speak of bureaucratization? Of a trend towards totalitarianism and dirigisme? Of increasingly oppressive imperial power? According to a widely accepted reconstruction of the procedures of government and administration between the Augustan and Constantinian ages, the emperor's management of the empire was characterized, on the one hand, by a substantial lack of initiative; on the other, by frenetic activism and personal commitment in the response to appeals from his subjects (whether individuals, *collegia*, communities or provincial *concilia*). Instead of acting, he managed the daily business in a reactive way, indeed mainly reacting at a personal level without delegating his decisions to an entourage of collaborators.[13] Unquestionably, for a long time the machinery of government and administration remained both 'personal' and 'rudimentary' in character, at both central and peripheral levels: personal because of its close links with the emperor and its origins as a domestic administration; rudimentary because the bureaucrats were unprofessional and amateurish, not to mention exiguous in number.[14] Besides, imperial action was severely restricted by inevitable objective difficulties, given the limited technological horizons within which it operated and given other problems such as the slow and arduous state of communications within the empire's vast territories. It has been held, therefore, that there was never any possibility of there being a political 'project' or programmatic line of action; or, for that matter, any interdependence and consistency in the various measures taken.

Such a notion of the emperor's 'protagonism' and such a perception of imperial action could partly be the result of the surviving evidence. To a very great extent the evidence consists of documents emanated by the emperor which individuals or communities thought fit to publicize on durable material, evidently because doing so was to their advantage or because it somehow enhanced their role and importance at a local level. Indeed it would appear, again on the basis of the surviving documentation, that the emperors rarely gave a negative answer to the petitions they

[13] Millar, *ERW*; cf. Millar (1990). But in particular see also the comments of Bleicken (1982).

[14] Brunt (1975); Saller (1980) and (1982); Hopkins (1980); and the reservations of Lo Cascio (1991a) 188ff. (= Lo Cascio (2000) 76ff.); see also Herz (1988b) 84 f.

received. This clearly suggests that as a rule the negative answers were not publicized.[15]

But even if we accept this overall interpretation of the 'emperor at work' in its broad outlines, there still remains a question to be answered: to what extent did this situation change between Augustus and Constantine, or between Marcus and Constantine? And, assuming there was a radical change, how fast was it?

It is undeniable that some changes were made in the administration. Also undeniable is the quantitative growth of the bureaucracy or 'civil service',[16] as well as the rise in social standing of those belonging to that bureaucracy. Thus, for example, the *notarii* and *exceptores*, the scribes recruited from the slaves and imperial freedmen during the first two centuries of the empire, were elevated in rank precisely because their duties brought them into close contact with the emperor. To the great scandal of some contemporary observers,[17] they were made *clarissimi* in the late empire. This increase in the number of bureaucrats also responded to objective needs. The process of Romanization, the diffusion of a market and monetary economy, the extension of citizenship – these were all factors that called for a wider and more thorough presence of central representatives to perform legal and administrative duties.[18] The local authorities and the city administrations did not decline in vitality, but their autonomy was to a certain extent restricted, especially after the reforms of the tetrarchy and the extension of the central representatives' duties, particularly in fiscal matters. There is some doubt, however, as to whether the rise in rank and increase in numbers was also accompanied by a genuine professionalization of the bureaucratic staff (as the role played by lawyers in various areas might suggest)[19] or by the introduction of more 'rational' criteria of employment and promotion. Equally, one can doubt whether corruption and dishonesty – documented in such abundance and detail in the imperial decrees of the *Codex Theodosianus* – had really multiplied to such an extent.[20] Quite plausibly, the increase in immoral incidents is attributable partly to the nature of the sources and partly to the simple fact that the bureaucratic staff was now so numerous.

What is certain is that there was a marked turnover, even a structural change, in the ruling class. And it is also certain that the process was accelerated not only by imperial action against the empire's opponents and by

[15] Eck (2000b) = Eck (1998) 107–45.

[16] Jones (1949) on the use of this term, the legitimacy of which could be questioned.

[17] Lib. *Or.* 11.44 and *passim*: cf. Teitler (1985).

[18] Dise (1991) on these considerations, with reference to the Danubian provinces.

[19] Lawyers, and not jurists, is the term chosen by Honoré, *E&L* p. vii, 'because their functions were basically the same in the ancient world as they are in the modern world'.

[20] Substantially different assessments of late antique corruption are given in MacMullen, *Corruption* and Kelly (1998); see also Noethlichs (1981).

economic difficulties, but also by the inability of families to reproduce, especially from the years of Marcus, when epidemic outbreaks introduced periods of high 'crisis' mortality. By the fourth century the equestrian order had, practically speaking, ceased to exist as the second order of the empire, while the role of the senate and of the senators had radically changed.[21] However, the process was more gradual than is generally thought. And its outcome was not the crystallization of the social hierarchy emerging from the third-century transformations: that 'caste system' which a long tradition of studies has identified as a typical feature of late antiquity. Mobility continued to be considerable, and may even have increased, at least at the higher levels of the social hierarchy. As for the partial regimentation of society, it may have been attempted as a means of obtaining the resources needed for the survival of a unified political organism, but its success was incomplete.[22] In any case, only in limited areas of social and economic life can one reasonably talk of the state's 'oppressive' presence. For example, the view that the late antique state was strongly dirigiste in economic matters seems frankly implausible and anachronistic. After all, the areas in which the emperor held a pre-eminent position as an economic agent were limited: in essence, they were the provisioning of Rome, of Constantinople (later) and of the armies. And even within those areas the prevailing scenario continued to be that of a free market, as is attested, for example, by the frequency and importance of the references to prices in the *forum rerum venalium* in the laws of the Codes.[23]

In conclusion, just as the economy, the organization of society and the very symbols of power in late antiquity drew on characteristics of the preceding era, radicalizing some though not entirely upsetting them (which allows us, among other things, to reconstruct those features *à rebours*), in the same way the government and administration arising out of the third-century 'crisis' was the height of novelty within a model that was unchanged in its essential features. While the second-century empire was perhaps less randomly governed and more 'bureaucratic' than is generally thought, its late antique counterpart was surely much less bureaucratized than is suggested by a deeply rooted tradition of studies. The age running from Severus to Constantine was an age of both fracture and continuity.

[21] Jacques (1986), however, insists, in a balanced way, on a certain degree of continuity among the senatorial families. On the disappearance of the equestrian order, see Lepelley (1986).

[22] See the classic essay by Jones (1970). [23] Lo Cascio (1998) and (1999a).

CHAPTER 6

THE EMPEROR AND HIS ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 6B

THE AGE OF THE SEVERANS

ELIO LO CASCIO

1. IMPERIAL DESIGNATION AND LEGITIMATION: THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION

The victorious contender of the civil war that followed Commodus' assassination, Lucius Septimius Severus, the governor of the province of Pannonia Superior and an African of Lepcis Magna, found it expedient to present himself as Pertinax's legitimate successor and hence assumed his name. Later, shortly after his first Parthian victory, when the decisive conflict with Albinus was imminent, in order to establish dynastic continuity (and also, as has been claimed,[1] to justify laying hands on the imperial dynasty's *patrimonium*), he went one step further. He had himself adopted into the Antonine family, after which he proclaimed himself son of the god Marcus and brother of Commodus, who was duly rehabilitated and also made a god. He even gave his eldest son Bassianus (known to the troops by his nickname Caracalla) the name Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, as well as the title of Caesar, thus designating him as *imperator destinatus* and successor.[2] In the situation of civil war after Commodus' death, such expedients were clearly expected to legitimize power – especially for an exponent of the 'African clan'[3] and of the new provincial families that had recently joined the empire's ruling class. Dynastic legitimation served to cement the patron–client relationship binding the emperor and his troops.[4] For the same reason the patron–client relationship was extended to other members of the imperial domus, such as Julia Domna, who became known

[1] Steinby (1986) 105; Mazza (1996a) 206.

[2] *ILS* 446, cf. 447; 8914 (where he still retains the *cognomen* Bassianus, which he would have dropped afterwards), of 197; cf. *CIL* VI.1984; VII.210 and the further attestations in Mastino (1981) 84; Magioncalda (1991) 33.

[3] A. R. Birley (1969) and *The African Emperor*; see also Daguet-Gagey (2000). Even after the elimination of Albinus' followers, the Africans chosen to govern the provinces (the imperial ones, above all) or appointed as praetorian prefect or urban prefect constituted a majority, compared to their Italic, eastern, Gallic and Spanish counterparts.

[4] Bleicken (1978).

as *mater castrorum*, a title previously held by Faustina the Younger. At the beginning of 198, after the conflict with Albinus, Caracalla was acclaimed as Augustus and his younger brother Geta as Caesar.

Septimius Severus' behaviour is revealing. His self-adoption and, even more, his rehabilitation of Commodus were political acts that confirmed (if further confirmation were necessary) that one of the basic problems facing a constitutionally undefined and indefinable regime – as was the principate from its very inception – was precisely its perpetuation as a regime. There was no acceptable constitutional solution for imperial succession, nor could there be. While the various magisterial prerogatives that made up the princeps' power were in themselves constitutionally definable, in no way did they transform that power into an organ of the *res publica*. A successor, therefore, was such not because he held a specific office, but in so far as he, a private citizen, had acquired that sum of powers and prerogatives by specific investiture.[5] In addition, the ambivalence of the emperor's person somewhat naturally confused the two levels of succession: private and family succession, on the one hand; succession to the imperium, on the other. And that's not all. It has authoritatively (and plausibly) been claimed that the Augustan revolution, rather than adding a new organ to the existing organs of the *res publica*, had if anything juxtaposed a whole new legal and administrative system with that of the *populus Romanus*.[6] It is also held that this 'duplication of legal systems' was one of the most singular features of that peculiar form of political organization known as the principate; and that for a long time it left its mark on the administrative organization at both central and peripheral levels. By definition the double legal system gave the princeps absolute discretionary power within the system that was being built up around his person and inevitably generated a certain amount of confusion between the princeps' 'public' functions and his private actions.

Although there was no constitutionally acceptable answer to the problem of succession, there were various solutions that were politically and propagandistically feasible in different situations. One – obviously – was plain dynastic succession. Another was the 'choice of the best man', using the private-law procedures of adoption. In itself adoption was not incompatible with the dynastic principle; and it also fulfilled the expectations of one of the main forces sustaining the regime and ensuring its stability: the army. (It is worth noting that during the second century adoption was accompanied by the marriage of the adopted son with the current Augustus' natural daughter.) In Septimius Severus' case, given the traumatic interruption of

[5] The literature is boundless: see the concise discussions in de Martino (1974) ch. 17; Guarino (1980); Serrao (1991); and Crook (1996a) and (1996b).

[6] Orestano (1968).

dynastic continuity at Commodus' death, it was hardly a matter of a 'good emperor' making his best choice before his death, but of self-designation by the presumed heir. But this was evidently not enough to diminish (let alone invalidate) the political and propagandistic efficacy of what was still a family succession, albeit a fictitious one.

Later events during the Severan principate confirm just how much weight was carried by dynastic ideology in imperial succession. For example, it is significant that the latent (and ultimately fratricidal) conflict between Caracalla and Geta should have appeared to the tradition as a conflict that could have even caused a division of the empire into two parts with two capitals – a solution thwarted by Julia Domna's intervention.[7] Equally significant are the events surrounding the succession of the praetorian prefect Macrinus after Caracalla's assassination. In spite of the army's support, it was doomed to failure precisely because it constituted an interruption of dynastic continuity. Macrinus was neither related to the Severans, nor even a senator. Indeed Herodian attributes to him a letter to the senate in which, speaking as a man without distinguished family connections but nonetheless expert in law and thus a potentially good administrator, he postulated that family succession was an insufficient guarantee that only the worthiest would perform the emperor's duties, and that elevation to the purple from the ranks even presented distinct advantages:

> nobility of birth in the case of patrician emperors degenerates into haughtiness, because they have a contempt for their subjects and think them vastly inferior to themselves. But those who reach the power from moderate means treat it carefully as a reward for their labour, and continue to respect and honour, as they used to, those who were once more powerful than themselves.[8]

After involving his own nine-year-old son in power, first as Caesar and then as Augustus, and after assuming (as well as making his son assume) the names of his predecessors Severus and Antoninus, Macrinus rapidly fell from power after the putsch of the *legio* III Gallica, which acclaimed Caracalla's young cousin Elagabalus. It was Julia Maesa (sister of Julia Domna and mother of Julia Soaemias and Julia Mamaea, in turn the respective mothers of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander) who helped spread the rumour among the troops that her two grandchildren were the natural sons of Caracalla. When some years later Elagabalus himself was eliminated (again on the prompting of Julia Maesa and Julia Mamaea) and succeeded by Severus Alexander, the succession presented no problem and was even facilitated by the fact that Elagabalus had adopted his cousin and made him Caesar.

[7] Herod. VIII.7.6: on which see in particular Kornemann (1930) 95ff. The project is regarded as plausible by many modern historians, and as an anticipation of Constantine's solution of two capitals and two senates: Mazzarino (1974) 148ff.

[8] Herod. V.1.5–7 (trans. Whittaker, *Herodian* 2: 9): cf. Mazza (1986) 23ff.

II. THE *DOMUS AUGUSTA* AND THE DYNASTIC IDEOLOGY

An early feature of the principate was the involvement of the *domus*, and of the women in the imperial family, in the construction of a dynastic ideology. This is attested in a series of epigraphic texts connected with Germanicus' assassination and with the uncustomary honours that followed the event; among these texts perhaps the most significant is the *SC de Pisone Patre*.[9] The importance of the *domus* gradually increased during the Julio-Claudian, Flavian and above all Antonine ages, especially after succession by adoption began to be consolidated by the adopted son's marriage to the adopter's daughter (as noted above).[10] In the Severan age the *domus* was elevated yet further when, from being merely *Augusta*, it became *sacra* and even *divina*, and was thus implicated in the sacral aura surrounding the emperor himself.[11]

As for the women of the Severan dynasty, they played a decisive role not only during the palace intrigues accompanying the moments of succession, but also in the daily exercise of imperial power and in the very construction of the princeps' image.[12] This was particularly evident during the successive reigns of the two adolescent emperors, for then the two sisters Soaemias and Mamaea championed two different, indeed conflicting, images of the emperor. With Elagabalus a new source of legitimacy was sought in the sacral, 'oriental' aura surrounding him as a high priest (by family descent) of the sun god of Emesa, whose cult was duly encouraged. The break with the image of a princeps respectful of the Roman traditions could not have been clearer. Severus Alexander, on the other hand, was presented as precisely that: the guardian of tradition and friend of the senate. The conflict between Elagabalus and Severus Alexander is thus a good illustration of the difficulties plaguing any attempt to give imperial power a basis of legitimation.[13]

Regarding the matter of self-representation, the immense power exercised by the women of the *domus Augusta* is also shown by the independence and importance of Julia Domna and Julia Mamaea, vis-à-vis not only the various pressure groups such as the army and senate, but also the entire population of the empire. Significantly, to the title of *mater castrorum* (which Julia Domna already possessed) Julia Mamaea added those of *mater senatus*, *mater patriae* and even *mater universi generis humani*.[14]

[9] Eck, Caballos and Fernández (1996). [10] On Plotina and Marciana, Temporini (1978).

[11] It is also no accident that the theme of the divine investiture of the princeps reappears on the coinage during Septimius Severus' reign: Fears (1977) 258ff.

[12] Kettenhofen (1979) who questions the influence of the Severan women on the supposed 'orientalization' of the imperial court.

[13] Naturally this is the portrayal of Severus Alexander espoused in the pro-senatorial historiography, particularly by the biographer of the *Historia Augusta*: recently Bertrand-Dagenbach (1990).

[14] *ILS* 485.

III. THE ROLE OF THE ARMY AND THE *PLEBS URBANA* IN IMPERIAL LEGITIMATION

One thing the two young cousins Elagabalus and Severus Alexander had in common was the fact that neither, for one reason or another, succeeded in winning (or better, maintaining) the support of the army. Such support continued to be decisive, as it had always been since the beginning of the principate. With the advent of Septimius Severus, however, we find a series of important novelties. First of all, there is no denying that the soldiers wielded greater power and that sustaining them (even economically) was an essential feature of imperial policy. The particular favour shown towards the army by the first two members of the Severan dynasty was certainly no invention of Cassius Dio.[15] But it was within the army that a new partition of power was beginning to emerge. There had been a decisive change in the respective roles of the legionary forces and the praetorian cohorts. What conspicuously emerged at the end of the civil war of 193 was armies composed of provincials and commanded by provincials. After Septimius Severus' seizure of power the praetorian cohorts that had put the empire up for auction were dissolved and replaced by regular soldiers from his own legions.[16] He then also stationed the II Parthica, one of his newly created legions, at Albano: unquestionably a revolutionary move, defying the time-honoured policy (observed since Sulla's day) of never positioning legionary troops in or near Rome. Another novelty was that the actual command of the new legions was no longer entrusted to senators with the title of *legati*, but instead to *praefecti* recruited from the equestrian order. For the first time, therefore, the highest positions of provincial military command were significantly subtracted from the senatorial monopoly and, as a result, became much more independent of the senate. However, to attribute this measure to intentional (and consciously cultivated) anti-senatorial policy would be an exaggeration: the very circumstances of the conflict that brought Severus to power had obliged him to be hostile towards a part of the senators. Equally, it would be wrong to interpret this apparent partiality to the equestrians as a case of pitting the second *ordo* of the Roman ruling class against the senate, as has traditionally been assumed (thereby taking it for granted that the hostility between princeps and senate, and hence also between equestrians and senators, was the decisive factor in the struggle for power throughout the early imperial age).[17]

The reason for stationing a legion (in any case recruited in Italy) in the vicinity of Rome and for increasing the numerical strength of the praetorian and urban cohorts (which was doubled) would seem to be obvious. It was

[15] For a representation of the Severan 'military' monarchy, see, most recently, Mazza (1996b).
[16] E. B. Birley (1969); Smith (1972); see also Carrié (1993a) 87f. [17] Christol (1997b).

merely the need to sustain imperial authority with the force of arms at the centre of the empire. After all, the city of Rome was still the centre of power. And the Roman populace was still a force to be reckoned with, one capable of exerting pressure through threats to law and order, above all in the places of public spectacle.[18] Not for nothing, therefore, was the urban plebs the recipient, together with the army, of exceptional imperial liberality on the occasion of Septimius Severus' tenth anniversary.[19] During the third century it not only preserved its ancient privileges but even saw them increase. And it was these privileges that marked it out as the symbolic embodiment of the entire community of *cives Romani*, even after it had ceased to play any effective role in forming political decisions.

IV. THE ADMINISTRATION: THE CENTRE AND THE PERIPHERY

Although the advent of the principate had effectively removed all residual trace of democracy in Rome, it had not eliminated – at least formally – the role of the *populus Romanus universus* as a citizen body. It is surely significant that the propagandistic presentation of the new regime that Augustus committed to the *Res Gestae* should so explicitly insist that the *imperium* is that of the *populus Romanus*.[20] In fact, Augustus' arrangement had created a distinction – which applied particularly, though not exclusively, to provincial government – between the functions of the magistracies of republican tradition and the duties of the *nova officia* (as Suetonius calls those devised for administering Rome).[21] To a great extent he created the *nova officia* within the administration of his own *domus*, in his dual capacity as both private citizen and holder of certain magisterial offices. On the one hand, therefore, there were the various magistrates with their subordinate staff of *apparitores*; on the other, the imperially appointed officials and the imperial freedmen and slaves. Giving to the expression different nuances, scholars have spoken of a 'double legal system' – one of the *populus*, the other of the princeps – within a single political organization.[22] The system dependent on the princeps was in some way set beside that of the *populus*, i.e. the administration of republican tradition.

Perhaps the most explicit, and also schematic, description of the double system is that of Strabo, a contemporary observer of the Augustan

[18] Yavetz (1988); Nippel (1995) ch. 4.

[19] With the booty from the capture of Ctesiphon, Severus succeeded in distributing 10 *aurei* a head to 200,000 people, including those belonging to the *plebs frumentaria* and the soldiers stationed in Rome: Dio, LXXVI.1.1 (Xiph.); cf. Herod. III.10.2; on the *decennalia*, see Chastagnol (1984).

[20] *Res Gestae* 26 and 27; *CIL* VI.701, 702 (= *ILS* 91); see also Gaius, *Inst*. I.53.

[21] Suet. *Aug*. 37; the aim would have been that of involving a larger number of people in the running of the *res publica*.

[22] Orestano (1968); de Martino (1974) 272ff.; Grelle (1991) 253ff.; Grelle (1996) on the testimony of Velleius.

revolution, who specifically refers to the division of the provinces between the *populus Romanus* and the princeps in the last chapter of his *Geography*. According to his account of Augustus' organization of provincial government and administration, the *oecumene* was divided into two parts: the part still requiring the presence of troops he assigned to himself; the other, corresponding to the areas already pacified by that date, to the people. Each of the two parts was then divided into provinces, which again were defined as subject to either the *populus* or Caesar.[23]

During the first two centuries of the imperial age the administrative fields dependent on the princeps steadily grew in importance. Their greater flexibility and their very lack of constricting traditions made it natural to resort to them whenever it was necessary to address the new (and increasingly complex) problems of organizing social life that were posed by the routine existence of a large territorial organism; or, in other words, whenever there was a need to create *nova officia*, new administrative functions. At the same time the administration of the *populus*, subject to the senate, was deprived of a series of its traditional functions – a trend that can doubtless also be connected with the decline of the senate's independent political power. Parallel to this process was the emergence and growing importance of the princeps' jurisdiction *extra ordinem* in the domains of both civil and criminal law. Powers were subtracted from the organs that had traditionally exerted them,[24] while jurisdictional duties in specific areas of administrative competence were assigned to newly created officials, such as the princeps' financial and patrimonial procurators.[25] The overall trend in imperial government and administration during the principate can thus be legitimately summed up as the system of the princeps gradually asserting itself at the expense of that of the *populus*. A reflection of this process can be traced in the juristic literature: in its speculations a unified concept of the princeps' powers, modelled on those of the magistrates, begins to emerge only very gradually.[26]

These developments can be observed both at the centre and in the provincial periphery. The centre witnessed not only the undeniable growth in political weight of the *consilium* of the princeps' friends,[27] but also the construction – and to a certain extent the institutionalization – of a remarkable administrative machine, consisting of large central secretariats which performed increasingly well-defined duties. Modelled on the internal organization of the *familiae* of the late republican magnates, these secretariats were initially entrusted to the emperor's slaves and freedmen. But while exponents of the imperial *familia* continued to be included in executive

[23] Strabo, XVII.3.25 (C840).
[24] Millar, *ERW* 505ff.; Buti (1982); Spagnuolo Vigorita and Marotta (1992) 127ff.; Santalucia (1998).
[25] Brunt (1966); Spagnuolo Vigorita (1978a) 57ff., and (1978b).
[26] Grelle (1991) on Gaius and Pomponius. [27] Eck (2000a) (= Eck (1998) 3–29).

positions, increasingly the managerial roles were being taken over by procurators of the equestrian order (though in each secretariat the new equestrian procurator was assisted by an imperial freedman as *adiutor*). By the Severan age the process was complete.[28]

The increasing importance of the administration subject to the princeps is attested in both provincial types: those of the *populus* and the imperial provinces. The distinction between the two typologies, which Strabo already considered as significant, is a crucial feature not only of the descriptions of the Augustan system by successive historians from Suetonius to Tacitus, but also of Gaius' account (mid-second century) of the provincial organization and of its impact on juridical relations between private individuals. By contrast, Augustus in the *Res Gestae* passes over the distinction in silence as if it had no significance at all.[29] On the whole, recent scholars agree that provincial organization followed a single model, if we except certain purely formal aspects relating to the criteria and methods of appointing governors and the different durations of their appointment; and also that the same model was applied to Egypt, where the administration was reformed before the reorganization of the provinces in the year 27 B.C.[30] This conclusion, however, is not entirely acceptable. Admittedly, there would seem to be no appreciable difference between the *proconsules* and the *legati Augusti pro praetore* either in the civil, and especially jurisdictional, functions they were expected to perform (the military functions are obviously another matter) or in the relations between the provincial administration and the city or the individual inhabitants of the empire.[31] Nonetheless, the different criteria of appointment (implying a different legitimation of power) and the different lengths of office (a year for the *proconsules*, as against an indefinite period, often three-year but sometimes longer, for the *legati Augusti pro praetore*) unquestionably had repercussions on the actual government and administration of the provinces concerned.[32] As did the fact that the proconsul could appoint his own legates, whereas the governor of an imperial province could not, given that his power was

[28] Wachtel (1966); Boulvert (1970) and (1974); Pflaum (1950) and *Carrières*.

[29] Suet. *Aug*. 47; Tac. *Ann*. XIII.4.2; cf. Dio, LIII.12; Gaius, *Inst*. II.21; cf. I.1.6; 2.7; Lo Cascio (1991a) (= Lo Cascio (2000) 13–79); on Velleius, who also makes no mention of the distinction, Grelle (1996).

[30] In particular Geraci (1983); Bowman (1996). [31] Millar (1966).

[32] Interesting, in this respect, is the remark that Philostratus has Apollonius of Tyana make to Vespasian (*Vita Apoll. Tyan*. V.36) about the qualities needed in a good princeps and about how the princeps must make sure that the governors sent to the provinces are suited to their destinations. Naturally, Apollonius says, he is not referring to the *legati* chosen by the princeps evidently 'by merit', but only 'to those who will acquire them (*sc*. the provinces) by lot. In their case, too, I maintain, those only should be sent out to the various provinces so obtained who are in sympathy, so far as the system of appointing by lot allows of it, with the populations they will rule' (tr. Conybeare (1912) I.557). The problem particularly applies to the governors sent to the eastern provinces and expected to speak Greek. Though Philostratus' observation certainly refers to the first century, it obviously reflects concerns still relevant in Philostratus' day.

itself delegated by the man who administered these provinces by *imperium proconsulare* (i.e. the princeps himself). In addition, there were tangible differences in areas that more directly concerned the individuals and communities living in the provinces: the financial and fiscal administration.

In the provinces of the *populus* it was significantly a quaestor who was in charge of financial management. In particular, he superintended the collection of revenues, entrusted either to the cities or to the companies of *publicani* (or, later, to individual *publicani*).[33] A very different function, at least in theory, was that performed by the procurator, initially an imperial freedman, whose task it was to manage the imperial estates in the region.[34] In the imperial provinces it is surely no accident that this distinction of roles was not observed. There the procurator supervised the entire financial administration,[35] and no distinction was made between revenue collection with its attendant 'public expenditure' (essentially, the maintenance of troops) and the financial management and administration of the imperial domain. The tendency is all the more conspicuous in the smaller provinces, entrusted from the very early principate to equestrians (initially called *praefecti* because they commanded the auxiliary troops stationed there). Here the procurators performed a series of military, jurisdictional and administrative duties that also included the management of the imperial property.[36] Another palpable difference between the two provincial types, at least until the Severan period, is in the procedures for holding the census to determine the *tributum soli* and *tributum capitis*. From the surviving documentation we infer that in the provinces of the *populus* the holding of a census continued to be the exclusive preserve of the urban communities, with no interference from the centre. In the imperial provinces, on the other hand, already at an early stage the same duty was assigned to *legati censitores* or *legati ad census accipiendos* appointed either by the centre or by the provincial governors themselves, the *legati Augusti pro praetore*.[37]

Significantly, in the course of time the differences between the two provincial types tended to diminish. First, the new provinces successively created after the constitution of the principate belonged to the imperial type, so the proportion of *provinciae populi* declined considerably. Second, even though the appointment to the provinces of the *populus* of former praetors and consuls was still decided by the drawing of lots in the senate, it would appear that the princeps made a prior selection of the eligible

[33] Gaius, *Inst*. I.6. [34] Tac. *Ann*. IV.15; Dio, LVII.23.

[35] Dio, LIII.15; LIV.21.2–8, on the imperial freedman Licinus; Strabo, III.4.20 (C167).

[36] Moreover, during the first two centuries of the empire, with the stationing of legionary troops alongside the auxiliary troops, many of these procuratorial provinces were transformed into normal imperial provinces assigned to legates of the senatorial order: Eck (2000b) (= Eck (1998) 107–45).

[37] Lo Cascio (1999b) (= Lo Cascio (2000) 205–19).

candidates, indicating a number equal to that of the available provincial posts: in other words, the lots did not select proconsuls, but merely the provinces to which they were sent.[38] Indeed often the process of appointing by lot was eluded altogether, in which case the princeps himself either appointed proconsuls *extra ordinem* or extended their period of office. Finally, as from the Severan age, in connection with the gradual replacement of senators with equestrians in the positions of highest military command, the administration of certain provinces was also assigned to *equites*. Thus the province of Mesopotamia, created by Septimius Severus after his victory over the Parthians, was assigned to an equestrian who assumed the title of *praefectus*; its administration was consequently modelled on that of Egypt.[39] Later, under Severus Alexander, an equestrian was also sent to govern the new province of Pontus.[40] Another development attested during the Severan age is the presence of *procuratores ad census accipiendos* in the provinces of the *populus*.[41] As for the financial and patrimonial procurators sent to the two types of province, the differences in their functions began to disappear already at an early stage. In the provinces of the *populus* the patrimonial procurators had expanded their duties well beyond the management of the imperial estates – even though in ways that (initially at least) were considered illegitimate.[42]

Towards the end of the second century, therefore, the trend was towards an assimilation of the two types of province. It is significant, for example, that a single designation for the provincial governor, such as we already find in the literary sources, also begins to make its way into the official terminology (the *praeses*);[43] that the works of late classical jurists such as Aemilius Macer, active in the Severan age, should be entitled *de officio praesidis*; and that these works covered the duties of all the provincial governors without distinction (including equestrian *procuratores* and *praefecti*)[44] and failed to differentiate between types of governor. Yet the process of assimilation was not definitive if Ulpian could still write a work called *de officio proconsulis*.[45] As we shall see below, the distinction between the two provincial types disappeared in a later period, when Egypt and Italy, two areas of crucial importance (though for different reasons), were assimilated to the remaining provincial territories.

[38] De Martino (1974) 813.

[39] Magioncalda (1982); Brunt (1983) 66, does not believe that the motive was distrust of the senators.

[40] Christol and Loriot (1986).

[41] L. Egnatuleius Sabinus is documented as *procurator ad census accipiendos Macedoniae* (*CIL* VIII.10500 = *ILS* 1409).

[42] Burton (1993); though already the case of Lucilius Capito (Tac. *Ann*. IV.15; Dio, LVII.23.5) suggests that the encroachment on different areas was seen as precisely that: an encroachment.

[43] See, most recently, Christol and Drew-Bear (1998) and the references there. *Praeses* already appears in Gaius, *Inst*. 1.6, 100, 105 and II.24, 25, though it probably excludes the procurator-governors: Grelle (1991) 264 with n. 41.

[44] *D* 1.18.1, on which see De Martino (1974) 829.

[45] Talamanca (1976) 129ff.

V. THE PRAETORIAN PREFECTURE AND THE JURISTS

Another important development of the Severan period was the unprecedented involvement of legal experts and lawyers in government and administration. In part it can perhaps be attributed to the accession to imperial rank of some very young principes and to the power wielded by the women of the imperial household.[46] A conspicuous role was played by the great jurists of the age, from Papinian to Paul and Ulpian, who took part in the *consilium principis* and also held positions of great prestige and authority, such as that of praetorian prefect. Especially noteworthy was Ulpian, Severus Alexander's adviser during the short time he was praetorian prefect. Given the prestige of the Severan jurists and their involvement in imperial government, it is easier to understand why they embarked on a general reorganization of the law and why their fragments were so prominent (and numerous) in Justinian's *Digesta*.

It has also been claimed, with some authority, that the jurists fulfilled another essential function in imperial government: that the imperial rescripts (of which the *Codex Iustinianus* contains a wide selection), or at least those implying some innovative technical–juridical decision, were materially written by the procurator *a libellis*, who was a jurist.[47] Indeed it is even contended that the authorship of individual decisions can be attributed, on stylistic grounds, to individual jurists known to us from the surviving fragments of the *Digesta* (this would incidentally also offer material for a wider assessment of their individual personalities).[48] This claim has met with strong criticism, and the specific conclusions on the authorship of the rescripts are certainly a controversial matter.[49] Nonetheless, the thesis that the decisions endorsed by the emperor (by his *subscriptio* of the rescripts) were materially drawn up by the procurator *a libellis* does seem more plausible than the other alternatives.[50] After all, the emperor would have had neither the time nor the specific competence to write the legal texts himself. And it is also hard to see why he should not avail himself of these legal specialists, especially since they belonged to his entourage. Besides, we know that in the fourth and fifth centuries a special functionary was appointed to draw up the texts of the imperial constitutions; and though admittedly the situation was then different, I see no reason

[46] Crifò (1976) 759 n. 344.

[47] That Papinian held the position of *a libellis* in Severus' time is reported by Tryphoninus in *D* xx.5.12.*pr*.

[48] Honoré, *Ulpian* and *E&L*.

[49] In particular Millar (1986a), and the scholars quoted there; and, much more strongly, Liebs (1983); Honoré has replied in Honoré, *E&L* pp. vii ff.

[50] Not to mention the fact that the above-cited passage from Tryphoninus suggests, as Millar (1986b): 278 himself admits, 'that Papinian's handling of the *libelli* was relevant to the content of Severus' *rescriptum*'.

why there should not have been a precedent for that practice, at least as far as the writing of rescripts is concerned.[51]

The fact that great jurists occupied important government positions and that Papinian and Ulpian (and perhaps also Paul) were praetorian prefects[52] suggests that in both the law making and the political-administrative management of the empire there was a desire to institutionalize and legitimize the emperor's role vis-à-vis the traditional organs, while at the same time retaining its absolute discretionary power. The praetorian prefecture, for example, had already extended its authority to cover matters of public order in Italy during the second century; during the Severan period its jurisdictional competence and its administrative functions were properly defined.[53] The prefect was assigned the jurisdiction of appeal *vice sacra* after the sentences of the provincial governors. And in Italy he shared the first level of criminal jurisdiction with the *praefectus urbi*: the actual boundary dividing their respective areas of competence was the hundredth mile from Rome.[54] But over and above his various official duties, the prefect can be said to have become a sort of head of the executive, directly subordinate to the princeps. At times, especially when he was the sole occupant of the post, he enjoyed enormous prestige and power: a prime example was Plautianus (until his disgrace), who was even related to the emperor as the father-in-law of the emperor's son. Their conduct at the delicate moments of imperial succession was often crucial, and during the third century they played a decisive role in the elimination of ruling emperors.[55]

According to Severus Alexander's biographer, the prefects were given senatorial rank,[56] and the epigraphic evidence confirms that by that date there was no longer any incompatibility between membership of the senate and that office. These are early intimations of the important developments that led to the disappearance of the traditional distinction within the ruling class.

VI. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROCURATORSHIPS

During the second century the new procuratorial functions had steadily expanded. During the Severan age and in the following decades the process

[51] That this interpretation of the evidence dangerously deduces 'a bureaucratic model from modern procedures' is claimed by Millar (1986a) 278. Conversely, however, one could argue that the idea of the emperor doing everything by himself is difficult to believe, given the average daily number of imperial decisions needing to be put into writing.

[52] Giuffrè (1976), in particular 642ff.; Maschi (1976) 675 f.; Crifò (1976).

[53] Laffi (1965) 193ff., on the evidence offered by the celebrated inscription of Saepinum (*CIL* IX.2438); Durry (1938); Passerini (1939); Howe (1942); in general De Martino (1974) 647ff.

[54] *Coll.* XIV.3.2 (Ulp.); Howe (1942), 32ff.; recently, see Santalucia (1998^2), 225ff. On the other hand, Peachin (1996) believes that the prefects were not regularly granted the authority to judge *vice sacra* before the fourth century (on the strength of *CTh* XI.30.16).

[55] Caracalla, Gordian III, Gallienus and Numerian: sources in Millar, *ERW* 126 n. 34.

[56] *SHA*, *Alex. Sev.* 21.3; the motivation being that with their present role in jurisdiction the prefects could be the judges of senators.

accelerated. The 104 posts of the Hadrianic period had become 136 under Commodus, whereas fifty new posts were created between the years 197 and 211 alone. In the mid-third century the number of equestrian procurators rose to 182.[57] As well as an increase in total numbers, there was also an increase in the number of posts carrying the top salary of 300,000 *sestertii*. The number of procuratorships alone, however, could give a misleading idea of how the gradually emerging bureaucratic system really functioned. Compared to the staff of the other great pre-modern territorial empires, the number of procurators (well under 200), to which we add the few administrators of senatorial rank, was small indeed. But we must remember that the procurators performed managerial functions, while the executive duties were carried out by imperial freedmen and slaves; and also that alongside the equestrian *procuratores*, whose roles were well defined, there were a large number of other *procuratores* (mainly freedmen) who operated at a local level and ran the imperial patrimonial estates. For example, from the rather singular evidence of the stamps on the *fistulae* (the lead pipes used to distribute water in Rome) we now know the names of many procurators who have been plausibly identified as superintendents of individual urban estates belonging to the emperor.[58]

Undeniably, the creation of new procuratorial functions responded to a need for greater efficiency in the administrative machine, a process encouraged (and permitted) by the gradual acquisition of new duties by the imperial administration. Though the criteria of recruitment and promotion applied to these new managers would hardly satisfy the 'rational' criteria we consider a characteristic of modern bureaucracies,[59] there were undeniably forms of career specialization, in part dependent on social and cultural background. From the epigraphic documentation (consisting of inscriptions honouring these high-ranking personalities) we infer that, by and large, there were three types of possible career.[60] The first type of procurator actually originated from the equestrian order and had done the *tres militiae*. The second came from the ranks of the army and entered the equestrian order only after a long period of service as a non-commissioned officer. The third had had an exclusively civil career and had not even done the *tres militiae*. It was from among the first and, increasingly, second groups that were selected the staff expected to carry out functions of military command, such as the *procuratores* that governed the provinces. As for the third group, it helped to recruit the patrimonial and financial *procuratores* in the provinces subject to senatorial governors, the bureaucrats working in the central secretariats (*trecenarii*, as heads of offices, and

[57] Pflaum (1974). [58] Bruun (1991) ch. 6.
[59] Saller (1980); see also Lo Cascio (1991a) 188ff. (= Lo Cascio (2000) 76ff.)
[60] Recently Christol (1997b).

centenarii, as *adiutores*),[61] and the procurators appointed to oversee various services in Rome (e.g. the control of public and sacred works, the Tiber riverbed and the sewers).[62] The *advocati fisci*, who were required to have very specific skills, were obviously the supreme examples of those pursuing exclusively civil careers. The use of slaves and freedmen, on the other hand, begins to be discontinued from the Severan age. For example the subordinate *procuratores* (the *adiutores* of the equestrian heads of the offices) start to disappear; the last is found under Severus Alexander.[63] In other situations the function survived, but by that time was performed by *ingenui* no longer directly linked to the person of the emperor; which implies that, in its own particular way, the imperial 'bureaucracy' was moving towards some form of institutionalization.

VII. THE NEW ORGANIZATION OF IMPERIAL ESTATES AND FINANCES

Perhaps the greatest changes in the administrative organization of the empire during the Severan age were those resulting from the large accretions of imperial property after the confiscation of the estates belonging to the followers of Niger and above all Albinus. To these were later added those of Septimius Severus' praetorian prefect and Caracalla's father-in-law, Plautianus, who was similarly expropriated after his disgrace.[64] On the one hand, this exceptional expansion meant a greater intrusion of the imperial administration in economic affairs; this is clearly attested in the documentation, though generally overestimated by modern historians.[65] On the other, it constituted a solution, at least in the short term, to the imperial state's considerable financial problems, which in turn were dependent on the difficult economic conditions existing in the empire from the 160s.[66]

The sheer magnitude of the confiscations was such that it required not only special new jobs, intended to be of temporary duration only (such as, for example, the *procurator ad bona Plautiani* or the more general *procurator ad bona damnatorum*),[67] but also the creation, or at least the radical

[61] Once the process of replacing freedmen with *equites* as heads of offices was completed, a further increase in staff occurred in the Severan age with the appointment of a *procurator centenarius sacrarum cognitionum* alongside the (*procurator) trecenarius a cognitionibus*: Boulvert (1970) 324f.

[62] Daguet-Gagey (1997) *passim*.

[63] Boulvert (1970) 453, in disagreement with Jones (1949) 46–7 who believes that imperial slaves and freedmen were used until the fourth century.

[64] Birley, *The African Emperor* 128, 162.

[65] Even in its effects, generally viewed as negative: just one example is *ESAR* v: 85.

[66] Lo Cascio (1991b).

[67] Pflaum (1974). It is possible that a separate administration of these patrimonial estates still existed in the fifth century: the *res Iuliani*, a complex of possessions comprised in the *res privata*, known to us from the *Notitia Dignitatum, Occ.* XII.24, can perhaps be identified with the patrimony of Didius Julianus: Masi (1971) 17 n. 67; Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 214f.

reorganization, of an independent department for the imperial property, the *res privata*. According to Septimius Severus' biographer, after the expropriations following Albinus' defeat the emperor instituted a *procuratio privatarum rerum* for the first time.[68] In fact, a separate account within the fiscal *rationes*, the *ratio privata*, had already existed from the time of Marcus.[69] But it is difficult to understand why the biographer, or his source, should have entirely made up such a well circumstantiated and, all things considered, 'neutral' piece of information.[70] What he probably meant, therefore, was that an already existing administrative office was reorganized precisely as a result of, and in connection with, the sweeping confiscations made between 193 and 197. This reorganization would seem to have consisted in entrusting a specific portion of the vast (and now further enlarged) imperial patrimony to one of the existing fiscal *rationes*, the *ratio privata*.[71] Now this task was assigned to Aquilius Felix, a *centurio frumentarius* (i.e. a sort of officer of the secret services) and one of Severus' trusted men, who after being hired by Didius Julianus to assassinate Severus had gone over to the opposition along with others of Julianus' followers.[72] In 193 and the following years he combined his duties as superintendent of public works in Rome with that of central procurator of the patrimony. In this latter capacity, he probably reorganized the *ratio privata* as the *res privata*, introducing a complex and articulate territorial organization similar to that already existing in the second century, especially in regions like Africa where the imperial property had been extensive for some time already.[73] Soon the new *res privata* became the more important of the two departments that were plausibly managing the imperial property. We cannot, however, securely assert (as some have done)[74] that a separate, and independent, administration of the patrimonial property disappeared in the course of time.[75]

While there is some controversy about the juridical status of the *res privata*,[76] there is no doubt about its economic function. No matter how comparable the emperor's patrimony was to that of a private citizen in juridical terms, from the beginning of the principate it obviously fulfilled

[68] *SHA*, *Vita Severi* 12.1–4. [69] *AE* 1961.80.

[70] Though Nesselhauf (1964) 73 does not believe it to be so neutral.

[71] Lo Cascio (1971–2) 106ff. (= Lo Cascio (2000) 139ff.).

[72] Oliver (1946), with the corrections of Pflaum, *Carrières* no. 225, 598ff., and Nesselhauf (1964) 85ff.; Lo Cascio (1971–2) 101ff., 111ff. (= Lo Cascio (2000) 135ff., 143ff.); a different view on the identity of this man and consequently of the chronology of his procuratorships in Daguet-Gagey (1997) 464.

[73] At least from the time of the Neronian confiscations: Plin. *NH* XVIII.35.

[74] Jones, *LRE* 411ff.

[75] A distinction certainly continued to exist between properties belonging to the *patrimonium* (and hence of the *patrimonium fisci*), such as the *fundi patrimoniales*, and properties belonging to the *res privata*: Lo Cascio (1971–2) 117ff.; Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 669ff.; Giangrieco Pessi (1998). Naturally this complex of possessions has nothing to do with the administrative department created by Anastasius at the end of the fifth century, on which see Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 691ff.

[76] Nesselhauf (1964); Masi (1971); Lo Cascio (1971–2) (= Lo Cascio (2000) 97–149).

functions that we would consider as 'public' and was clearly used for 'public' aims (a distinctive feature of the Roman imperial model),[77] though the way in which it was managed was still (initially at least) the same as that of the great late republican private patrimonies. Increasingly, however, the large accretions of imperial property during the first two centuries of the empire made the patrimony an essential instrument in the empire's financial administration. With the radical increase in its size from the expropriations the 'state' (i.e. the emperor) played a stronger role in the economy. Given the need to increase expenditure, above all to finance the army and satisfy the troops' demands, but also to meet the needs of the Roman population, income also had to be increased. And that could be done by increasing the surplus the emperor drew from the farming population in the form of rent and by eliminating the competition of the large landowners, especially those of the senatorial order, the main victims of the confiscations.

From that moment on, the imperial administration played a stronger role in economic affairs, especially those connected with the provisioning of the army and with the consumption needs of the great metropolis that stood at the centre of the empire. It also exercised control over certain corporations. Of the latter, those which guaranteed Rome's food supply were turned into *corpora*, whose membership, from being voluntary, became a *munus* and hence also obligatory and hereditary.[78] The emperor's interference in the economic areas linked to the provisioning of Rome is attested by the production (and presumably also the transportation) of oil from the Spanish province of Baetica. The product was to become the object of Septimius Severus' free distributions, along with those of grain.[79] From the *tituli picti*, the painted inscriptions that served as a mark of control on the amphoras carrying the oil to Rome, we infer that for a time the imperial administration had somehow taken over the duties previously carried out by the private operators who transported the Spanish oil and sold it in Rome (the *naviculariі*, and also the *negotiatores*, *mercatores* or *diffusores olearii*). This move can obviously be related to the growth of imperial property and to the start of the free distributions. Instead of merchants, who may also have been the *naviculariі* (the shippers) and were certainly the owners of the transported oil, from the time of Septimius Severus the inscriptions mention the emperors. This must indicate not only that the oil was the emperor's – and thus very likely from imperially owned estates – but also that the transportation itself was carried out by his administration. Under Macrinus the name of the princeps is replaced by the legend *fisci rationis*

[77] Hopkins (1978) 184 observes: 'What is interesting is that given their power, their absolutism, Roman emperors nevertheless acquired huge, personal patrimonial properties', and considers it important to explain why and to assess the consequences.

[78] Sirks (1991) particularly 108ff., on the dating; but see also Lo Cascio (2002).

[79] Cracco Ruggini (1985); Lo Cascio (1990); Herz (1988a) 156ff.

patrimonii provinciae Baeticae (or, on the amphoras from Hispania Tarraconensis, *fisci rationis patrimoni provinciae Tarraconensis*). An explanation for the change in wording is that, since Macrinus' succession was not dynastic, the estates confiscated by the Severans in Baetica had been diverted to the administration of the *patrimonium*.[80] The evidence of the *tituli picti* is reinforced by that of the amphora stamps, which have convincingly been interpreted as indicating the owners of the *figlinae* in which the amphoras were produced. Again in the Severan age, in many cases the names of private citizens are replaced by those of emperors, who had evidently taken over the factories of the previous owners. Another area showing increasing signs of imperial intervention was that of tile production, above all in the vicinity of Rome. In this case the *figlinae* that manufactured bricks for the city market were taken over by the imperial *patrimonium* and later by the *res privata*: the process had already begun in the Antonine age but accelerated in the Severan age.[81]

While the need to satisfy the requirements of the Roman *annona* was clearly a major priority for the imperial authority, an even greater need was obviously that of making sure the troops were provisioned as well as possible. During the Severan age provisioning methods were further rationalized and standardized through an intensification of exactions in kind. The so-called *annona militaris* became de facto an additional property tax, given that the requisitions were no longer subject to indemnity, and was also levied on areas like Italy that had previously enjoyed immunity.[82] Being a tax in kind, it was unaffected by price increases and could also cover areas of production that were not marketed. In addition to the intensified requisitioning, as well as to the two increases in pay under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, the generous donatives and the increase in the *praemia militiae*,[83] a further benefit to the army was the abolition of pay deductions. However, both the introduction of levies in kind and the abolition of pay deductions were much more gradually introduced than was thought in the past. The *annona*, as an exaction at fixed prices specifically designed to guarantee the provisioning of the troops, actually precedes the Severan age; and its transformation into a new system of taxation, based on different methods of assessing the actual production of the land in each area, was to occur only during the tetrarchy. As for the abolition of pay deductions, initially it must have been limited to the select troops following the emperor; only later did

[80] Rodriguez-Almeida (1980), (1989); Chic Garcia (1988); de Salvo (1988); Liou and Tchernia (1994).
[81] Steinby (1986).
[82] Corbier (1978); *Armées et fiscalité*, with papers by van Berchem (1977), Carrié (1977) and Corbier (1977); Neesen (1980) 104ff.; 157ff.; Carrié (1993a).
[83] Corbier (1974) 702. It could be significant that at the end of Caracalla's reign the rank of the *praefecti aerarii militaris* (i.e. of the specific fund for paying the bonuses of discharged soldiers) was a high one.

the rest of the army also benefit. So even though the years of Septimius Severus are generally no longer viewed as an epochal watershed in this respect (as they have been represented in one influential reconstruction),[84] they do mark an important stage in that process.

The Severan age undoubtedly also saw important innovations in matters of taxation, above all indirect taxation, as a result of the general concession of citizenship to provincials of foreign extraction – the true aim of which, according to Cassius Dio's malicious interpretation,[85] was to make the new citizens liable to the taxes levied on Roman citizens. Doubts, however, have been cast on the view that with the large increase in taxation (denounced by the sources hostile to Septimius Severus and Caracalla) the collection of all indirect taxes was definitively transferred to the imperial *procuratores* and their staff.[86] Tax-farming, above all by individual tax-farmers as opposed to *societates*, is still attested in the fourth century in the juridical documents and the system was probably still extensively used throughout the third century, though it is probable that specific duties, such as the *portoria*, were temporarily levied in some areas by the *procuratores* and their staff in the Severan period. In any case, the *procuratores* would have exercised a controlling function over the tax-farmers, wherever they continued to operate.[87]

Private citizens continued, therefore, to be involved in running the empire's taxation and finance. This is a further argument against the idea that it was the Severans who initiated the radically dirigiste transformation of the state's role – for a long time widely viewed to be a distinctive feature of the late antique imperial state. In fact, the increasing economic influence of the 'state' was merely the direct outcome of the increase in imperial property. In no way did it involve a more general reorganization of the economy, which continued to be based on the market. So while it is certainly anachronistic to postulate that the imperial authority consciously adopted a policy of *laissez-faire* during the first two centuries of the principate, it is no less anachronistic to assume that it then consciously changed policy and moved towards a direct economy.

The complex range of measures taken by Severus and his successors, together with the successful outcome of the expansionist campaign on the eastern front, turned out to be effective (temporarily at least) at arresting not only the economic problems of Commodus' reign but also the inflationary tendencies (whose extent can be measured, for Egypt at least, through the evidence of the papyri).[88] Such results were achieved in spite of the fact that pressing financial need, during the years of the wars against Albinus and the Parthians, had driven the imperial authority to carry out the most drastic

[84] Carrié (1993a). [85] Dio, LXXVII.9.4–5. [86] Cimma (1981); Brunt, *RIT* ch. 17.
[87] Eck (1999a); Brunt, *RIT* ch. 17. [88] Drexhage (1991); Lo Cascio (1993b), (1997).

debasement of the silver coinage since the Neronian reform. The quantity of fine metal in Septimius Severus' *denarius* failed to exceed 50 per cent.[89] A coinage of such low silver content was feasible only if the authority minting it succeeded in convincing its users to accept the following principle: that a coin's value depended not only on the quantity of precious metal it contained but also on the mark impressed on it by the state during mintage: in other words, on the value the state attributed to the coin denominations, in terms of *sestertii* (the unit of account). This principle was unambiguously expressed during the Severan age by the jurist Paul, who observed that by then the coinage was no longer a *merx* like others: that in so far as it was *materia forma publica percussa*, it was the *pretium* and not a *merx*.[90] Corollaries of the imposition of a nominal value not strictly related to intrinsic value were the obligation to accept coins bearing the *vultus* of the emperor and severe sanctions for all who refused.

[89] Walker (1978). [90] *D* XVIII.1.1.*pr.*; Lo Cascio (1986).

CHAPTER 6

THE EMPEROR AND HIS ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 6C

THE GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EMPIRE IN THE CENTRAL DECADES OF THE THIRD CENTURY

ELIO LO CASCIO

1. DESIGNATION OF THE EMPEROR AND SUCCESSION DURING THE FIFTY YEARS OF THE ANARCHY

The fifty years following the assassination of Severus Alexander are those in which the imperial structure – subjected not only to external attack, but also to political, economic and demographic problems of its own – ran a genuine risk of disintegration. The danger was most apparent from the mid-century onwards.[1] The unified political control of the empire was the issue principally at stake, and the very foundations of the legitimation of imperial power seemed to change both markedly and rapidly. In this respect the accession of Maximinus and, particularly, his refusal to come to Rome to endorse his designation at the centre of the empire are revealing, for they already show signs of a breakdown in that delicate equilibrium between the senate and the army which had hitherto guaranteed the process of imperial legitimation (though admittedly with varying success). The senate's attitude towards Maximinus, however, was not one of immediate rejection.[2] In order to muster the power needed to unite the whole senate against Maximinus, the group of senators loyal to Severus Alexander needed not only a rebellion in one of the richest areas of the empire (against the excessive taxation imposed by the imperial government to finance the extended war effort on the northern front), but also the support of a sizeable number of provincial governors equipped with armies. The senatorial reaction against Maximinus took the form of a somewhat fanciful and utopian experiment in aristocratic restoration.[3] The appointment of the *vigintiviri*

[1] As eloquently demonstrated by the ' "raw" data', to use the definition of Carrié (1993a) 93.

[2] The continuity in the careers of senators and equestrians between the years of Severus Alexander and those of Maximinus is emphasized by Syme, *E&B* 191.

[3] Dietz, *Senatus*, on the composition of the senate.

was evidently an attempt to reassert the role of the senate and the senatorial élite in imperial government. Even the designation of two Augusti from among their number was essentially part of the same scheme, and could hardly be construed as a constitutional innovation aiming at a genuinely collegial management of imperial power – no matter how much the propaganda (expressed, for example, on the coinage) liked to dwell on this aspect. Instead, the nomination was the result of a difficult compromise within the senate. Gordian III's appointment as Caesar and *princeps iuventutis*, which was desired by the people of Rome (who thereby hoped to reassert their own role in the emperor's designation) and probably also supported by a group of senators, showed that it was politically impracticable to have an imperial succession that completely excluded the dynastic principle.[4] And as it turned out, the mutiny of the praetorians rapidly put an end to this experiment in aristocratic government, giving the senators no choice but to bow to military pressure and accept even the *damnatio memoriae* of Pupienus and Balbinus.[5]

And yet it was precisely the dynastic principle that was to be challenged in the following fifty years, even though repeated attempts were made to reassert it: as illustrated, for example, by Philip the Arabian's association with his son, or by the similar associations of Decius with Herennius Etruscus and Hostilianus, and of Valerian with Gallienus, Valerian the Younger and Saloninus. In fact, the most conspicuous evidence of the difficulties besetting the imperial structure was precisely the turbulent succession of so many emperors, most of whom came to a violent end (or even, in one case, died in captivity).[6] What no longer existed (if it ever had) was a criterion for distinguishing a candidate who had legitimately risen to imperial dignity from one who instead was to be considered as a usurper or – to adopt the term specifically used for this purpose in the late antique legal texts and in the *Historia Augusta* – a *tyrannus*. Obviously what decided each case was merely the outcome of the successive putsches that created these ephemeral emperors or usurpers. With the interruption of dynastic continuity becoming the rule rather than the exception, increasingly those who became emperors with the support of the army found it expedient to resort to other forms of legitimation of a sacred or religious nature: either by reasserting traditional religious values or by somehow following Elagabalus' example and importing some cult that could reinforce the common sentiment of an exclusive relationship binding the supreme imperial ruler to the divine world. It is not altogether paradoxical, therefore, that it was precisely the continual breaches in imperial continuity that encouraged the idea that the most effective form of legitimation was through

[4] On the revolt of 238 see the different interpretations of Mullens (1948), Townsend (1955) and Dietz, *Senatus*.

[5] Revealed by the erasure of their names in *AE* 1934.230. [6] Hartmann (1982).

emphasis of the imperial link with the divinity – a trend that eventually led to Constantine's own use of the Christian religion in the same way.

But despite its difficulties the senate lost neither its legitimating role nor its political importance. Its favour or hostility continued to be decisive in ensuring a minimum of continuity to imperial action, though inevitably the situation represented in the literary sources, to a great extent emanating from senatorial circles, is distorted and biased (an example is the bitter hostility shown towards Gallienus). That the senate's traditional role in the running of the empire was still considered to be important is shown by the cautious policy of Philip the Arabian: he rose to power rather like Maximinus, yet was sufficiently astute to avoid his predecessor's mistakes.[7] At times the senate was also attributed a specific role within a subdivision of powers that was not in fact constitutionally defined: as, for example, when (as often happened) the emperor was occupied away from Rome and at the front, and the senate was left with the duty of looking after government and administration. Thus Aemilianus, shortly after his acclamation in 253, wrote to the senate expressly to propose such a division of duties.[8] It is also worth remembering that there were moments after 238 when the senate's role was active, and not merely reactive: as, for example, when it elevated Gallienus to the rank of *nobilissimus Caesar* before this was done by Valerian.[9]

In a period of such serious difficulties it is understandable that attempts were made to run political–military affairs more efficiently by multiplying the centres of political command and distributing them over the various areas of the immense empire. In fact the solution eventually achieved by the tetrarchic division had precedents in these central decades of the third century. The reason the acclaimed emperors immediately elevated their son or sons to the rank of Caesar or Augustus was not just a desire to ensure dynastic succession; it was also a means of dividing duties, responsibilities and theatres of action, hence of making imperial action more effective. This is plainly what Valerian did: he kept the eastern front for himself, while leaving the Illyrian front, that closer to Italy, first to Gallienus and then (when Gallienus moved to the Rhineland) to the latter's eldest son, Valerian the Younger.

ii. gallienus' reforms: military command and the government of the provinces

Naturally, the division of duties within the various imperial colleges was a necessary measure, though in itself insufficient to increase the efficacy of

[7] De Blois (1978–9), (1986); Christol (1997a) 99ff.

[8] Zon. xii.22. The information is also reported by the *Anonymus post Dionem* (*FHG* iv.193); Mazzarino (1980) 27; and Christol (1997a) 125. See also the division of duties already between Decius and Valerian mentioned by Zon. xii.20.

[9] Information given in Aurelius Victor, Eutropius and Orosius, and which can be traced to the *Kaisergeschichte* of Enmann: Christol (1997a) 131.

imperial action or to guarantee the cohesion of the empire. Other crucially important priorities were the organization of the army and the administration of the provinces, above all the 'hotter' provinces closest to the invasion routes used by the enemies from across the borders. In this regard, relations between the various élite groups were vitally important. Largely thanks to prosopographic research, we now have a less simplistic and more nuanced vision of the relations (and/or clashes) between the various forces in play; i.e. not only the army and senate, but also the equestrian order, whose role in the third century has traditionally been interpreted (as we saw above) as that of a weapon wielded by the princeps in his continuous conflict with the senate. According to a widely held opinion, the third century was a period of prosperity for the equestrians and by the end of this process of advancement the senators were de facto excluded from both military command and provincial government.[10] Again, however, recent research has shown that the opposition of the two privileged orders was not nearly so clear-cut; and that, while senators were unquestionably replaced by equestrians in certain functions, the process was altogether slower and more gradual. Nor was it even unidirectional: when the new province of Phrygia–Caria was created in 249–50, it was significantly assigned to a *legatus* of the senatorial order.[11] Above all, the research has shown that these developments are not the reflection of a struggle between the imperial authority and the senate, but an understandable response to external and internal problems. In other words, they reflect the pursuit of greater efficiency in the political and military management of the empire.[12]

What we notice, in fact, is not so much a generalized advancement of equestrians at the expense of senators, as the promotion of professional soldiers to positions of the highest command, even when they come from the ranks. The rise of professional soldiers obviously responded to the empire's military needs, especially after the army had once again become a fighting army and particularly under Severus Alexander. The exclusion of senators was dictated merely by the need to ensure that the imperial armies got the very best commanders. A similar need dictated the (obviously related) exclusion of senators from provincial government and, later, the separation of civil (and essentially jurisdictional) functions from military duties.

In a famous passage Aurelius Victor attributes the responsibility of exclusion to Gallienus, claiming that the emperor barred the senators from the militia by special edict 'so that the *imperium* should not be transferred to the best among the *nobiles*'.[13] It would appear that the measure was

[10] This opinion can be traced to Keyes (1915). [11] Roueché (1996); Christol (1997b) 62.

[12] See in particular Christol (1982), (1986) and (1997b).

[13] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XXXIII.33; cf. XXXVII.5; see in particular, with different interpretations, Malcus (1969); Thylander (1973); de Blois, *Gallienus* 39f. and *passim*; Pflaum (1976); Christol (1982).

subsequently abrogated by Tacitus. To some extent Aurelius Victor's statement is confirmed by the epigraphic evidence. From the years of Valerian and Gallienus[14] we notice a considerable acceleration of a process that had already begun earlier: the posts of *tribunus laticlavius* and *legatus legionis* disappeared from the senators' normal cursus; the senatorial legate was increasingly replaced by a *praefectus agens vice legati*; and the great exceptional commands were no longer the exclusive prerogative of senators. As we saw above, the transfer of important military commands to equestrians had already begun under Septimius Severus, even under Marcus; and the equestrians chosen were then often admitted to the senatorial order by *adlectio*.[15] The process can be connected with the more general tendency to stress the professionalization of command and the 'militarization' of imperial government. But whether it was a matter of conscious choice or merely of necessity, the change in strategy demanded an 'elastic' defence:[16] one designed not so much to ensure the tranquillity and welfare of the regions within the empire's frontiers (which proved no longer possible) as to guarantee the empire's very survival as a unified territorial state. Related to this change in strategy was Gallienus' decision to attribute a tactical, even strategic, function to the cavalry that followed the emperor, who himself generally resided in the most vulnerable areas of the empire.[17] Indeed it was these changes in the army's organization that decisively contributed to the eventual success in overcoming the military crisis of those years.

The exclusion of senators from the government of provinces in which armies were stationed seems to have been neither complete nor definitive, even if there was a very strong drive in this direction during the years of Gallienus, at the most critical time for the empire. In the provinces of praetorian rank, like Numidia, Arabia, Thrace and Cilicia, government was assigned to *praesides* from the equestrian order (i.e. *perfectissimi*); from the epigraphic evidence this can be precisely dated to 262, which must therefore have been the year of Gallienus' edict.[18] Only much later, at the time of Constantine, did some of these provinces return to senators (i.e. *clarissimi*), though by then the whole scenario was obviously completely different. In the consular provinces, on the other hand, there was no generalized transition to equestrians. There we find a variety of situations in the following decades: senatorial and equestrian governors alternated, though in most provinces the majority of the governors were senatorial legates (of consular rank). In short, though we do see a tendency to get rid of senatorial governors, it was just that, a tendency; one that in any case was to become more accentuated only under Diocletian.

[14] Christol (1986) 39ff. [15] Christol (1986) 38. [16] Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* ch. 3.
[17] It is in these terms that we need to qualify the presumed 'reform of the cavalry' under Gallienus: Carrié (1993a), 102f.
[18] Christol (1986) 45ff.

The provinces affected by the innovations of Gallienus' age were obviously those in which the imperial armies were actually stationed. The provinces of the *populus* – that is, the more internal and less threatened provinces like Africa and Asia – continued in part to be assigned to ex-consuls. Now, however, these proconsuls were directly appointed by the emperor and no longer by lot. And they also governed for periods of more than a year. Often they were attended by *correctores*, assigned to the districts – the *dioeceses* – into which the larger provinces such as Asia were divided. Of the provinces entrusted to *proconsules*, it was those governed by *praetorii* that were subjected to administrative reorganization. To these provinces, governors with extraordinary functions began to be sent; and often the governors were not *proconsules*, but *vicarii* from the equestrian order,[19] in which case the princeps assumed the administration of a province of the *populus* for a period of time without actually modifying its official status. Other provinces, such as Macedonia and Lycia–Pamphylia, were later transformed into imperial provinces and assigned to *praesides*.

But perhaps the most conspicuous element in the organization of provincial government – and one directly connected with the changes in military strategy – was the creation of large inter-provincial districts under unified direction. These have been defined as genuine 'provinces of war'.[20] Thus Philip the Arabian entrusted the eastern command to his brother Priscus. The unification of various provinces under single command meant a sort of return to the situations of the late republican or early imperial ages.

The immense war effort of these years inevitably entailed more taxation, which increasingly took the form of requisitions for the *annona militaris*. But there were also attempts to reform the very system of tax collection. Philip the Arabian, for example, tried to distribute the tax burden more equitably and efficiently by revising the definition of taxable capacity, without weighing excessively on the higher classes. We know of these measures from the Egyptian documentation.[21]

Inevitably, especially when the various usurpations and the actual raids of the barbarian populations made it impossible to carry out the levy with any regularity, there was no other way of covering the essential expenses (particularly military pay) than that of resorting to the only expedient left: debasement of the coinage. The following phenomena are clearly explained as responses to the recurrent financial difficulties: the progressive deterioration of the silver coinage (which eventually became such only in name); the different function of minted gold;[22] the proliferation of mints and their very locations. This last development parallels what has been defined as the

[19] The definition of 'independent vicariates' is owed to Keyes (1915) 8; Christol (1986) 53 n. 78.
[20] Christol (1986) 40. [21] Parsons (1967); de Blois (1978–9); Christol (1997a) 102f.
[22] Callu, *Politique monétaire* ch. 6; Lo Cascio (1986).

'end of monetary pluralism',[23] i.e. the disappearance, in the decades between the mid-century and Aurelian's reform, of the local and provincial emissions that had been such an important feature of the political and (to a certain extent) economic autonomy of the eastern cities and the provinces themselves. During these decades the number of mints and *officinae* minting imperial coinage, the mainstream coinage, increased immeasurably: from the three mints of 251 we move to nine in 274, while the number of *officinae* grew from fifteen in the years 251–9 to 43 in 274.[24] At the same time production was largely transferred from Rome, where an important mint still remained, to the frontier zones, mainly near the Rhine and the Danube. The positioning of the mints evidently reflected a need to bring the places of currency production closer to where the money was actually spent. And obviously the mints and *officinae* proliferated because the production of money had to increase enormously, not so much because the imperial structure was spending more, as because increasingly that expenditure needed to be met with new money. Given the difficulties of tax collection, the quantities of old currency returning to the imperial coffers via taxation were always much too small to cover expenditure. Moreover, for the mechanism of debasement to be exploited, the money that did make its way back to the coffers had to be melted down in order to be reminted at the newer, and much lower, standards of weight and fineness. Once the process had started, it was unstoppable: by effect of Gresham's Law, the money returning to the coffers was inevitably the worst. The *antoninianus*, the silver coin that had ousted the *denarius* as the hub of the system, depreciated increasingly in the years of Valerian and Gallienus. Under Claudius II (Gothicus) the nadir was reached:[25] the silver coinage contained no more than one or two percentage points of silver and had become merely a copper piece 'washed' in silver. Though Aurelian did inaugurate a policy of monetary reform, the motives and consequences of which are still debated,[26] monetary instability (and its influence on prices) was destined to continue for a long time to come.

In conclusion, it is precisely during these central decades of the third century that we detect the beginning of a series of developments which, in various ways, prepared for and anticipated the reorganization of the tetrarchic age. As we shall see, the novelty of the tetrarchic age lay in the fact that these various developments came together in a global attempt at state reform.

III. THE CITY OF ROME FROM THE SEVERANS TO AURELIAN

During the Severan age – indeed already earlier, under Commodus – the city of Rome was the object of a series of measures aimed at solving the

[23] Callu, *Politique monétaire*. [24] Callu, *Politique monétaire* 198ff.; cf. Christol (1977).
[25] Cope (1969). [26] Lo Cascio (1993a) and (1997) and references there.

problem of food provisioning in the difficult period following the 160s. When plague and famine struck the city in 189–90, Commodus tried to remedy the ensuing inflationary situation by imposing controlled prices, a move that provoked an even greater scarcity of goods on the market.[27] The imperial administration also tried to control the provisioning and transport of grain, above all that from Africa.[28]

But it was with the Severans that the urban *annona* was placed on a new footing. The opportunity for more radical reform was created by the general reorganization of the imperial estates and, more generally, by the economic recovery of the Severan age. Septimius Severus' attention towards Rome is demonstrated not only by the enormous *congiarium* to celebrate the *decennalia*,[29] but also by the care with which he organized the *annona.* His biographer relates that he left the Roman people the 'seven-year canon': a vast quantity of corn that made available 75,000 *modii* of grain every day (an amount plausibly sufficient to provide for the city's total daily consumption).[30] Despite the obvious rhetorical exaggeration of this unlikely figure, this passage does suggest that the amount of requisitioned grain arriving in Rome was enormous and must have almost entirely covered the urban population's need of that staple food commodity. It also shows that the creation of a large grain reserve was deemed an essential instrument for guaranteeing public order in Rome. Along with the distributions of grain there were also those of oil (and here again the same biographer makes a similar claim for the size of Severus' oil reserve).

There was also another area in which the Severans appear to have taken steps to improve the *annona* services. For it is to this period that we can date the building of various mills in different parts of the city: from the Janiculum to the outer wall of the new baths of Caracalla, a complex completed by Severus Alexander.[31] Moreover, Severus Alexander's biographer relates that the emperor had built not only public *horrea* in all the regions, but also *mechanica opera plurima*,[32] which have been plausibly identified as the mills. Measures such as the building of these mills must have been taken at a very high level, hence with the full involvement of the imperial administration also in their running.[33] At the end of the second century, or beginning of the third, there was a further reform, which may have been connected with the need to rationalize the 'services' offered to the inhabitants of Rome. This was the uniting of the two administrations that ran the aqueducts and corn distribution: a measure presumably taken precisely because the water from

[27] Herod. 1.12ff.; Dio, LXXII.12–14: see in particular Grosso (1964) 262ff., 290ff.; *SHA*, *Comm*. 14.3, on the price control.

[28] *SHA*, *Comm*. 17.7, on the creation of the *classis Africana Commodiana*.

[29] See above, p. 142 n. 19.

[30] *SHA*, *Sev*. 23.2; cf. 8.5; Lo Cascio (1999a) 165f.; for a different interpretation of the passage, see de Romanis (1996).

[31] Bell (1994); Wikander and Schiøler (1983); see also Coarelli (1987).

[32] *SHA*, *Sev. Alex*. 39.3, 22.4; Coarelli (1987) 447. [33] Bell (1994) 84.

the aqueducts was now also used in the mills. In fact, *curatores aquarum et Miniciae* are first attested at the time of Septimius Severus.[34] It has also been conjectured that the *frumentationes*, the monthly distributions of grain, were transformed into daily distribution of bread in the same years, though it is more likely that this took place later, at another important moment in the history of third-century Rome: the reign of Aurelian.[35] Finally, further evidence of imperial interest in Rome is shown by the enormous bath buildings initiated by Caracalla and completed by Severus Alexander.[36] Among other things, the construction of such a huge bath complex is a sign that the Rome of the Severan age was still densely populated.

And yet, with the resumption of the wars, usurpations and invasions in the following decades, the city's role unavoidably changed. Rome was no longer the theatre of the emperor's actions and self-representations. And Maximinus' refusal to come to Rome is a clear sign that the centre of gravity had inevitably shifted from the city that had created the empire to the frontiers that had to be garrisoned for its defence. Even after Maximinus the emperors were more and more often to be found on the frontiers, with little time to spend in Rome. By then the role of the city increasingly depended on the presence of the senators and the senate, even on the senators' capacity for expenditure. In this respect, we already detect an anticipation of late antique Rome, even in its physical appearance – as, for example, through the replacement of the *insulae* with splendid *domus*.[37] It was precisely the absence of the emperor that favoured the growing importance of the senate–city relationship, a link that is particularly reflected in the increasingly strong role played by the urban prefecture in the city's administration.[38]

Nonetheless, the ideology of the empire as the 'empire of Rome' had not died out. This is particular attested by the city's millennial celebrations, an event associated with the emperor Philip the Arabian, whose own origins were very distant from both Rome and Italy. For as long as the *caput* remained Rome, its plebs would continue to be the recipients of largesse. To be sure, after the great building activities of the Severan period, the general conditions of the empire and the state of its finances ruled out the

[34] Rickman (1980) 253ff.; Bruun (1989); Bell (1994) 85ff. The exact dating, however, of the unification of the two administrative departments remains uncertain. The appearance of a title such as *praefectus Miniciae* (*CIL* VIII.12442) already during Commodus' reign can in no way be taken as evidence that they were already united: see Bell (1994) 85 n. 47.

[35] That the construction of the mills is connected with the transition from monthly distributions of grain at the *porticus Minucia* to daily distributions of bread (perhaps already at the mysterious *gradus*, as we find later in the fourth century) is claimed by Coarelli (1987) 452ff. The evidence of Zos. 1.61 and *SHA*, *Aurel.* 35.1 seems to attribute the innovation to Aurelian, while *SHA*, *Aurel.* 47.1 seems to imply that bread was already distributed under Aurelian. I feel we cannot rule out the possibility of an intermediate phase in this evolution from grain to bread: that of a distribution, still centralized at the *porticus Minucia* and still monthly, of flour instead of grain; see Lo Cascio (2002).

[36] DeLaine (1997). [37] Guidobaldi (1999). [38] Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine*.

possibility of initiating ambitious programmes. It has been pointed out that there was a total lack of building in the next fifty years, and that even the restorations attested for the same period amount to little under a fifth of those carried out in the (shorter) Severan age.[39] But once the disruption of Gallienus' years had been definitively overcome, imperial interest in Rome's fate once again found concrete expression under Aurelian. The form the recovery took, however, eloquently testifies that Rome was no longer the same city as that of the second century: i.e. a city with no need for walls (as Aelius Aristides put it) because its walls were the *limes*.[40] So the most significant manifestation of imperial concern was precisely the building of the city walls, an operation that was completed in a very short time, also thanks to the reuse of construction materials from buildings specially demolished for that very purpose.[41] Also symptomatic of this radical change in outlook is the fact that the path of that circuit took into account not only the limits of the inhabited area, but also the orography and hence the possibility of genuinely defending the built-up areas. Aurelian also increased the distributions in favour of the urban plebs: to the daily issues of bread he added regular distributions of pork. These took place at the *forum suarium*, near which the emperor had built the *castra urbana*, the new barracks for the urban cohorts: the *tribunus fori suarii*, who was in charge of the distributions, probably also commanded the cohorts under the general supervision of the urban prefect.[42] Aurelian also introduced the sale of wine at subsidized prices in the porticoes of the Templum Solis, the new temple built in the Campus Martius.

In many respects Aurelian's innovations were an important stage in the developments leading to the Rome of the following century. For though fourth-century Rome, after the building of Constantinople, was no longer in any way the capital of an empire, its plebs – the same plebs whose mean existences are so marvellously represented in Ammianus Marcellinus' withering description – had jealously preserved its privileges; indeed, if anything, it had seen them increase.

IV. ITALY MOVING TOWARDS PROVINCIALIZATION

One of the recommendations made to the future Augustus in the fictitious dialogue between Maecenas and Agrippa in Book 52 of Cassius Dio's work is the advice to subject Italy to a regime not unlike that of the provinces: the arguments recommending such a course were the size of the peninsula and the extent of its population.[43] The problem of this passage is obviously the

[39] Eight, compared with thirty-eight: Daguet-Gagey (1997) 76.
[40] Ael. Arist. *Or*. XXVI.29, 82–4; cf. XXV.36; see also Appian, *Praef.* 7; Herod. II.II.5.
[41] Steinby (1986) 110f. [42] Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine* 58. [43] Dio, LII.22.1f.

same as that posed by the whole dialogue, and particularly by Maecenas' advice: the fact that it sometimes contains anachronistic anticipations of developments that affected the empire's administrative organization before the actual time when Dio wrote the work. It is in fact precisely during the Severan period that we begin to detect an awareness that Italy occupied an anomalous position in an empire in which it no longer enjoyed economic supremacy, and in which the capacity of the Italic urban élites in furnishing the imperial ruling class had declined considerably (compared to that of the aristocracies of the provincial cities). At the same time, however, it was the Severans who reasserted Italy's traditional role, at least at an ideological level, by a generalized concession of the *ius Italicum* to the provincial communities especially favoured by the new dynasty. By this juridical fiction, the territory of a provincial town was assimilated to the Italic territory and hence acquired not only the right to apply specific norms of private Roman law that had value only in the *ager Romanus* in Italy, but also the much more concrete advantage of immunity from the property tax.

On a number of occasions during the two centuries before the Severans, the central authority had intervened in the internal affairs of the Italian urban communities. For a long time it was claimed that these measures represented the beginning of a long and gradual process that would eventually bring about the fall of Italy's position of special privilege and the ultimate provincialization of the peninsula in the tetrarchic age.[44] More recently it has been pointed out that these measures responded to specific needs and were not connected in any comprehensive and coherent plan of administrative reform; hence in no way did they constitute a precedent of the reforms of Diocletian's age that aligned Italy's status with that of the provinces.[45] The administrative areas in which the central government interfered were few and far between, and were those that somehow lay outside the territorial boundaries within which the magistrates of individual towns were allowed to act. Thus from the early days of the principate, imperial representatives were appointed to manage and control those services for which private citizens were expected to provide payment: for example, the administrations for road maintenance and for implementing the alimentary programme; or the organization of the *cursus publicus*, the service that dealt with the transfer of men and goods in the peninsula. Again on a regional basis, *procuratores* were specially appointed to supervise the collection of the taxes paid by the *cives*: for example, the *vicesima libertatis* and the *vicesima hereditatium*.

Jurisdiction was another area in which, at some stage, it was deemed necessary to set up some form of intermediate institution between the

[44] This thesis is particularly associated with Camille Jullian: particularly, Jullian (1884).
[45] Eck (1979), (1999a).

centre and the urban communities of peninsular Italy. Initially, this meant the creation of what the *Historia Augusta*, using an apparently anachronistic term, calls the *quattuor consulares*, assigned by Hadrian to the four judicial districts in which the peninsula was divided.[46] Recently it has been conjectured that the powers of Hadrian's *quattuor consulares* also extended to fields other than jurisdiction and that Hadrian's project was genuinely to create a sort of provincial governor for Italy.[47] Whatever the case, the innovation was short-lived. It apparently aroused fierce opposition within the ruling class and was eventually abandoned by Hadrian's successor, himself formerly one of the *quattuor consulares*. The *iuridici* later created by Marcus[48] unquestionably also had jurisdictional powers (though somewhat limited ones), but we can probably rule out the possibility that they had wider administrative functions, even though they are known to have carried out exceptional duties during their period of office, for example in matters concerning the *annona*.[49] It has been claimed that the creation of the *iuridici* represented the most important stage in the 'regionalization' of Italy, a gradual process eventually completed when Italy was definitively split up into provinces during the tetrarchy.[50] Yet the districts in which the *iuridici* operated did not remain fixed over the course of time, and the various attempts to identify the different phases of this territorial division of duties have not been convincing.[51] Nor can we rule out the possibility that the regional areas in which each judge operated were totally and continually variable. Again this suggests that the judicial districts cannot be considered as a real anticipation of the division into provinces.

Only with the appointment of the *correctores*, attested (albeit sporadically) from the time of Caracalla, can we genuinely detect an anticipation of a provincial organization in Italy. Already in the second century it had become customary for the emperor to send a *corrector* (or *epanorthōtēs* or *diorthōtēs*) to the provinces of the *populus*, such as Achaea, Asia, Bithynia–Pontus, particularly to supervise the administration of the *civitates liberae*, at whose boundaries the authority of the normal provincial governor stopped (at least in theory). The function of the *correctores*, and in general of the *legati ad ordinandum statum civitatium*, was no different from that of Pliny's correspondent Maximus in Achaea[52] and to a certain extent of Pliny himself

[46] Appian, *Bell. Civ*. 1.38.172; *SHA*, *Hadr*. 22.13; *Pius* 2.11, 3.1; cf. *Marc*. 11.6.

[47] Eck (1999a) 253ff., which on this point corrects the picture presented in Eck (1979) 247f.; see also A. R. Birley (1997) 199f.

[48] The earliest evidence is G. Arrius Antoninus, *ILS* 1118–19, *iuridicus per Italiam regionis Transpadanae primus*, in the mid-160s: Eck (1979) 249f.; Giardina (1993) 53 n. 15.

[49] Eck (1979) 263ff. = (1999a) 271ff.; Giardina (1993) 54.

[50] Eck (1979) 247 = Eck (1999a) 253.

[51] Eck (1979) 249ff. = Eck (1999a) 257ff., on Thomsen (1947) 164ff. and Corbier (1973); see also Camodeca (1976).

[52] Pliny, *Ep*. VIII.24: the title of Maximus' office was that of '*missus in provinciam Achaiam ad ordinandum statum liberarum civitatium*'.

in Bithynia. Apart from generally supervising the workings of the urban institutions, they were above all expected to oversee the finances, rather like the *curatores*, from whom they differed in so far as they superintended not single communities, but groups of communities.

A similar function, at least in name, appeared in Italy in the Severan age, for in Caracalla's time a functionary is attested with the title of *electus ad corrigendum statum Italiae*.[53] Quite possibly this official's exceptional appointment can be connected with an emerging threat to public order in Italy in those very years, and specifically with the need to combat banditry. But it might also have originated from a concern over the state of the urban finances in the Italic communities, at a time when the burden of taxation must have been especially onerous, even in Italy: in this regard, it is worth remembering that Caracalla doubled the rate of both the *vicesima hereditatium* and the *vicesima manumissionum*.[54] The imperial authority must have viewed the efficient management of the urban finances as a pressing need, especially since Italy was also subject to the exactions of the *annona militaris*. Almost contemporary with the *electus ad corrigendum statum Italiae* is a figure mentioned in a Cretan epigram, a certain ἑσπερίης πάσης χθονὸς ἰθυντήρ (i.e. *Italiae totius corrector*),[55] whereas to around the middle of the century we can date the function of ἐπανορθωτὴς πάσης Ἰταλίας (i.e. *corrector totius Italiae*) performed by Pomponius Bassus (consul in 258 and 271).[56] In both cases the emphasis is on the fact that the functions applied to the entire territory of Italy.

But the *correctura* in Italy is attested not only in the epigraphic documents. Mention is also made in the biographies of the *Historia Augusta*, with reference to the fate reserved for the last of the usurpers of the *imperium Galliarum*, Esuvius Tetricus, appointed *corrector* by Aurelian after his defeat. What is significant (and also a problem of difficult solution) is that the function attributed to Tetricus is presented in different sources as extending over either the whole of Italy[57] or just Lucania.[58] Now if Tetricus was really the *corrector* of Lucania only, we must somehow anticipate to the years of Aurelian the subdivision of Italy into several provinces (which however continued to be defined as *regiones*).[59] It would mean that one of the most notable aspects of the general reorganization carried out during the tetrarchy – the fragmentation of the existing provinces into smaller units – had a

[53] C. Octavius Suetrius Sabinus: *ILS* 1159. See Ausbüttel (1988) 87ff. [54] Dio, LXXVII.9.4–5.

[55] *ICret* IV.323. [56] *CIL* VI.3836 = 31747 = *IG* XIV.1076 = *IGRR* I.137.

[57] *SHA*, *Tyr. Trig.* 24.5, including a specification of the various districts, which, with a few significant differences, are the provinces of Diocletian's reorganization.

[58] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XXXV.5; *Epit. de Caes.* XXXV.7; Eutr. IX.13.2; *SHA*, *Aurel.* 39.1; Ausbüttel (1988) 89ff.

[59] Cecconi (1994b), who also shows that at quite an early date the term 'province' began to be used even in the official language to indicate the administrative partitions of the Italic territory and that there were thus no ideological reservations about using the term with reference to an Italy that had by then been made to conform with the other territories of the empire.

significant Italian precedent before the final imposition on the peninsula of parity with the provinces (even in fiscal matters).[60] The divergence in our sources is perhaps symptomatic of the fact that Aurelian's reign represented a transitional phase both fiscally and administratively. Though Italy was not yet liable to the *tributum*, it was subject to the *annona* levies and some of the southern Italian regions had been requested to satisfy Roman consumption through such requisitions, for example by providing for the new free distributions of pork. Very likely Lucania was one of the regions that produced a large share of the pork consumed in Rome already under Aurelian, just as it was to be in the following two centuries. If so, it could offer an explanation for the particular relation of Tetricus' *correctura* with Lucania;[61] i.e. that while the official denomination of his office may well have continued to refer indistinctly to Italy, its actual authority was basically limited to Lucania. Whatever the case, the example is significant, for it shows that even in the administration of Italy we can find an anticipation of developments that were eventually systematized under Diocletian.

[60] A precedent which would be even more plausible if the existence of a *corrector Campaniae* in the years of Carinus could be attested by an inscription that is generally considered to be a fake (*CIL* x.304*): Giardina (1997) 277ff.

[61] Giardina (1993) 58ff., and (1997) 275ff., following Mazzarino (1956) 375.

CHAPTER 6

THE EMPEROR AND HIS ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 6D

THE NEW STATE OF DIOCLETIAN AND CONSTANTINE: FROM THE TETRARCHY TO THE REUNIFICATION OF THE EMPIRE

ELIO LO CASCIO

1. THE NEW LEGITIMATION OF IMPERIAL POWER

When Diocletian rose to the imperial dignity after the assassination of Numerian and after rapidly ridding himself of Carinus, he possibly adopted – and certainly appointed as Caesar and shortly after as Augustus – Maximian, an old comrade in arms and like himself a man of humble origins, whom he sent to control the west. The new system of government was thus diarchic and as such had precedents in the history of the third century. But what was now being given some form of official sanction was a territorial partition of duties between the two Augusti. A few years later, in 293, two other soldiers, Constantius Chlorus and Maximianus Galerius, were raised to the purple as Caesars. The diarchy was transformed into a tetrarchy.[1]

As a system the new division of power had a certain complexity. While to a certain extent it endeavoured to recall the methods of legitimating imperial authority peculiar to the adoptive empire, at the same time it also retained the traditional dynastic ideology. Relations between the tetrarchs were thus cemented by matrimonial links: Galerius with Diocletian's daughter, Constantius with Maximian's daughter. Even in Diocletian's case the fact that he had no male offspring of his own must surely have had some influence on his decisions. Within the imperial college, Diocletian's position remained one of undisputed pre-eminence. Most likely the new system was not, as some have claimed (both in the past and even recently),[2] the product of an overall design in which every element was pre-arranged,

[1] Seston, *Dioclétien*; Kolb, *Diocletian*; Chastagnol (1993) and (1994); Kuhoff (2001); see also Pasqualini, *Massimiano*; Kolb (1997); and Leadbetter (1998).

[2] Seeck (1910) 36, according to whom abdication was to take place twenty years after accession to power; cf. Ensslin (1939). More recently, arguments for the existence of a definite, consistent and systematic plan have been advanced by Kolb, *Diocletian*; see above pp. 68, 89.

but instead an empirical response to the problems of the empire. Its basic aim must have been that of guaranteeing the essential unity of the imperial directives, while at the same time guaranteeing the greatest efficacy to their execution by ensuring the physical presence of the imperial authority in the large territorial districts into which the empire was now divided. With the partition into four areas – the western parts to Maximian and Constantius Chlorus, the eastern to Diocletian himself and Galerius – the centres of decision were brought closer to the more critical frontier zones. It was an attempt to resolve a structural problem in a large territorial empire: that of the slowness and difficulty of transmitting messages and orders. The partition did not create four watertight compartments, though it did permit regional differentiation to continue and made it possible to adapt not only decisions, but also the basic reforms of the administrative and fiscal system, to the individual local situations. Nor were the divisions conceived as definitive: evidence of the unity of the empire was not only the undisputed pre-eminence of Diocletian, but also, for example, the fact that there continued to be two praetorian prefects.[3]

To strengthen the new regime a new legitimation of imperial power was devised: one that exploited a particular religious climate, while at the same time aiming to trace its roots in the Roman tradition. A precedent had been consciously set by Aurelian, when the cult of the god of Palmyra was used for legitimating purposes: his building of the temple of the Sun in the Campus Martius was clearly an attempt to institute a new imperial religion of a monotheistic tendency based on the cult of Sol Invictus. It was an important precedent not only because a new cult was welcomed in Rome and a new temple was erected, but also because Aurelian favoured the creation of a college of priests in accordance with the tradition. It was an early premonition of the religious upheavals of the next half century. When Diocletian and Maximian assumed the names of *Iovius* and *Herculius* and claimed a particular identification with Jupiter and Hercules (repeated also in the names of their Caesars), there was more at stake than mere divine investiture. These were ways of making the sovereign participate in the divine world.[4] By insisting on the emperor's connection with the sacred and divine sphere, the tetrarchy could be said to have taken the process begun by Aurelian to its extreme consequences. At the same time, however, the association with the divine was consistent with the Roman polytheistic tradition and can thus be legitimately considered as further evidence of the new regime's essentially conservative character.

The sacred and inviolable aura surrounding the emperors associated with Jupiter and Hercules was accentuated further by certain features of the

[3] For chronological information on when colleges of five prefects are attested, see Barnes, 'Emperors' 546ff.

[4] Kolb, *Diocletian* ch. 5.

ceremonial: those admitted to the emperor's presence no longer performed the act of *salutatio*, but that of *adoratio*, by kneeling and kissing the hem of the emperor's robes; and perhaps already from the tetrarchic age the imperial *consilium* was called the *consistorium*, the name unquestionably used for the room where the meetings took place (presumably because its members had to stand before the emperor).[5] From the despotic eastern regimes the imperial power borrowed not only certain characteristics that were distinctly remote from the Roman tradition (or at least the symbols thereof), but also that particular association with the divine that was one of the essential components of those regimes. Though not themselves divinities, the emperors were nonetheless closely connected with the divinity. So quite apart from the question of the sincerity of Constantine's 'conversion', one understands that the Constantinian revolution merely accelerated a process that had already been started. The religious aura surrounding the emperor also contributed to limiting the prerogatives, hitherto enjoyed by the army and the senate of Rome, in the process for legitimating imperial power.

II. THE REFORMS AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION OF THE EMPIRE

The distinct restriction of the senate's prerogatives was another aspect of the changing role of Rome in the imperial fabric. One consequence of the tetrarchic system (indeed already of the diarchy) was the definitive and formal abandonment of Rome as the centre of power, even if the city forfeited neither the imperial interest in its welfare nor the privileges of its population; indeed, if anything, these increased. Now, however, the imperial residences proliferated and, in addition, were no longer permanent: for Diocletian it was Nicomedia in Bythinia, for Galerius Thessalonica and Serdica (and, later, Sirmium for Licinius); in the west Maximian increasingly made Milan his residence, while Constantius resided in Trier. The *adventus* of an emperor – i.e. his arrival and 'epiphany' in Rome – would thus clearly be an important event, but most likely also a unique and unrepeatable one. The decisive moment, however, in Rome's decline was the subsequent creation of the 'new Rome' on the Bosphorus and its elevation to the status of emperor's residence in an empire restored to unity.

Under the new tetrarchic order there was also a reshaping of the administration, a process that was much more innovative at the periphery than at the centre. On this subject, however, as for other aspects concerning the empire's administration, there is no documentation that can determine the extent to which the innovations can be ascribed to Diocletian and the

[5] Delmaire (1995) 29ff. dates the transformation of the name to the years of Constantine. The mention in *CJ* IX.47.12 would appear either to refer to the room where the meetings took place or to be an incorrect reading by the compilers of the abbreviated formula 'in cons.'.

tetrarchy or to Constantine and his successors. In fact, on matters concerning the imperial administration we notice a remarkable continuity between the tetrarchic reforms and those carried out by Constantine and his sons, whereas in many other areas we have to concede that there was a distinct contrast: a contrast also suggested by the early sources and obviously particularly stressed (by both Christian and pagan writers) when they dealt with Constantine's religious revolution. The administrative reforms, which not only reinforced the imperial organization in the periphery by boosting the number of bureaucrats, but also increased the duties and staff at the centre,[6] can be viewed as the expression of a greater desire and ambition to govern than in the past. This is borne out by the fact that numerous copies of important pronouncements were published in durable materials throughout the east.[7]

The administrative reforms, which were connected with the reorganizations of the army, of taxation and even of the coinage, were an effective response to danger from without and to the threat of disintegration. During the tetrarchic age the number of troops in the army was certainly increased, though not quadrupled as we are led to believe by Lactantius, a writer violently hostile to Diocletian.[8] The volunteers, recruited from the barbarians across the border, and the sons of veterans, presumably already forced into service by this time, were by then insufficient. Conscription was again necessary and this time it took the form of a genuine 'tax' levied on property, the *praebitio tironum*. By turns the landowners were obliged to supply a part of their *coloni* for military service,[9] according to a complex system that grouped the small landed properties into units of taxation or *capitula*, each of which was expected to provide a recruit. The larger estates, on the other hand, were subdivided into a number of *capitula*. The small landowner actually supplying the recruit would then be compensated by the other landowners belonging to the same *capitulum*. Already at an early stage, however, there must have been provisions for 'commuting' the recruit's services with a payment in gold (*aurum tironicum*). As for the actual organization of the army, a process already begun earlier was brought to completion: the

[6] Censured in Lact. *DMP* 7.3, where it is claimed hyperbolically – and obviously including the soldiers in that number – that there were fewer people paying taxes than using them. In spite of everything, the number of bureaucrats at a peripheral level remained low compared to that of a modern state: one bureaucrat for every 5–10,000 inhabitants, according to the estimate in Bagnall, *Egypt* 66, based on data deduced from imperial constitutions by Jones, *LRE* 594. This figure can be usefully compared with that of the Chinese empire in the twelfth century (Hopkins (1980) 121): one representative of the central administration for every 15,000 inhabitants.

[7] Corcoran, *ET* 4.

[8] *DMP* 7.2. Lactantius' claim that each of the tetrarchs tried to secure for himself as many soldiers as a single emperor possessed previously and that the troops therefore quadrupled, is unanimously considered to be exaggerated: see recently Carrié (1993a) 134ff.; and now Kuhoff (2001) 448ff.

[9] The new system was certainly operative during the years of the tetrarchy: Carrié and Rousselle, *L'Empire romain* 172f.

subdivision of the larger units as a means of increasing the general flexibility of the system. Though this clearly entailed a multiplication of legions, it presumably also meant a gradual reduction of the number of soldiers in each legion.[10] To start with, the distinction between legions and auxiliary units did not cease. But increasingly (especially at a somewhat later date) importance was attributed to a different distinction within the army, one that bore on the new strategy of defence. During the central decades of the second century the troops following the emperor had gained in strategic importance compared to those stationed on the borders. Under the tetrarchy that process seems to have slackened. The mobile contingents, which followed the tetrarchs' movements and formed part of the imperial staff, or *comitatus*, were exiguous in number, whereas greater efforts were made to strengthen the border, especially the eastern border, with impressive works of fortification.[11] The logistic organization and distribution of the troops along the border responded to a new defence strategy, the idea being that if the border troops could no longer fulfil a genuinely preclusive function, their job was to slow down the invasions or at least limit their impact territorially and give other troops time to intervene. At the same time the attempt to reassert the frontier's impenetrability to enemy invasion, as witnessed during the safest periods of the principate, was never completely abandoned. All things considered, therefore, the importance of the mobile troops accompanying the tetrarchs was limited. A reversal of this tendency, however, can be observed in the following decades, for under Constantine the mobile troops of the *comitatenses*, commanded by the two *magistri peditum* and *equitum*, became much more important: a development that was to provoke strong criticism from Zosimus.[12]

Both the increase in the number of troops and the actual preparation of the works of defence called for a heavy boost in state revenue. A reorganization of imperial taxation and finance had become essential, and in fact Diocletian seems to have devoted his energies to the matter even before the introduction of the tetrarchic order.[13] One effect of the third-century disturbances was that tax collection was less efficient. In addition, the demographic decline in many areas of the empire and the consequent drop in agricultural production had reduced the basis on which taxation was assessed and had made it difficult to ensure an adequate yield for the two most important levies that financed imperial expenditure: the *tributum soli*,

[10] On these developments a general consensus has not been reached: see in particular Jones, *LRE* 607ff., 697ff.; Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* 173ff.; Duncan-Jones, *Structure* ch. 7 and apps. 4 and 5; Carrié and Rousselle, *L'Empire romain* 175f.

[11] Carrié (1993a) 118ff.

[12] Zos. II.34. The distinct contrast between Diocletian's policy and that of Constantine and the importance attributed to Zosimus' testimony are strongly qualified by Carrié (1993a) 125ff.

[13] Recently Carrié, 'Fiscalité' and references there; see also Kuhoff (2001) 484ff.

the land tax, and the *tributum capitis*, the poll tax.[14] As a result, it became common practice, wherever the need arose, for the military authorities to resort to the forced requisitioning of goods (food, above all) for the army. Further complicating the situation were the consequences of the monetary manipulations aimed at redressing the imbalance between revenue and expenditure (at least in the short term). But though the reduction in weight and fineness of the silver coinage had undoubtedly created considerable difficulties, these did not automatically or immediately translate into price increases; whereas Aurelian's monetary reform, an attempt to improve the currency, had caused an immediate decuplication of prices expressed in units of account,[15] with prices continuing to rise even after that.

The financial system needed to be established on new foundations, not only to ensure that revenue matched expenditure, but also to guarantee that the military units were regularly provisioned. Diocletian thus proceeded to reform the tax structure by introducing a new system of taxation (though in fact it was the conclusion of developments already begun in the Severan age and pursued during the third century). Exactions for the army were regularized and came to represent the main part of the revenue. In this way the amount of revenue could be calculated in advance and also be made to correspond, year by year, to the expenditure actually needed to provision the army. In other words, a tax that was proportionate to agricultural yield and to the number of taxpayers was turned into a tax that distributed the overall burden among all the taxpayers. In addition, by making revenue directly dependent on provisioning the army (the main item of state expenditure) the new system removed the need to use coinage in tax collection. The levy could now be largely in kind; and correspondingly, supplies in kind formed a considerable part of the soldiers' pay. This helped to protect both the imperial administration and the army from the consequences of currency depreciation and price rises.

For the first time, therefore, the imperial government was in a position to draw up a sort of budget. To distribute the tax burden a new general census of the population of the empire was ordered, as well as a land survey to measure the size of the estates and to estimate their yields and different agricultural uses. This ambitious general assessment of the taxable value of people and land was carried out during the tetrarchy, and the foundations were laid for ensuring its regular application in the future. The heart of the system was the establishment of two theoretical, and interconnected, units of taxation: the *iugum* (etymologically, the amount of land worked by a pair of oxen) and the *caput*. The two units combined the size and

[14] According to some, however, the poll tax was abolished as a result of the extension of citizenship introduced by the *constitutio Antoniniana*.

[15] Lo Cascio (1984) 167ff.; Lo Cascio (1997); Rathbone (1996).

quality of the land with the number of agricultural labourers present in a given area (in a way that is not altogether clear and that has aroused endless debate among modern historians). According to a plausible reconstruction, the system also differentiated the taxable capacity of the various areas in relation to their respective densities of population.[16]

Though the reorganization of taxation on an annonary basis and the corresponding transition to paying the army in kind did undoubtedly remove much of the need to use money, the imperial authority was still left with the monetary problems inherited from the third century and paradoxically exacerbated by Aurelian's reform and its effect on prices. The monetary events of the third century up until Aurelian's reform had produced an important result: the coinage had effectively ceased to serve as a stable measure of value. In itself, however, this did not mean that money was used less or that there was a return to a natural economy, either in private transactions or even in payments involving the administration: papyrological documents from Diocletian's age show that wages and above all donatives in money for the troops retained their importance.[17] The passage to annonary taxation and the payment of soldiers and bureaucrats in kind was an attempt to escape the negative consequences of the absence of a stable measure of money: wages, even when paid in money, could not be measured in money. An attempt, therefore, had to be made to re-establish the entire edifice of the monetary system on new foundations. So in 294 or 296 the tetrarchic government introduced a comprehensive reform of the coinage which confirms the basic traditionalism of Diocletian's policy. The reform endeavoured to recreate the old silver coin of great fineness, minted (like the Neronian *denarius*) at 96 pieces per pound: the coin was presumably produced at its full intrinsic value. The weight of the gold coin was fixed at 60 pieces per pound. Finally a new coin of silverwashed copper of good weight was introduced: supposedly worth a quarter of the new silver coin, its function in the new system was to be that of the *sestertius*.[18] This coin was accompanied by further silverwashed copper coins or smaller copper coins, to serve as small change. The reform, however, was powerless to stop the general increase in prices, including those of the precious metals themselves. The point came, therefore, when the imperial authority was obliged to give its new coinage a nominal value that had become lower than its intrinsic worth. In other words, it was issuing its own coinage at a loss. In order to mint under these conditions, the precious metals had to be acquired by forced purchase, paid for in small change. Since the price paid to private citizens for the precious metal was unrealistically low, such forced purchases were tantamount to a further tax.[19] As revealed by an

[16] Mazzarino (1951) 261ff. [17] The two papyri from Panopolis: *P. Panop. Beatty* 1–2.
[18] Lo Cascio (1997) and the authors cited there; see also Kuhoff (2001) 515ff.
[19] Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 347ff.; Carrié (1993b) 115ff.

epigraphic document discovered at Aphrodisias in Caria reproducing an edict of the tetrarchs,[20] a second reform (in 301) attempted to solve the problem by increasing the nominal values of some or all of the various coins, in some cases even doubling them. This measure, however, risked giving the inflationary movement further momentum, as had happened with Aurelian's reform. At this stage the tetrarchic government could find no better solution to the problem than to try and freeze prices.

At the end of 301, therefore, an edict fixed, in the minutest detail, the maximum prices that could be asked for all the goods and services available on the market. The *edictum* is known from numerous fragments, in Greek and Latin, found in several towns of four eastern provinces of the empire (just one small fragment, in Greek, was found in the Appenines in central Italy, though it was possibly brought there from Greece in the modern age): as a result, some scholars believe this gigantic price freeze was enforced only in the regions controlled by Diocletian himself. The edict lists not only the maximum prices of food commodities in immense detail, but also those of the most diverse types of manufactured article, as well as the salaries of a great variety of labourers and even prices of transportation by land or river, not to mention freight charges on many routes, principally those connecting the eastern ports among themselves or with Ostia. One feature emerging from the more recently discovered and published fragments is that the price of the precious metals – gold and silver – was kept artificially low. In this way the imperial government attempted to bring the prices it wished the metals to have in the marketplace closer to those at which it requisitioned them. The result was naturally to give private citizens a further incentive to hoard. Yet since the edict also established that the price of minted gold was to be the same as that of gold bullion, the government was forced to issue its *aurei* at an unrealistically low value and to attribute to its silver coins a degree of overvaluation that was, all things considered, very modest compared to the fixed price of silver bullion. Again, this made the minting of silver coinage somewhat disadvantageous for the issuing authority. The fixing of such a low price for precious metals amounted to an attempt to enforce artificially an unrealistic ratio between the new gold and silver coinage and the billon coinage, signalling a desire to sustain the small change and hit the interests of the private citizens who possessed gold and silver.[21]

It was an impressive provision, attesting the great ambition and boldness with which the imperial authority strove to control the market in a dirigiste manner. Its starting-point was the predicament of the soldiers, whose salaries and donatives were being 'eaten away' by galloping inflation.

[20] *AE* 1973.526, now Roueché, *ALA* 254–65.

[21] Lo Cascio (1993b) and (1997). See the standard editions of the Prices Edict by Lauffer and Giacchero and articles on the Aphrodisias copy by Crawford and Reynolds (1977) and (1979); also Kuhoff (2001) 543ff. with refs.

In a long preamble the tetrarchs expressly declare that their main concern is to defend the soldiers from speculation, imputed to be the sole cause of the uncontrolled price rises. As was only to be expected, the controlled price list caused goods to disappear, resulting in disorder and a 'black market'. Moreover, the tetrarchic government lacked a system of coercion to prevent speculation. Given the failure of the edict, it was perhaps then allowed to lapse. One writer who particularly stressed this failure (as well as the authoritarian character of the endeavour itself and even the bloodshed that allegedly ensued) was Lactantius,[22] though of course his impartiality to the tetrarchic government is legitimately questioned. What is certainly true is that monetary instability persisted and prices continued to rise.

In his defence of the small change (essentially an attempt to enforce a legal value in relation to the gold and silver coinage), Diocletian was to some extent pursuing the traditional policy followed by his predecessors. But this line of action was powerless to establish monetary circulation on securer foundations, because it was incapable of replenishing the state coffers with the gold and silver hoarded by private citizens during the most difficult years of the third century and of generating an abundant emission of coinage of full intrinsic value. The rise in gold and silver prices, in terms of money of account and hence in terms of small change, continued to force the issuing authority either to adjust upwards the nominal value of its own gold and silver coinage or to issue it at a loss.

The turning point came with Constantine. Most probably after the reunification of the empire in 324, the protection of the needier classes, as expressed in the defence of their coinage, was abandoned. Constantine no longer tried to impose a fixed ratio between the values of the silverwashed copper coin (that of humble trade) and the coin of precious metal. Instead he took stock of the situation and, to prevent the hoarding that continued to rock the monetary economy, 'liberalized' the price of gold and allowed it to rise – a measure that naturally favoured the hoarders and hence the richer sectors of society. At the same time he initiated a very large production of gold coinage, destined to be increased further by his successors.[23] The new gold coin minted by Constantine, the *solidus* weighing 1/72 lb, thus began to form the basis of the monetary system, exactly as the silver *denarius* had done during the principate; in the following centuries it became the stable coin of the Byzantine empire. However, the return to gold also entailed social costs of some consequence. Writing a few decades after Constantine's death, the anonymous author of the *de Rebus Bellicis*, an acute observer and interpreter of the social repercussions of the monetary measures, harshly censures the emperor and accuses him of ruining the needier classes by his policy of gold-based emission.[24] The monetary economy gained strength:

[22] Lact. *DMP* 7.6. [23] Lo Cascio (1995) and references there. [24] *de Rebus Bellicis* 2.1–3.

the levies in kind were often commuted into gold, as were the payments in kind to the military units (by means that inevitably led to corruption and dishonest practices). 'Liberalizing' the price of gold also contributed to accelerating the rise of prices expressed in unit of account. The central decades of the fourth century were characterized by 'galloping inflation' and prices rose tens of thousands of times.[25]

III. PROVINCES, DIOCESES AND PREFECTURES

It was above all the imposing reorganization of taxation begun by Diocletian that created the need for a more substantial administration: an administration that would be more thoroughly distributed at the periphery and, at the same time, more uniform, thereby hastening the removal of the idiosyncrasies that (for different reasons) had hitherto distinguished the administrations of Egypt and Italy. To this end the tetrarchic government accomplished a series of reforms that, once again, can be said to have terminated developments initiated during the third century. Lactantius' account of these measures, despite its underlying hostility, can be taken as substantially reliable on certain details. The main feature of the reform was the division of the existing provinces into smaller territorial entities. The number of provinces was more than doubled, from forty-eight to over a hundred – as we learn from the *Laterculus Veronensis*, a document illustrating the administrative divisions of the empire and dating to the early decades of the fourth century (though we cannot rule out the possibility of revisions at a later date).[26] The provinces were still distinguished in accordance with the rank of their governors. With the subtraction of military command from the provincial governors and its assignment to the *duces*, the legates disappeared and few proconsuls remained; in most cases the provinces were assigned to equestrian *praesides*. The new *regiones* of Italy, and some other provinces, had *correctores* and (from the time of Constantine) *consulares*. Not all the divisions were destined to last, as some provinces were subsequently reunited or subjected to some other form of territorial reorganization. In many cases the duties of governor were reunited with those of financial *procurator*[27] (a legacy, in certain respects, of the positions held by those appointed to the so-called independent vicariates in the third century), though the *procuratores* did not disappear from all the provinces.[28]

A problem often posed is that of establishing the fundamental reason for Diocletian's decision to partition the provinces. Strategic and military

[25] Bagnall, *Currency*.

[26] Jones, *LRE* 42f.; and, more recently, the observations of Barnes, 'Emperors' 548ff., who corrects the picture offered in Barnes, *NE* chs. 12 and 13. On the reorganization of the provinces see now Kuhoff (2001) 329ff.

[27] Though this did not always happen: not, in any case, in Egypt.

[28] Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 171.

considerations certainly played a part: often, for example, the border provinces were divided so as to create a new, more internal, province without military units next to an external, armed province. Yet this cannot have been the only reason, for even the provinces that were most internal and least exposed to external attack were dismembered. We can also rule out the desire to limit the power of the governors. In a number of cases partitioning was applied to provinces in which no military units were stationed; and besides, the *duces* appointed to lead the troops often found themselves commanding contingents stationed in more than one province. The reason for partitioning must have been a conviction that the centre's presence needed to be more thoroughly felt: that certain functions – such as jurisdiction, the control of public order and the financial and fiscal administration formerly entrusted to *quaestores* and *procuratores* – should remain with the institutions delegated by the centre; and above all, that closer control should be exerted over the institutions of urban self-government, particularly the *curiae*, the bodies ultimately responsible for the payment of taxes. The partitioning could be interpreted as an attempt to bring the imperial power closer to the inhabitants of the empire through its representatives in the provinces; equally, it could be negatively construed as an unacceptable limitation of local autonomies.

The reorganization of the provinces had other important consequences. In particular, the distinction between the provinces of the *populus* and the imperial provinces disappeared definitively. Moreover, Egypt became in every respect equivalent to the other provinces, in so far as its administrative system was concerned. But above all, it concluded the process of bringing Italy into line with the provincial territories, which it did by subdividing the Italic territory into a series of provinces (initially called *regiones*, as we saw above).[29] In addition, the tax reform, which by then had subordinated the imposition and collection of taxes to the provisioning of the army, eliminated once and for all the privilege of immunity formerly enjoyed by the peninsula.

The provinces were then grouped into twelve large territorial districts called dioceses: six in the west (Britanniae, Galliae, Viennensis, Hispaniae, Africa, Italia), three in Illyricum (Pannoniae, Moesiae, Thracia) and three in the east (Asiana, Pontica, Oriens). At the head of these dioceses were appointed officials of the equestrian order, called *vicarii* of the praetorian prefects. The Italian diocese, however, was split into two vicariates: one, comprising the northern regions, assigned to a *vicarius* of the praetorian prefects; the other, whose area of competence extended to the so-called *urbicariae* or *suburbicariae* regions, assigned to another *vicarius* (whether of the praetorian prefects or of the urban prefect is still a matter of debate).

[29] Chastagnol (1987); Ausbüttel (1988) ch. 3; Giardina (1993); Cecconi (1994a); on the duties of the new governors see Carrié (1998a) and (1998b); Cecconi (1998); Roueché (1998); Palme (1999).

In the years of Constantine and for some time after, two distinct *vicarii* must have existed (presumably simultaneously), until the 350s when the functions of the *vicarius* of the urban prefect were definitively absorbed by the *vicarius urbis Romae*, i.e. the vicar of the praetorian prefect of Italy.[30] The *vicarii* of the dioceses were the representatives of the central power and performed at a local level the various civil duties that by then fell to the prefects; in addition, they had control over the troops commanded by the *praesides*. Apart from overseeing the conduct of the provincial governors (except the two *proconsules* of Asia and Africa), they also supervised the imposition and collection of the *annona*. The dioceses were thus the great fiscal districts of the empire. They also hosted the financial officials of the *fiscus* and of the *res privata*, the *rationales summarum* and the *magistri* (later called *rationales*) *rei privatae*.[31]

The dioceses were plausibly created in 297.[32] But already before that, with the monetary reform, the production of money had been reorganized on a regional basis through the creation of new mints at Trier, Aquileia, Carthage, Heraclea, Thessalonica and Nicomedia. Even Alexandria began to mint the mainstream coinage and London, which had served to produce the currency of the usurpers, was also kept operational, as were the mints already functioning at the start of Diocletian's reign: Rome, Lyons, Ticinum (Pavia), Siscia, Cyzicus and Antioch.[33] Not every diocese had a mint (neither Viennensis nor the Hispaniae had one), while the Gallic and the Oriental had two each and the Italian three (Rome, Aquileia and Ticinum). Nonetheless the proliferation and decentralization of the mints in the various regions clearly accorded with the new system of tax collection, which was based on those dioceses. The anomalies in their distribution can be explained by the fact that the two dioceses lacking a mint were among the most internal and secure, where military expenditure was much lower. Certain minor readjustments occurred later: the closure of the Carthaginian mint in 307; the creation (short-lived, as it turned out) of one at Ostia, plausibly using the Carthaginian staff; the closure of those in London and Ticinum; and finally, the opening of one in Constantinople in 326.

IV. LATER DEVELOPMENTS

In many respects the new empire reunified by Constantine could not but continue in the course of administrative organization commenced by the tetrarchic government. And it was above all in the central administration

[30] On this very complex issue, Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine* 29ff.; de Martino (1975) 346 ff.; on the creation of dioceses see Noethlichs (1982); Kuhoff (2001) 378ff.

[31] Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* ch. 4.

[32] This is the view generally held; though Hendy (1985) 373ff. anticipates the creation of the dioceses to before 297.

[33] Hendy (1985) 378ff.; conversely, the mint of Tripolis was closed.

that the process of bureaucratization was brought to completion. The functions of the central departments, each with their own bureaux (or *scrinia*), were further defined. Four 'ministers' were directed to take part in the *consistorium*: the *quaestor sacri palatii*, whose duty it was to draft the imperial legislative enactments (the *constitutiones*); the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, a sort of minister of finance, who dealt with the tax revenue in money, as well as the imperial expenditures (significantly conceived as 'donations') and the issue of money; the *comes rerum privatarum*, the minister entrusted with the task of overseeing the immense imperial patrimony; and the *magister officiorum*, a sort of controller of the whole bureaucratic system. Oriental influences can be detected in the fact that an even higher rank was assigned to the *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, superintendent of the *cubicularii* (formerly the sovereign's private attendants) and effectively in charge of the organization of the imperial palace. The respective rankings of these new officials underwent change in the course of time: the two financial *comites*, for example, acquired greater importance in the period from the second half of the century to the first half of the fifth.

In the Constantinian age some important innovations were also introduced precisely because there was no longer a collegial management of imperial power. One such important reform was the transformation of the praetorian prefecture. Ever since the fiscal innovations of the tetrarchic age, when the prefects further expanded their multifarious functions, these officials had become the principal finance ministers, while their *vicarii* controlled to collection of the annona in the large circumscriptions. After the battle at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine dissolved the praetorian cohorts, which had sided with Maxentius,[34] at which stage the transformation of the prefecture into a completely and exclusively civilian office was complete. The result of the process was to turn the prefects into something similar to viceroys, controlling very large territorial districts made up of a number of dioceses. Again, to a certain extent this was a response to the same need to decentralize the exercise of power that had motivated the tetrarchic system: a decentralization that could not be effectively guaranteed by Constantine's various sons, all appointed Caesars, given their extreme youth.

In many respects the political organization Constantine bequeathed his sons – a political organization which by then had a new centre in the New Rome – was much more complex than it had been during the first centuries of the imperial age. To counter the disruptive pressures of the 'crisis' period more effectively, the bureaucratic system had become increasingly well defined. In the following decades it acquired further definition, as is

[34] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XL.24–5; Zos. II.17, 2; again Zos. II.33, 1–2 for the regional prefectures attributed to Constantine: in particular Jones (1964) 101ff., and Chastagnol (1968); see now Porena (2003); also Gutsfeld (1998) 78ff.

demonstrated by a key document, the so-called *Notitia Dignitatum* (or, to give it its full title, the *Notitia omnium dignitatum et administrationum tam civilium quam militarium*). Of this document, which is a sort of register of the civil and military offices of the empire, accompanied by illustrations showing the insignia of the various offices and military regiments, we possess a copy drawn up after the division of the empire in 395. The surviving redaction poses serious problems, for it is a 'stratified' document incorporating corrections dictated by the various changes made to the bureaucratic and military organization during late antiquity. But despite the exegetical problems, as a piece of evidence the document is unique and of great value. Indeed the very fact we have nothing like it for a previous age is perhaps a sign of how much both the political-administrative and military organizations of the post-Constantinian empire had deviated from those of the principate, while still retaining strong roots in the original Augustan system.

CHAPTER 7A

HIGH CLASSICAL LAW

DAVID IBBETSON

The age of the Antonines and Severans witnessed the highest achievements of Roman law, building on the foundations laid down in the last decades of the republic and the first of the empire. The law of this period, transmitted through the texts collected under the emperor Justinian, formed the doctrinal bedrock on which most modern legal systems are based; and even in those countries whose legal systems have remained formally untouched by Roman law, primarily those of the English-speaking world, the writings of the lawyers from the second half of the second century and the first quarter of the third are still cited in courts.

At the heart of this high classical law were two elements: first the jurists, and second the scientific approach to legal thought which they embodied.

Jurists, in the sense of a group of men who claimed to have specialized legal knowledge and to be particularly skilled in its deployment, can be traced back to the last century of the republic, to such men as Q. Mucius Scaevola and Ser. Sulpicius Rufus. Already in the first century they had been involved in aspects of imperial administration, but it was only from the middle of the second that they were fully integrated into it. They constituted a new type of lawyer–bureaucrat, the legal expert more or less continuously holding imperial office.[1] One of the earliest of these, L. Volusius Maecianus, was at various times *praefectus fabrum*, *adiutor operum publicorum*, *praefectus vehiculorum*, *pontifex minor*, *procurator bibliothecarum*, *praefectus annonae*, and finally *praefectus Aegypti* in 161.[2] As *praefectus praetorio* we find Tarruntenus Paternus and the three greatest of the Severan jurists, Aemilius Papinianus, Julius Paulus and Domitius Ulpianus; as *praefectus vigilum* Q. Cervidius Scaevola and Herennius Modestinus; and so on.[3] After Hadrian, possession of legal expertise may have been a prerequisite for becoming secretary *a libellis*, an office certainly held by Papinian and probably held by Ulpian too.[4] His reforms of the civil service had paved

[1] Schulz (1946) 103–7; Bauman (1989). [2] Kunkel (2001) 174. [3] Kunkel (2001) 290.

[4] Honoré, *E&L*. *D* XX.5.12.*pr* (Papinian); Honoré, *E&L* 81–6 and *Ulpian*[2] 18–22 (Ulpian). Amongst epiclassical jurists serving as secretary *a libellis* we may be certain of Arcadius Charisius and fairly confident of Hermogenian (below, pp. 200–03).

the way for the *consilium principis* to play a greater role; and, whether by design or accident, jurists came to occupy an important position on this.[5] Practically all of the leading jurists were sucked into it: Celsus, Neratius and Julian under Hadrian; Maecianus, Pactumeius Clemens, Vindius Verus and Marcellus under Antoninus Pius; Marcellus and Scaevola under Marcus Aurelius; Tarruntenus Paternus under Marcus and Commodus; and under the Severans Papinian, Ulpian, Paul, Messius, Tryphoninus, Menander, Modestinus and Licinius Rufinus.[6] The ubiquity of lawyers in the Antonine and Severan bureaucracy might be likened to that found in late twentieth-century America.

These men were not merely bureaucrats with legal training. They continued to engage in private legal practice: advising litigants and judges, composing legal works, engaging in public disputations, perhaps also teaching. But the integration of the lawyer into the state administration brought with it a change of status. After Hadrian, this was now a matter of professional standing, not, as in the first century, something that depended on birth: few of the leading lawyers were from senatorial families, and most were from the provinces.[7]

Indicative of this transformation of status is an anecdote retailed by the jurist Pomponius in his *Enchiridion*[8] pointing to a shift in the nature of the *ius respondendi* originally introduced by Augustus.[9] The emperor Hadrian, petitioned by a group of ex-praetors that they should be granted the *ius respondendi*, replied that this was not something to be asked for but to be granted, and that anyone with faith in himself might prepare himself to give *responsa* to the people.[10] The story has two aspects. First is that henceforth – though the text hints that it was already the practice – individuals should not petition for the grant of the right, but the initiative should come from the emperor himself. Second, and more importantly, there is a clear sense that the grant of the *ius respondendi* was something to be earned by merit, not something to be given as a matter of course to ex-praetors or others of appropriate status: they should prepare themselves to give *responsa*, not simply expect the right to do so. The holding of the *ius respondendi* was a mark of one's standing as a jurist, and as such it was conferred only on those deserving of it; but it was not an essential precondition to juristic recognition. There was nothing to prevent a person without it writing legal works, offering legal instruction, and giving legal opinions: in Hadrian's own time it was held neither by Gaius nor (probably) by Pomponius, and any definition of 'jurist' must be broad enough to include men such as these. In so far as it meant anything at all it was no more than the right to give

[5] Crook (1955) esp. 56–65; Amarelli (1983). [6] List from Palazzolo (1974) 31 n. 29.
[7] Kunkel (2001) 290. [8] *D* 1.2.2.49. [9] Frier (1996) 962–3.
[10] For the interpretation of the text, see Bauman (1989) 287–304 with discussion of earlier views.

legal opinions in public, to engage in public disputations; such at least is the thrust of Aulus Gellius' description of his searching out opinions on a point of law by going round *stationes ius publice docentium aut respondentium*.[11] This right, perhaps, could only be granted by the emperor; but the principal elements of juristic activity were open to anybody with faith in his own abilities.

This was not merely the period in which lawyers were fully integrated into the administrative structures of the state. In the century after *c.* 130, and more specifically under the Severans, legal science reached its apogee. The vast majority of the texts collected together in the *Digest* of Justinian, compiled in the second quarter of the sixth century, date from this period; one half of the whole work is derived from the writings of just two Severan jurists, Ulpian and Paul. A century earlier, in 426, the so-called Law of Citations[12] laid down that legal argument should be based on the writings of only five jurists: Papinian, Paul, Gaius, Ulpian and Modestinus. Of these, Gaius, more a law teacher than a legal commentator in the orthodox mould, wrote under Hadrian and Antoninus Pius; the major works of Papinian, Paul and Ulpian were concentrated between 190 and 220; and Modestinus, traditionally regarded as the last of the classical jurists, was a pupil of Ulpian and some fifteen years his junior.[13] The sharpness of focus is unmistakeable, the shortness of the period in which practically all of the surviving major legal writing of the Roman world was produced little short of astonishing.

It is primarily from the writings of the jurists that our knowledge of classical Roman law is derived. This raises its own problems. Only one classical work, the *Institutes* of Gaius, has survived in something like its original form. The principal text of this, a palimpsest discovered in Verona in 1816, dates from the late fifth or early sixth century, some three and a half centuries after the work was first written. Other fragments have been discovered, but the earliest of these can still not be dated earlier than the middle of the third century.[14] Some parts of other works are known to us through post-classical compilations, most notably two collections probably made in the later fourth century, the *Fragmenta Vaticana* and the *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio*,[15] and a handful of papyri containing brief extracts from classical juristic writings have been unearthed; but the vast majority of surviving texts have been transmitted through the *Digest* of Justinian. They were not preserved by antiquarians with a concern for textual purity, but by lawyers concerned with the law of their own time.

[11] *Noctes Atticae* XIII.13. Atkinson (1970) 44; Liebs (1976) 236–9. [12] *CTh* 1.4.3.

[13] For details of the jurists and their works: Honoré (1962a); Kunkel (2001); Liebs (1997) with literature.

[14] Liebs (1997) 191; Diosdi (1970). [15] In *FIRA* II.464–540 (*FV*), 544–89 (*Coll.*).

It is well-known that Justinian's compilers altered classical texts to bring them up to date – they were explicitly instructed to do so by the emperor himself[16] – though the extent to which this occurred has been a matter of acute controversy: modern scholarship has stepped back considerably from the extremes of the textual critics of the early twentieth century, for whom any text suffering from impure Latinity or containing what was deemed to be bad law was automatically treated as suspect. Quite apart from this, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the texts had not undergone alteration by post-classical editors, whether this was the result of ignorance and misunderstanding or from an inventive attempt in good faith to make the classical text accord with the law of the editor's own time.[17] That said, though, it would be misguided to be too negative. Comparison of the Veronese palimpsest of Gaius' *Institutes* with the papyri suggests that the text had reached a substantially stable form by the middle of the third century – and it is only lack of direct evidence that prevents us saying that that form represents substantially what Gaius himself (or at any rate the original compiler of the work) had written a century earlier – and very substantial parts of the work which were undeniably obsolete before the end of the third century, most notably the treatment of the formulary system of legal procedure which takes up much of the fourth book, were still present in the version of the text in use two centuries or more later. So long as it is borne in mind that the texts as preserved cannot be regarded as unfailingly reliable, they can tentatively be treated as giving a reasonable indication of what was actually written by the classical authors to whom they are ascribed.

Juristic literature of the period may conveniently be divided into two principal categories: the systematic and the analytical. The former were primarily pedagogic in purpose, the latter aimed at the legal practitioner.

The tradition of pedagogic works can be traced back to the first century of the empire. They took a variety of forms: institutional works; the *Res Cottidianae* of Gaius;[18] the historical *Enchiridion* of Pomponius (known to us largely through a desperately corrupt post-classical epitome used by the compilers of Justinian's *Digest*);[19] collections of *regulae* and *definitiones*;[20] the practical work attributed to Paul, the *Manualium Libri Tres*.[21] The earliest of these elementary works was the *Libri Tres Iuris Civilis* of Massurius Sabinus. This provided an elementary introduction to the law, following the order of the commentary on the *Ius Civile* by the greatest of the republican jurists,

[16] *DC. Deo Auctore* 7.

[17] Kaser (1972); Johnston (1989). The identification of Justinianic interpolations and alterations is, relatively speaking, a straightforward matter compared with the tracking of post-classical shifts.

[18] Liebs (1997) 192. [19] Liebs (1997) 146 with literature.

[20] Schulz (1946) 173–6, Stein (1966) 74–108. [21] Liebs (1997) 162; Stein (1960).

Q. Mucius Scaevola: the law of inheritance, the law of persons, the law of obligations and the law of property.[22] Though Sabinus' books had become the standard introductory work by the time of Nero, its material was not well organized and there were some notable omissions in its coverage. Writers of the second and third centuries – Florentinus, Gaius, Ulpian, Paul, Callistratus, Marcian – experimented with different principles of organization; their *Institutiones*, it can safely be surmised, made up the basic foundations upon which legal education was based. Of all these institutional works, the most important by far was the *Institutes* of Gaius, substantially compiled under Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. That it was still being used as the basis of education in the epiclassical and post-classical law schools of the eastern empire says much for the conservatism of the legal tradition that they perpetuated; and as the basis – in structure, and in much of the detail too – of Justinian's *Institutes* it has continued to exercise a profound influence over European legal thought ever since. Its virtue lay not in any deep or original legal analysis, but in the systematic order according to which the material was arranged: the law of persons, the law of things, the law of actions; with the law of things further subdivided into property (including succession) and obligations (contract and delict).

Contemporary jurists were not especially concerned with legal categorization. None cites Gaius, and his inclusion in the fifth-century Law of Citations' list of jurists whose work could be referred to owes everything to the classic status accorded to the *Institutes* in Byzantine legal education and nothing to his reputation among his peers. We know remarkably little about his life, though this has not prevented scholars from speculating about it,[23] and he was primarily a provincial teacher rather than a jurist in the orthodox mould. The types of introductory work that comprised the most significant portion of Gaius' known output[24] were not the sort of works to fuel serious juristic debate.

The main focus of the classical jurists was on the detailed analysis of specific legal institutions. The principal works in which this type of analysis occurred were the great commentaries, in particular those on the Edict. These could be very considerable undertakings. Ulpian's was in eighty-one books, Paul's in seventy-eight; both were dwarfed by that of Pomponius, which is said to have extended to more than one hundred and fifty books.[25] Their significance and centrality were no doubt the consequence of there having been settled under Hadrian a definitive text on which a commentary could be built, though well before this Labeo had produced

[22] Astolfi (1983).

[23] Stanojevic (1989) 20–33; Pugsley (1994) [Gaius identical with Pomponius]; Samter (1908) [Gaius a woman?]. More sober, though still speculative, is Honoré (1962b).

[24] Liebs (1997) 188–195. [25] Liebs (1997) 177, 156, 149 with literature.

a commentary in over thirty books. Alongside these, from the second century onwards, there ranked the commentaries on the *Libri Tres Iuris Civilis* of Sabinus, the most important of which was that of Ulpian in fifty-one books.[26] These large-scale works did not stand alone: there were as well treatments of individual *leges* and *senatus consulta*,[27] and jurists sometimes produced extended commentaries on each other's works: there are discussions by Javolenus and by Paul, for example, of first-century works of Labeo and Plautius, and one by Paul on the early second-century jurist Neratius. All of these appear to have taken a lemmatic form: the commentator would move from word to word or phrase to phrase in the text being commented on. In a commentary *ad Edictum*, therefore, he would typically begin by quoting the relevant clause of the Edict (*Ait praetor*) and work through it point by point; similarly in a commentary *ad Sabinum* he would begin with a quotation from Sabinus and take that as his basis for discussion. As a consequence, the systematic structure of the later institutional works was not followed here; what was important was the order of the initial text.

Alongside the commentaries there was a substantial corpus of casuistic literature, hardly less voluminous than the works *ad Edictum* or *ad Sabinum*. Julian's most significant juristic work was his ninety volumes of *Digesta*,[28] Papinian's his thirty-seven books of *Quaestiones* and nineteen volumes of *Responsa*.[29] Common to all such works was their problematic nature, the discussion of very specific fact-situations, though the sources of the questions discussed might vary very considerably: genuine cases raised by clients, students or other jurists; cases which were the subject of formal disputations, such as those found in the volumes of *Disputationes* by Tryphoninus and Ulpian;[30] or straightforward hypotheticals invented in order to focus sharply on some particularly difficult issue. Though collections of these cases were commonly arranged more or less according to the order of the Edict (with an appendix dealing with specific *leges* and *senatus consulta*), this was merely a matter of convention or convenience; each case stood alone, and might in fact bear only a tenuous connexion to the rubric under which it was catalogued. Despite the sophistication of the legal analysis contained in them, because these casuistic works were not structured around some essentially fixed text they did not advance juristic science in the same way as did the great commentaries *ad Edictum* and *ad Sabinum*. By comparison with these latter works, they provide a relatively small proportion of the classical texts brought together in Justinian's *Digest*.

Finally, there was a body of monograph literature. This was the principal literary form for areas falling outside the scope of the traditional

[26] Liebs (1997) 178 with lit. Generally, Schulz (1946) 210–14.
[27] On which see Schulz (1946) 186–9.
[28] Liebs (1997) 104 with literature.
[29] Liebs (1997) 120, 121 with literature.
[30] Liebs (1997) 126, 185 with literature.

commentaries: public administration; military law; *iudicia publica*, or criminal law; and *fideicommissa*, or testamentary trusts.[31] Monographs are also found within the range of the commentaries; and although some references to what appear to be monographs may in reality be to post-classical epitomes of parts of much larger works, some – such as the work in nineteen books dealing with written contracts attributed to Venuleius – must undoubtedly have been genuine.[32] Paul, in particular, seems to have been fond of the form: no fewer than forty-one titles are ascribed to him.[33] None the less, they were not a major force for the advancement of legal science. In the case of *fideicommissa*, for example, the principal motor for legal development was not so much the series of monographs written on the subject between *c.* 140 and *c.* 230 by jurists from Pomponius to Modestinus, but the opinions of Q. Cervidius Scaevola in his casuistic *Digesta* and *Responsa*.[34]

Classical juristic science was radically individualistic. There was no doubt a core of *ius non controversum* – Gaius asserts that unanimous juristic opinion had the force of *lex*[35] – but beyond this most basic level no jurist's opinion was beyond question, and only the most primitive of legal doctrines was so firmly entrenched as to be proof against destructive legal analysis. While it was very common for a jurist to refer to earlier juristic writings, these references were not simply uncritical citations, nor was the later work simply as another layer accumulated on the juristic wisdom of previous generations. On the contrary, the early third century marked the culmination of a two-century long debate. The earlier jurist might have been cited because he was thought to have been right (commonly an opinion is said to be *verius*, more accurate, implicitly alerting the reader to the existence of an opposite point of view); or equally he might have been cited because he was thought to have been interestingly wrong, with the result that it would be instructive to tease out the nature of his error.

Strengthening this individuality was the disappearance of the two schools of jurists, the Sabinians (or Cassians) and the Proculians, which had come into existence in the early part of the empire.[36] Juristic activity in the first 150 years of the principate was centred on these, but around the time of Hadrian, they appear to have come to an end. In part this may be a trick of the sources. Most of our direct knowledge of the schools is derived from the Hadrianic *Enchiridion* of Pomponius, refracted through post-classical epitomization and Justinianic compilation, and the list of the heads of the schools continues up to his own time. All we can say with relative certainty is that the schools were still functioning then. After this there survive only

[31] Schulz (1946) 242–57; Liebs (1997) for further references.
[32] Liebs (1997) 134. Other monographs on the same subject are attributed to Gaius, Pedius and Pomponius.
[33] Liebs (1997) 162–72. [34] Johnston (1988) 12. [35] Gaius, 1.7. [36] Frier (1996) 969–73.

fragmentary references:[37] Gaius, writing under Antoninus Pius, could still oppose the opinions of the writers of his school, the Sabinians – *nostri praeceptores* or *nostrae scholae auctores* – to those of the Proculians – *diversae scholae auctores*[38] – in such a way and with such frequency as to suggest that the division was still then a living reality and perhaps also that his audience would count themselves as members of the school as much as he was a member himself. But though there are references to the schools after this, all allude to disputes which may have taken place in the past; in none of them do we find a jurist referring to himself or a contemporary as a member of one school or other. The indirect evidence points in the same direction: though a later jurist might follow the Proculian or Sabinian view on some disputed point, he would not ally himself consistently with the teachings of one or other school.[39] No longer was there any party line to which a jurist might be expected to adhere. This individuality of thought was matched by the different jurists' individuality in their mode of thinking. The three great Severan jurists could hardly have been more different in their approaches. Papinian, the most well-respected of the three in the Byzantine law schools, is ingenious and delicate, though his subtlety has not always endeared him to more modern scholars;[40] Paul is notable for his quest for underlying abstract principles, a quest which is not always successful; and Ulpian is nothing short of brutal in his destructive assaults on orthodox doctrine as he exposes inconsistencies in other jurists' reasoning. Similar variation can be found in the jurists of earlier generations: an overwhelming concern for systematic coherence in Gaius, a search for self-consistency – if sometimes at the expense of common sense – in Julian, and so on.

The Antonine and Severan jurists were not held together by being dragooned into the acceptance of specific legal rules or doctrines, nor by commitment to any particular intellectual methodology; but they did share certain underlying assumptions, and these gave a strong measure of coherence to their endeavours. To begin with, they were concerned with the explication of the law and not directly with abstract philosophical notions of justice and the like. Explicit moral principles do appear – Ulpian, to take a well-known example, defines justice as *constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuere*, and reduces the basic precepts of law to three: to live honestly, not to harm others, and to give each his due[41] – but these are invariably derivative, and for all their rhetorical grandiloquence they are little more than platitudes which have no serious part to play in the framing of concrete legal rules and doctrines. As well, individual jurists, as thinking men, inevitably had their own ethical standpoints which coloured

[37] Collected in Liebs (1976) 201–3.

[38] Gaius, I.196; II.15; II.37; II.79; II.123; II.195; II.200; II.217–23; II.244; III.87; III.98; III.103; III.141; III.167A; III.168; III.178; IV.78; IV.79; IV.114.

[39] Liebs (1976) 243–75, 283. [40] Schulz (1946) 236 n. 6. [41] *D* I.1.10.*pr*; *D* I.1.10.1.

their perspectives on the law. Ulpian seems to have been a Neoplatonist, for example, and there are strands of Neoplatonic thinking underpinning his formulation of specific legal rules;[42] but it is all very implicit, and there is no hint in the legal corpus that this type of theoretical speculation had any substantial part to play in legal debate. Nevertheless, law could be seen to have an important philosophical dimension of its own; for Ulpian it was – possibly – the true form of philosophy, *veram (nisi fallor) philosophiam*.[43] It was, or aspired to be, a true art, the *ars boni et aequi*.[44] Jurists were not simply repeating and transmitting received legal wisdom; they were committed to discovering the law's rational foundations and where necessary reconstructing the legal edifice to fit comfortably on this base.[45] More prosaically, it might be said that they held a shared belief that the law was a self-consistent body of norms that could be fitted together to make up a coherent whole. It was this belief that lay at the centre of Roman legal science.

Such a harmonization of the legal system was possible only because of the relative lack of formal sources of legal change: the classical period of Roman law coincides neatly with the hiatus between the eclipse of the older sources of law – *leges*, *senatus consulta*, magisterial edicts – and the rigid establishment of imperial legislation as the sole source. More accurately it could be said that it coincided with the period when the older sources were being formally superseded by the law-making power of the emperor, but when the exercise of that imperial power was relatively restrained and heavily influenced by the jurists themselves.

Although retained and exploited by Augustus, comitial *leges* and *plebiscita*, the principal republican mechanisms for bringing about formal legal change, had finally stuttered into desuetude by the Flavian period.[46] That they remained at the head of the list of legal sources given by Gaius in the middle of the second century and Papinian around the beginning of the third[47] testifies both to their centrality as the bedrock of the traditional *ius civile* and to their continued rhetorical significance as quintessentially popular forms of legislation. Indeed, for Gaius, *lex* was the anchor-point of all forms of legal invention and change: plebiscites were treated as equivalent to *lex*, *senatus consulta* (probably) had the force of *lex*, imperial constitutions (undoubtedly) had the force of *lex*, the unanimous opinions of jurists had the force of *lex*.[48] But, for all of this, by his time *lex* itself was no longer a vital source of law.

The eclipse of the senate was less brutal, less rapid, but no less effective.[49] With the decline of magisterial authority, *senatus consulta* – which were formally speaking merely advisory to magistrates – came to be treated

[42] Frezza (1968); Honoré, *Ulpian*[1] 31, *Ulpian*[2] 82. [43] *D* 1.1.1.2. [44] *D* 1.1.1.*pr*.
[45] Honoré, *Ulpian*[1] 30–1; *Ulpian*[2] ch. 3; Nörr (1976), (1981a).
[46] The last comitial enactment was the *Lex Agraria* of Nerva: Rotondi (1912) 471.
[47] Gaius, 1.2; *D* 1.1.7. [48] Gaius, 1.3–7. [49] Liebs (1997) 87 with lit.

almost by default as having full legislative effect in themselves.[50] For Gaius they had the force of *lex*, though he notes that this had been a matter of doubt,[51] but gradually over the next half-century his statement became increasingly misleading. So far as can be judged from the very patchy surviving evidence, there was a spurt in the use of *senatus consulta* under Hadrian, and again under Marcus Aurelius, but by the beginning of the third century they had to all intents and purposes disappeared as an active source of new law.[52] But the stark figures mask a significant shift in the extent to which the senate in practice did little more than grant approval to imperial initiatives.[53] From the time of Hadrian reference begins to be made to the *oratio principis* alongside, or instead of, the formal resolution of the senate, a trend that became accentuated under Antoninus Pius. At the same time there is a discernible shift in the tone of the *oratio*: from a request under Hadrian to an authoritative demand under Severus.[54] An inscription of 177,[55] embodying a raft of disparate proposals to be put before the senate for enactment (or, in theory at least, rejection) by a single vote, suggests strongly that any effective legislative power that the senate had once had had already ebbed away; and the last reliably datable *senatus consultum* is attributed to Caracalla in 206.[56] Once the authority of imperial constitutions was well established, there was little need for the ever-thinner veneer of democratic respectability provided by senatorial ratification.

Through the last two centuries of the republic magisterial Edicts, especially that of the urban praetor, had been a crucial source of legal change. These had survived well into the principate, even if more as a means of giving effect to *senatus consulta* than in facilitating any independent legislative initiative on the part of the magistrates. Under Hadrian, even this limited role fell away with the consolidation of the Edicts – or at least those of the praetors and the curule aediles – by the jurist Salvius Julianus on the initiative of the emperor.[57] This is traditionally placed in 131 following the chronology of Jerome, though a strong case can be made for pushing

[50] For the various views on the legal force of *senatus consulta*, see Schiller (1959).

[51] Gaius, 1.4. Their legal force is also noted by Pomponius and Ulpian: *D* 1.2.12; *D* 1.3.9 (interpolated?).

[52] List in Talbert (1984) 443–50. [53] Talbert (1984) 290ff.

[54] Contrast *D* v.3.22 nam et in oratione divi Hadriani ita est: 'dispicite, patres conscripti, numquid sit aequius possessorem non facere lucrum et pretium, quod ex aliena re perceperit, reddere, quia potest existimari in locum hereditariae rei venditae pretium eius successisse et quodammodo ipsum hereditarium factum.') with *D* xxvii.9.1.1, 2 (Quae oratio in senatu recitata est tertullo et clemente consulibus idibus iuniis et sunt verba eius huiusmodi: 'praeterea, patres conscripti, interdicam tutoribus et curatoribus, ne praedia rustica vel suburbana distrahant, nisi ut id fieret, parentes testamento vel codicillis caverint. quod si forte aes alienum tantum erit, ut ex rebus ceteris non possit exsolvi, tunc praetor urbanus vir clarissimus adeatur, qui pro sua religione aestimet, quae possunt alienari obligarive debeant, manente pupillo actione, si postea potuerit probari obreptum esse praetori. si communis res erit et socius ad divisionem provocet, aut si creditor, qui pignori agrum a parente pupilli acceperit, ius exsequetur, nihil novandum censeo.').

[55] Musca (1985). [56] Talbert (1984) 450 no 135.

[57] Bauman (1989) 250–63; Liebs (1997) 83 with further literature.

it back as early as 120 or 121.[58] The Edict enumerated the circumstances in which the praetor would grant a formula together with the formal defences that were available. Though Julian is known to have made minor additions to the range of remedies,[59] he did not make wholesale changes to the content of the Edict, which had in truth changed very little over the previous century or more. The material was reorganized, most notably by incorporating model formulae in the text of the Edict rather than banishing them to an appendix,[60] but it is hard to think of this as a great advance in itself. The significance of the work lay not so much in the form which the consolidation took as in the very fact that it took place at all. It marked the end of the independent legislative power of the praetors, and provided a stable framework around which juristic commentary could be shaped.

The disappearance of the old law-making institutions did not leave a vacuum: formal legislative power was increasingly arrogated to the emperor. The shift is starkly visible in the *senatus consultum* giving force to Julian's consolidated Edict: henceforth if there were to be changes it was the emperor who would promote them rather than the magistrates.[61] Writing a few years after Julian's work, Gaius asserted explicitly the general principle that imperial constitutions had the force of *lex*.[62] The explanation given for this was transparently weak – since the emperor received his *imperium* by *lex* it followed that his enactments had the force of *lex* – but there is little reason to question the truth of his statement that the rule itself was beyond doubt. Imperial constitutions took a variety of forms, in practice not always clearly distinct from each other. For Gaius, there were three basic types: *edicta*, or formal acts of legislation; *epistulae*, responses to petitions from officials or private individuals, which were more generally designated as *rescripta*; and *decreta*, or imperial judgments intended to have general effect.

Most truly legislative were *edicta*,[63] prescriptive rules of general application deliberately changing the law; typical of these was the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of Caracalla (212), extending Roman citizenship across the whole empire. Because of their generality their effectiveness depended on open proclamation; they would be published by being posted at the emperor's residence and then disseminated throughout the empire as appropriate.[64] From time to time the edictal form might be used for more localized legislation, where for some reason the normal form of *epistula* would have been impossible or inappropriate; this would be the case if there was no single representative body to whom the instruction could be addressed, either because no such body existed or because the affected group

[58] Bauman (1989) 259–60. [59] *D* XXXVII.8.3 (Marcellus 9 *Digestorum*).
[60] Lenel (1927). [61] *C Tanta* 18.
[62] Gaius, 1.5. To the same effect, and with the same reasoning, *D* 1.4.*pr* (Ulpian, 1 *Institutionum*).
[63] Liebs (1997) 90 with literature; Marotta (1988) 17–19. [64] Millar, *ERW* 252–9

fell under the jurisdiction of different bodies.[65] There was no doubt that the emperor had the power to make such enactments on his own authority, stemming from his *imperium* as a magistrate, though it is a reasonable supposition that he would seek the advice of his juristic *consilium* before introducing any major changes; but unlike the *edicta* of other magistrates, whose force was strictly limited to the maker's term of office, imperial *edicta* did not lapse on the death of the emperor and were consequently perpetual in their application. None the less, the power was but sparingly exercised openly before the beginning of the third century; until this time such deliberate legislative change as occurred was habitually clothed in the increasingly threadbare garb of *senatus consulta*.

Related to *edicta*, though on the periphery of juristic vision, were *mandata*, administrative instructions to provincial governors or other subordinate officials.[66] No doubt because of their primarily administrative nature, they were not mentioned in the *Institutes* of Gaius or Ulpian when the forms of imperial constitutions were listed,[67] though Ulpian (in another work) and Marcian treated them as analogous institutions.[68] In the nature of things, *mandata* were inevitably heterogeneous owing to the different demands of different offices, but there was a solid core which remained more or less consistent from place to place. As early as the 170s, it seems, there was an official collection, the *liber mandatorum*, from which relevant texts could be copied and sent to appropriate officials;[69] and by the time of the Severans this constituted an effective code of bureaucratic administration.[70] There is some reason to believe that the jurists of the classical period made use of it,[71] but since *mandata* were not directly concerned with private law relatively little reference to their treatments has survived in Justinian's *Corpus Iuris*.

Rather different were *decreta*. Already by the end of the first century it was recognized that decisions of the emperor while sitting in judgment, or more precisely the reasons enunciated for his decisions, would have a persuasive effect on the resolution of analogous cases.[72] For Gaius and Ulpian their authority was stronger than this: they had the binding force of *lex*. Written texts of such *decreta* would – at the very least, would sometimes – be posted, and individuals might make copies of these. A rescript of Antoninus Pius granting permission to copy a *sententia* of Hadrian[73] suggests that an archive

[65] Williams (1975) 43–8.
[66] Liebs (1997) 91 with literature; Marotta (1991). [67] Gaius, 1.5; *D* 1.4.1.1.
[68] *D* XLVII.11.6.*pr* (Ulpian, 8 *De Officio Proconsulis*); *D* XLVII.22.3.*pr* (Marcianus, 2 *Judiciorum Publicorum*).
[69] Lucian, *Pro Lapsu inter Salutandum* 13 (MacLeod (1980) 363); Marotta (1991) 3–33.
[70] Millar, *ERW* 316. [71] Justinian, *Nov.* 17.
[72] Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 1.6.2: '*tuis autem decretis, imperator, exempla publice valitura in perpetuum sanciuntur*'. Liebs (1997) 92 with literature.
[73] *CIL* III.411 (= *FIRA* 1.435), now *I. Smyrn.* no. 597.

of resolutions was by then being kept, a conclusion supported by the survival of a number of what appear to be genuine decisions of Hadrian copied by a non-juristic writer into a text of the early third century.[74] None the less, *decreta* did not figure at all significantly in the writings of the second-century jurists. Only three of the 125 constitutions attributed to Hadrian can be reliably classified as *decreta*, only nine of the 266 attributed to Antoninus Pius.[75] There are several reasons for the relative insignificance in practice of *decreta*: the fact that some imperial *sententiae* were posted in public does not entail that all were, and it may not always have been a straightforward matter for someone not a party to the lawsuit to discover their contents; and an imperial decision might not be based explicitly on reasons sufficiently general that they could be applied to other cases. As well, the fact that the emperor could de facto operate outside the formal constraints of the *ius civile* must inevitably have meant that his decisions did not always fit neatly into the more logically rigorous legal frameworks championed by the jurists, thereby militating against their citation in juristic writings.

Of greater importance by far were *rescripta*, imperial responses.[76] These took two distinct forms: *epistulae*, responses to cities, to provincial governors or to other officials; and what are commonly described in the second century as *subscriptiones*, responses to private individuals. The provision of an effective mechanism to provide authoritative guidance for imperial officials and the like is no more than would have been expected of a bureaucratically competent regime; of far greater significance was the institutionalization of a system providing for those private citizens who cared to ask for it free legal advice supplementing and complementing that which could be obtained by private consultation of a jurist.[77] However much the two forms were united by the common feature that they represented the reaction of the emperor to petitions from others, their differences were very marked. *Epistulae* took the form of letters addressed to petitioners, *subscriptiones* replies appended at the foot of the original petition. It followed that they were diplomatically different, *epistulae* beginning with an appropriate greeting and ending with a valediction, *subscriptiones* lacking any such markers.[78] They were prepared by different officials, the former by the secretaries *ab epistulis* (*latinis* or *graecis* as appropriate), the latter by the secretary *a libellis*. They were published differently: *epistulae* were in essence private letters, whose contents would only be known if, and to the extent that, the recipient chose to make them public; *subscriptiones* were posted in batches in a public place

[74] *Sententiae et Epistolae Hadriani* in Goetz (1892) 30–8. See Schiller (1971); Volterra (1971) 869–84.
[75] Figures from Gualandi (1963) 1: 24–102. Honoré, *E&L* 20–4.
[76] Liebs (1997) 91, 92–4 with literature; Honore, *E&L*. [77] Honoré, *E&L* 34.
[78] But see Nörr (1981b) 6–11 for the practical difficulties of using these to assign *rescripta* to the one category or the other.

near to the residence of the emperor – normally at the temple of Apollo in the second century[79] – where they could be read and copied out by anybody who was interested. And while in their very nature the responses contained in *epistulae* were transmitted directly to the petitioners, it seems that no regular mechanism existed whereby those embodied in *subscriptiones* were sent individually, with the result that petitioners might commonly have had to make their own copy from that which had been publicly posted.[80] No doubt because of the level of publicity attending them, *subscriptiones* occupied a far more prominent place in juristic writings than did *epistulae*.

Though the practice of issuing imperial *rescripta* can be traced back at least to Tiberius,[81] it underwent a major reform under Hadrian. He divided the secretaryship *ab epistulis* into two, one secretary to deal with Latin letters and one with Greek, and made these and the secretaryship *a libellis* senior positions paying HS 200,000 a year.[82] At the same time he began the practice of appointing equestrians rather than freedmen to these posts, thereby markedly increasing their status. So far as can be judged from private rescripts to which reference is made in surviving juristic writings, Hadrian's reforms consolidated and rapidly built upon advances that had already been made under Trajan: where there was one reference to each of the reigns of Tiberius, Claudius, Vespasian and Domitian, there were twenty to Trajan and 126 to Hadrian.[83] Moreover, despite the rule that petitions had to be handed in personally and not sent by post, a substantial proportion of rescripts were addressed to individuals who were discernibly poor.[84]

Imperial constitutions posed two threats to classical legal science. First of all, there was an inevitable friction between jurists' law and imperial legislation. Juristic thinking was based upon a fundamentally static model of law, which sat ill with explicit legal change. Though the danger here was real, it need not be exaggerated. Legislation, whether through imperial *edicta* or in the guise of *senatus consulta*, was relatively uncommon in the field of private law which constituted the main focus of the jurists' work; and there was sufficient flexibility in their model to enable them to adjust to such occasional changes, all the more so if those changes had been winnowed through an imperial *consilium* of jurists. The real threat was the second, provided by substantial accretions of authoritative *decreta* and *rescripta*. Classical legal science, concerned with rationality and self-consistency, was not well able to incorporate authoritative rulings as to what the law actually was.

The reign of Severus ushered in a heightened regard for imperial *decreta*, perhaps flowing in part from respect for the emperor's own capabilities

[79] Williams (1976) 235–40. [80] Honoré, *E&L* 46–8. [81] Gualandi (1963) 1: 7.
[82] Pflaum (1957) 1251. [83] Honoré, *E&L* 14 n. 80. [84] Honoré, *E&L* 34.

as a lawyer. A collection of Egyptian *apokrimata* – properly identified as *decreta* – from 199/200 provides clear evidence both of the accessibility and of the value of such decisions by this time;[85] and slightly later the jurist Paul compiled three books of *decreta* (and perhaps also six books of imperial *sententiae*, though it is probable that this is the same work[86]) derived from lawsuits also heard by Severus.[87] In addition, full legal force came to be attached not merely to final rulings but also to *interlocutiones de plano*, interlocutory rulings given in the course of lawsuits.[88] Whereas under the Antonines *decreta* had constituted but a tiny proportion of imperial constitutions cited in juristic works, they make up full thirty per cent of Severan constitutions.[89] The existence of a substantial corpus of such authoritative rulings on specific points, especially when they emanated from an emperor concerned with justice in the individual case rather than the thought-out application of abstract legal principles, must inevitably have slowly undermined the possibility of a wholly rational legal science.

Rescripta should not have been problematic. Although they were in form acts of legislation whose authority stemmed from the simple fact that they articulated the will of the emperor, in reality they were substantially acts of juristic interpretation. Their purpose was to state what the law was, not what it had been decided that it should or would be. Moreover, in so far as the secretaries *a libellis* were legal experts – and they included among their number Papinian and probably Ulpian – *rescripta* should have been no less scientific than juristic writings themselves, and have done nothing to disrupt the edifice of rules and abstract principles that had been built up by the generations of lawyers going back to the last century of the republic. But the threat to classical legal science stemmed not so much from the fact that the recognition of authoritative *rescripta* might involve the incorporation of 'bad' rules into the law (though this was always a danger) as from the fact that their accuracy could not be questioned. They were, definitionally, fixed points in the shifting framework of juristic thinking, a form of interstitial glue at first helping to hold the whole structure together, but later imposing a rigidity on it which prevented its adapting organically to encompass changing needs and circumstances.

High classical law was unsustainable on its own terms. It was also subject to external stresses. The subtlety of thought of Paul, Papinian and Ulpian demanded educational continuity if it was to be developed by the

[85] *P. Col.* 123 (Westermann and Schiller, *Apokrimata*; with Youtie and Schiller (1955) = *SB* VI.9526). Identified as *decreta* by Turpin (1981); note the bland specificity of *Apokrima* 3, 'Obey the findings made'.

[86] Lenel (1889) I.959 n. 1. [87] Liebs (1997) 172 with literature.

[88] *D* 1.4.1.1; Liebs (1997) 94 with literature. On *interlocutiones de plano*, see Nörr (1983).

[89] Figures from Gualandi (1963) I: 158–218.

legal thinkers of the next generation; but legal education in Rome was utterly haphazard. A strong measure of imperial indulgence was necessary if legal doctrine was to continue to be elaborated by men who were imperial functionaries as well as private lawyers; but not all emperors were so indulgent to lawyers. And political quietude was essential if jurists were to have the professional leisure to think deeply about abstract and complex legal issues.

CHAPTER 7B

EPICLASSICAL LAW

DAVID JOHNSTON

The classical period of Roman law is conventionally taken to end in 235 with the death of Alexander Severus. That this chapter ends with a sketch of law for the next three quarters of a century or so, roughly up to the end of the reign of Diocletian in 305, therefore requires some explanation. By 235 the line of classical jurists and their writings had certainly come to an end. It would be wrong, however, to pronounce this the end of jurisprudence *tout court*. Schulz elegantly sums up the difficulty with that view: 'If one limits one's view of legal science to its expression in the law schools and in literature, one is completely baffled by the sudden and unexpected collapse of classical jurisprudence in the second half of the third century, immediately after Ulpian; one can merely note the withdrawal of God's grace.'[1]

In fact there was no sudden break or sharp discontinuity. The years from 235 to 300 to a significant extent represented the consolidation of trends which had already been developing in late classical law: both before and after 235 the jurists increasingly attended to topics other than those of private law, such as *munera*, penal and military law, fiscal law, *cognitio*; they concentrated on writing substantial elementary works, commentaries on the duties of officials and monographs; they paid greater attention to imperial law making; and had indeed increased involvement in making that law.[2] Nor after 235 was there an immediate collapse in legal learning; had there been, it is hard to see how Diocletian could already in the early 290s have revived it sufficiently to produce the classicizing rescripts associated with his reign.[3] Schulz could describe the whole period from Augustus until the accession of Diocletian in 284 as 'the classical period'; in his account it was immediately followed by 'the bureaucratic period',[4] a term used not pejoratively but simply to describe the fact that the creative elements in the law were now to be found not among those independently professing jurisprudence but in the imperial chancellery and offices.

[1] Schulz (1946) 263; Beseler (1938) 170 n. 2.
[2] Wieacker (1971) 205–6.
[3] Wieacker (1971) 204; Watson (1973), (1974).
[4] Schulz (1946) 99, 262.

The notion that jurists should play official roles was not novel, and went back virtually to the beginning of the principate. But two things were new in this period: first, the redirection of juristic effort from the writing of individual works to involvement in the business of the imperial chancellery, composing rescripts; in the half century from 235 the classical individual role of the jurist was eclipsed by that of the jurist as official. Second, towards the end of this period, around 300, the first works anthologizing and epitomizing classical juristic texts emerge.

1. RESCRIPTS, JURISTS AND THE CHANCELLERY

The third-century rescripts which survive cluster into groups. The vagaries of transmission and unpredictable distortions mean that it is difficult from the surviving evidence to draw any conclusion about how many rescripts were issued from year to year. All the evidence allows is an impression of the activity of the chancellery during the isolated periods in which rescripts survive in significant numbers, 238–46, 259–60 and 283–94.[5] The vast bulk of surviving rescripts, around 1200 of them, is from the reign of Diocletian.[6] This of course is not chance but the result of the fact that it was during Diocletian's reign that compilation of codes of rescripts took place.[7]

Any view on whether the third-century rescripts were faithful to classical law depends on assessing the extent to which our surviving texts reflect the original constitutions which were promulgated. Extreme pessimism has been expressed, and the view that what now survives is no more than excerpts or summaries, possibly made shortly after promulgation.[8] But the prevailing view is that a more moderated pessimism is appropriate: it has to be accepted that the texts of constitutions will have been edited and may have been altered at each of three stages. The last of these stages was when the constitutions were edited by the compilers of Justinian's Code. Before that they were edited by the compilers of the two Diocletianic codes on which Justinian's compilers drew,[9] and both of these codes apparently went through more than one edition.[10] Even before this, the constitutions may have been edited by the makers of any earlier compilations on which Diocletian's compilers themselves drew.[11] But the evidence does not suggest that the makers of those first pre-Diocletianic collections themselves had no more than summaries to work with.[12]

[5] Honoré, *E&L* 188–9.
[6] Amelotti (1960) 5–8; Honoré, *E&L* 188–9; for the context, Corcoran, *ET*.
[7] See below; Turpin (1985). [8] Volterra (1971). [9] See below; Simon (1970) 389–92.
[10] Rotondi (1922) 138ff.; Simon (1970) 390–1. [11] See below.
[12] See Wieacker, *Rechtsgeschichte* 173–8, for a summary.

Studies of the rescripts of Gordian[13] and, immediately prior to Diocletian, those of Carus, Carinus, Numerianus and Probus[14] do not show any serious difference in substance (as opposed to style or language) from those of the Severans. Indeed express reference to the praetor's Edict is made in a rescript of Gordian, and reference to classical jurists, although not express, can be detected too.[15] There is therefore no reason to believe in any great shift in the law itself or in the approach to dealing with legal questions or petitions.

The same is true of Diocletian. Although in the past it was argued that Diocletian showed a tendency towards hellenization of Roman law,[16] this view does not survive close study of the rescripts emanating from his chancellery. Examination of the rescripts on family law and the law of succession has confirmed that in Diocletian's rescripts classical law was applied, and occasionally cautiously developed. Even in provincial cases, where the temptation to hellenization must have been greater, the rescripts demonstrate an adherence to principles of classical law.[17]

II. CODES

The reign of Diocletian saw the compilation of two codifications of imperial rescripts, the *Codices Gregorianus* and *Hermogenianus*. The first evidently collected rescripts from the reign of Hadrian up to 291, while the second covered 293–4. Neither of these codes survives as such. A significant number of constitutions of the *Codex Gregorianus* and two from the *Codex Hermogenianus*, survive in the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, which contains an epitome preserving constitutions of the *Codex Gregorianus* and the *Hermogenianus* and its appendices have further quotations from the former.[18] Some are preserved in other sources such as the *Fragmenta Vaticana* of *c.* 320.[19] But most of what survives of these codes does so in Justinian's own Code. It is clear from the introductory constitution to Justinian's Code that these two codifications were major sources for it;[20] and it has been shown that all the constitutions preserved in Justinian's Code up to May of 291 derive from the *Codex Gregorianus* and that nearly all of the rescripts from 293–4 come from the *Codex Hermogenianus*.[21]

Just as the codes themselves do not survive, neither does any record of why or on whose orders or for what purpose they were compiled. It used to be maintained that they were purely private compilations, but this for

[13] Wieacker (1971) 208–17. [14] Watson (1973) and (1974). See also Schnebelt (1974).
[15] *CJ* VII.72.2; Wieacker (1971) 208–17. [16] Taubenschlag (1923).
[17] Amelotti (1960) 88–96, and conclusions on family law at 153–4; on the law of succession, Tellegen Couperus (1982).
[18] *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, Haenel (1848) 444–51; Visigothic Epitome of *Codices Gregorianus* and *Hermogenianus* (*FIRA* II.655–65); Appendices to *Lex Romana Visigothorum* (*FIRA* II.669–79).
[19] *FV* 266a, 272, 285, 286, 288. [20] *CJ C. Haec* 2. [21] Rotondi (1922).

little more reason than that nothing survived signed by Diocletian comparable, for example, to the instructions of Theodosius II and Justinian to the compilers of their respective codes. There is, however, good reason to believe that these were 'official' codes: some of the constitutions are not very likely to have been accessible outside official archives; they fit into the general ethos of Diocletian's reign that administration, including the administration of justice, should be more effective.[22] Once the codes were available to the public at large, the need to petition the emperor on a point of law must have been much reduced. It is not unlikely that these compilations represented a deliberate move to contract the traditional rescript system.[23]

The *Codex Gregorianus* was evidently divided into fifteen or sixteen books, and within them into a large number of titles, up to forty in a book.[24] The consequence will have been that constitutions which touched on a number of different issues were divided up between the titles. The code was published in 291. It is likely that the *Codex* was compiled in Rome; Mommsen's view, that it emanated from the law school at Beirut, was based on little solid evidence and is now generally disapproved.[25] The author of the *Codex* was presumably Gregorius, who has been argued to have been *magister libellorum* to Diocletian.[26] That the author had access to the imperial archives is in any event clear.

The *Codex Hermogenianus* was in one (large) book only, probably of about a quarter to a third of the length of the *Codex Gregorianus*.[27] It was published in 295, although additions appear to have been made to it subsequently. The *Codex* was divided into titles: some of the non-Justinianic sources give title references.[28] It is unclear precisely how many titles there were, although the highest reference any of the sources gives is to constitution 120 in title 69.[29] This, given the order of the *Codex*, would take the total to over 100 titles.[30] It is now widely accepted that the same Hermogenianus both compiled the *Codex* and wrote the *iuris epitomae* discussed below. It has been argued that, as *magister libellorum* to Diocletian in 293–4, he was also the author of most of the rescripts in the *Codex*, and that he was based in Milan as *magister libellorum* to Maximian at the time of publication of the *Codex*.[31] Although there is no unanimity about where

[22] Amelotti (1960). [23] Honoré, *E&L* 182–5.

[24] Rotondi (1922) 136ff.; Liebs (1964) 23. Some book numbers are preserved, e.g. in *Cons.* I.6, II.6.

[25] Mommsen (1901); Hans Wolff (1952) is not totally against it, but *contra*, Rotondi (1922) 136; see also Honoré, *E&L* 155 and the discussion in Liebs (1987) 30–5.

[26] Honoré, *E&L* 148–55. [27] Liebs (1964) 24.

[28] E.g. *FV* 270; *Cons.* VI.10–21; *Coll.* X.3; *Lex Romana Burgundionum* XIV.1 (*FIRA* II.727).

[29] *Scholia Sinaitica* 5 (*FIRA* II.639).

[30] The palingenesia by Cenderelli (1965) 141–81 proposes a figure of 147 titles, although some of these are necessarily conjectural.

[31] Honoré, *E&L* 163–81 esp. 177.

the *Codex* was compiled, it is clear that its author had access to imperial archives.[32] The fact that the author may indeed have been Hermogenianus while serving in the west shows the artificiality of attempting to ascribe an eastern or western origin to the *Codex*.

There is some reason to believe that collections of rescripts were made even before these codes; they may also have been glossed and edited. There are instances in which two different versions of a constitution are preserved, from which it appears that the compiler of the *Codex Gregorianus* cannot have been depending purely on official archives. Instead, it seems probable that he relied in addition on at least one work in which the texts of constitutions were cited.[33] Since the evidence for such earlier collections is purely inferential, it is not possible even to guess at whether they were compilations of rescripts along the lines of the codes with which we are familiar (anything on a significant scale seems unlikely) or whether they were anthologies which happened to contain some rescripts.

III. EPICLASSICAL JURISTS

The *Digest* contains work from only six jurists who appear to be later than Modestinus. But the evidence for their dates is very slender: mostly just the fact that they appear at the end of the *Index Florentinus* to the *Digest* which is, broadly speaking, in chronological order.[34] The *Index* ends with the jurists Arcadius Charisius, Licinius Rufinus, Furius Anthianus, Rutilius Maximus and Hermogenian; one other possible contender for inclusion in the epiclassical period is Julius Aquila, although the *Index* lists him earlier, between Marcian and Modestinus. About Hermogenian there will be more to say later; the others may be dealt with very briefly. In spite of all attempts, it can safely be said that we know nothing at all about three of these people except that they wrote works from which the compilers of the *Digest* took excerpts: two from a *liber responsorum* by Julius Aquila; three from books *ad edictum* by Furius Anthianus; one from a monograph on the *Lex Falcidia* by Rutilius Maximus.[35] On the other hand, Licinius Rufinus, author of twelve books of *regulae*, from which the compilers took seventeen fragments, evidently consulted the jurist Paul, so clearly does belong in this period.[36] And Arcadius Charisius, who wrote three monographs on *munera*, on the office of praetorian prefect, and on witnesses, is known to have been *magister libellorum*, possibly in 290–1.[37]

[32] Liebs (1987) 37 favours Milan; Cenderelli (1965) 7 favours the east.
[33] Hans Wolff (1952); *CJ* V.14.1 = *CJ* II.3.10; *CJ* III.29.7 = *FV* 280.
[34] Kunkel (2001) 261. [35] See Kunkel (2001) 261–3; Liebs (1987) 19–20, 131.
[36] *D* XL.13.4; cf. Liebs (1997) §428.2 and Millar (1999).
[37] *D* I.11.1; Liebs (1987) 21–30, 131–3; Honoré, *E&L* 156–62. The sources give different versions of his name, on which see Liebs (1987) 21–2.

The works written by these (possibly) epiclassical jurists fit within a pattern already emerging in the late classical period:[38] the authorship of extended introductory works – that of Licinius Rufinus may be compared with those of Callistratus, Florentinus, Marcian and Modestinus; of *libri de officio* – that of Arcadius Charisius may be compared with those of Ulpian, Paul and Macer; and of monographs – those of Rutilius Maximus and Arcadius Charisius may be compared with the monographs of Paul, Marcian, Modestinus and Macer. Even so far as the quality of the works is concerned, on the whole there is not much to choose between them and the last gasps of classical jurisprudence as represented by Callistratus, Macer and Marcian.[39] In this respect, so far as our meagre sources allow any sort of judgement, continuity seems to be the leading characteristic.

But what is new in this epiclassical period is the emergence of the compilation. Two belong in this period and are important:

(1) The iuris epitomae *of Hermogenian*

The compilers of the *Digest* made a significant number of excerpts from this work.[40] It appears to date from *c.* 300. It calls itself an epitome and, without actually citing them, does indeed draw not just on passages from Papinian, Ulpian and Paul, as would be expected, but also on Julian, Marcian, and Modestinus, and on imperial constitutions, the earlier ones no doubt taken from the *Codex Gregorianus*.[41] In spite of the title, the work is less an epitome than an anthology of legal propositions taken from classical authors. Although controversy is eschewed and only firm rules are stated, this is a relatively 'high-brow' sort of anthology, in the sense that it makes use of works outside the canon of the most obvious authors.[42] The work shows a continuing adherence to classical law not just by borrowing from classical authors but also by following the order of the praetor's Edict.[43] It is, however, not itself a classical work but a work about classical law, in a sense a tribute to the quality of the work of the classical jurists, and an attempt to make the main doctrines of classical law more accessible.

It is now widely accepted that the author of the *iuris epitomae* and of the *Codex Hermogenianus* were one and the same.[44] It may be that the *iuris epitomae* was conceived by its author as a sort of civil-law companion to the imperial law of the *Codex*.[45]

[38] Wieacker (1971) 205–6; Liebs (1987) 130.
[39] Wieacker (1971) 222; Liebs (1964) 113–14.
[40] Lenel (1889).
[41] Liebs (1964) 43–86.
[42] Liebs (1964) 87–9.
[43] *D* 1.5.2, admittedly with modifications: see Liebs (1964) 26–8.
[44] Krüger (1912) 318ff.; Wieacker (1971) 219; Liebs (1987) 36; Cenderelli (1965) 239; Honoré, *E&L* 177–80; *contra*, Schulz (1946) 309.
[45] Liebs (1964) 107–9; Cenderelli (1965) 239–42.

(2) Pauli sententiae

The five books of *sententiae* attributed to Paul were the most successful and widespread of epiclassical juristic works. They were used already by the compiler of the *Fragmenta Vaticana* in about 320 and they were given a boost by being officially approved by Constantine.[46] They evidently date from the late third century and come from the west, possibly Africa.[47] The treatment is decidedly elementary: what for the classical lawyers were legal problems in this work become legal doctrine, and what for them were cases become rigid norms.[48] The work draws, like Hermogenian's work, on classical texts without attribution. It is possible, however, to identify many of the sources for the work: late classical works and constitutions.[49] Since the sources are not purely confined to Paul, the title is not to be taken too seriously: this is simply an anonymous epiclassical work. The approach followed by Levy, that is the deconstruction of the *sententiae* into six different textual layers, would nowadays be regarded as excessively formalistic.[50] But there seems little reason to doubt his broad conclusion that most of this work represents the law of Diocletian, with some alterations to reflect changes in the law over the next century and a half.[51]

So far as it is possible, given the small numbers involved, to say that any particular kind of new work is characteristic of the epiclassical period, it seems that the elementary compilation fills that role. That is true, in spite of their different titles and differences in level, of both Hermogenian's *iuris epitomae* and pseudo-Paul's *sententiae*. In the pseudonymous *Pauli sententiae* we find a work which was to be the model for the future: simple and clear, with no concern for subtleties or controversies, and conveniently adopting the name of a leading classical jurist.

IV. JURISTS IN THE SCHOOLS

There were law schools at least at Beirut and Rome already in the late third century. Of what went on there details are lacking. Some odd surviving works may be best attributed to activity in the schools in the epiclassical period.[52] Glossing and reworking of classical texts will also have taken place. It is reasonably clear that all (or nearly all) classical works were at some point copied from the roll form in which they first appeared into book or '*codex*' form, a process that began around the middle of the third century A.D.[53] At

[46] *FV* 172 and 336; *CTh* 1.4.2. [47] Liebs (1993) 33, 38–43; cf. Levy (1945) vii–ix.
[48] Wieacker (1971) 219. [49] Liebs (1993) 43–93. [50] Liebs (1995) and (1996).
[51] Levy (1945) ix.
[52] E.g. 'Scaevola's' *liber singularis quaestionum publice tractatarum*; perhaps 'Ulpian's' *liber singularis regularum* (*FIRA* II.262–301), although Liebs (1997) §428.5 dates the work within the classical period; cf. Honoré, *Ulpian*[2] 207–12.
[53] Wieacker, *Rechtsgeschichte* 165–73.

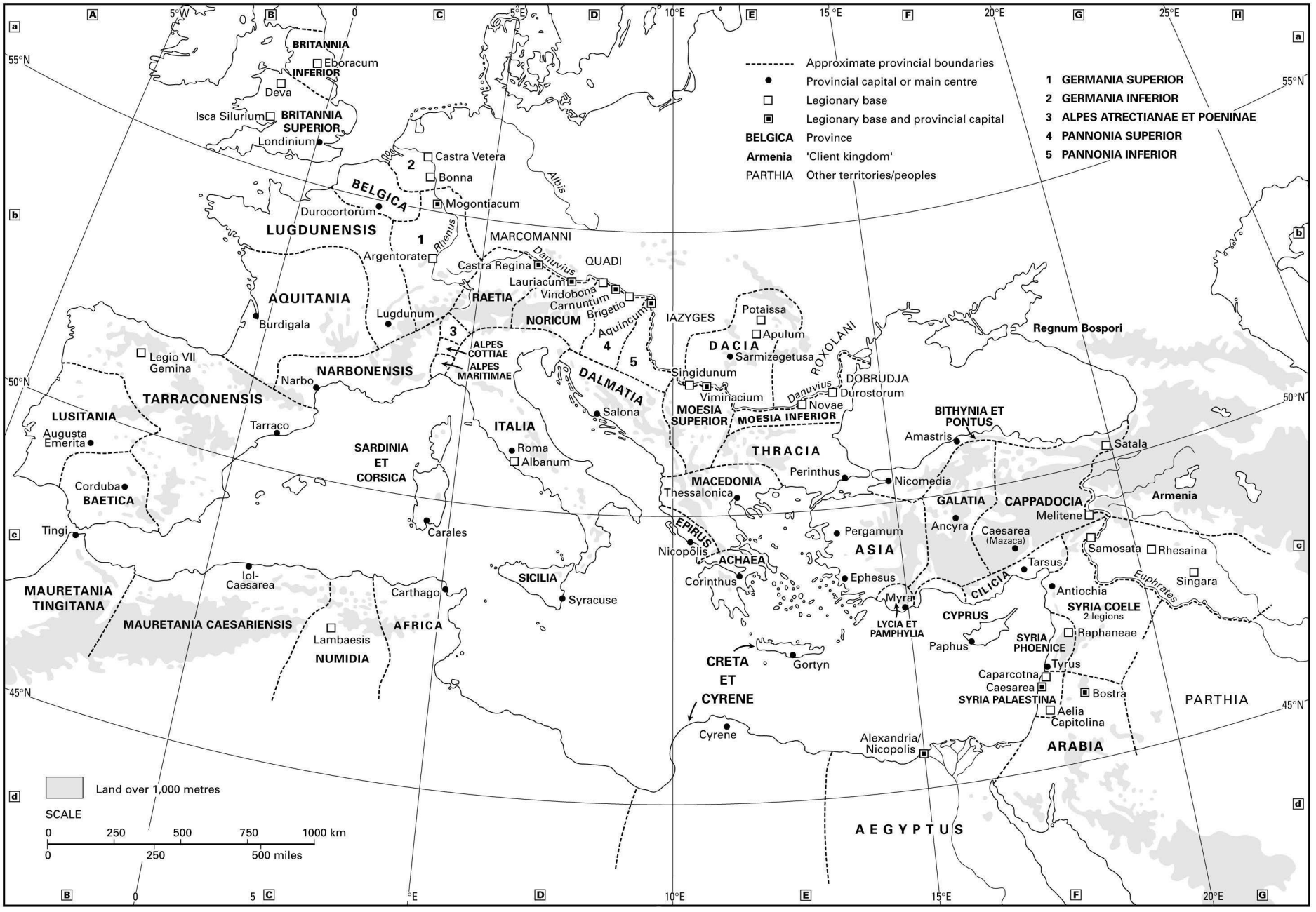
the same time these texts may have been glossed, updated or altered. From studies of individual juristic works, the pattern which begins to emerge is that most reworking of texts is likely to have occurred immediately after the end of the classical period, in roughly 250–310; and that early classical works are relatively free of post-classical reworking: they probably went through relatively few editions. This is true, for instance, of the *epistulae* and *libri ex Cassio* of Iavolenus Priscus.[54] Most attention will have been focused on the works of the great Severan jurists, Ulpian, Paul and Papinian and, since these leading works will have gone through regular new editions, they are more likely to have been subject to reworking.

V. CONCLUSIONS

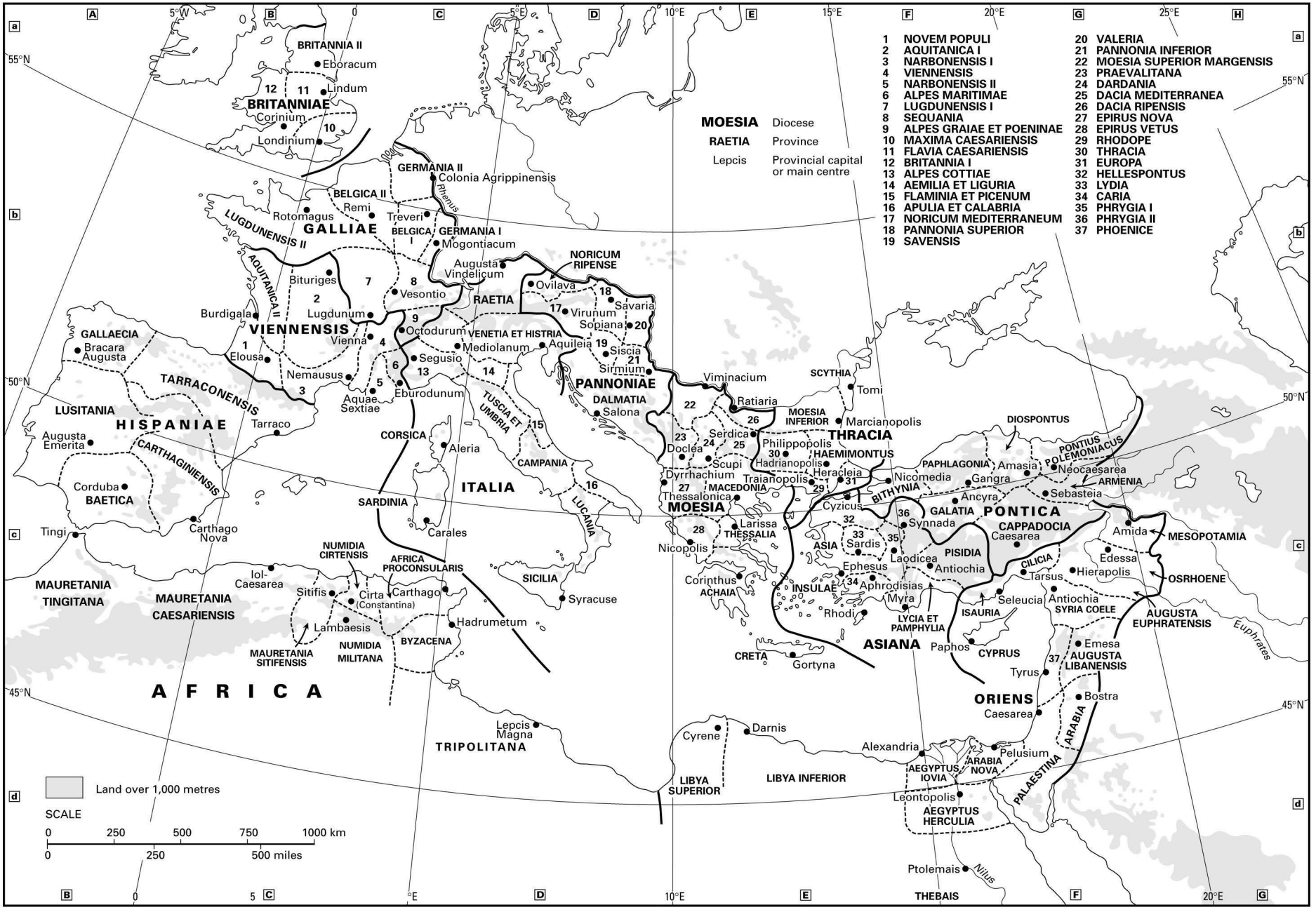
In this period there is a good deal of continuity with the late classical period; it therefore seems appropriate to refer to this period as 'epiclassical'.[55] Two changes could, however, be highlighted: the end of the classical role of the jurist and the redirection of jurisprudence into the official legal business of the chancellery; and the emergence of a new genre of classicizing rather than classical juristic work.

The reign of Diocletian forms the natural terminus for discussion of the classical period of Roman law. Jurists' works, albeit preserved in small quantity, still appeared in their own names, if they chose to use them. Diocletian's very adherence to the rescript system was classical in spirit; his rescripts remained faithful to classical law. By contrast, Constantine's law is replete with Greek and eastern influence, and the legislation typical of his reign is the *lex generalis*.[56]

[54] Eckardt (1978); Manthe (1982). [55] Wieacker (1971) 223.
[56] Amelotti (1960) 94–107; Honoré, *E&L* 181–5.



Map 2 The Roman empire in A.D. 211



Map 3 The Roman empire in A.D. 314

CHAPTER 8

PROVINCES AND FRONTIERS

JOHN WILKES

1. FRONTIER HISTORY[1]

Under the Severan emperors there was a significant advance of the limits of territory under direct Roman occupation, in Mesopotamia to the river Tigris and in Africa to the northern fringes of the Sahara desert. There were also major campaigns in northern Britain but any intended increase in the extent of northern Britain under direct Roman control was cancelled by the death of Septimius Severus. Only in the later years of Severus Alexander, last of the Severan dynasty, were there indications of new threats to stability along the northern and eastern frontiers.

The exceptional concentration of Roman military manpower in northern Britain remained, on paper at least, unaltered throughout the period. Hadrian's demarcation of Roman territory by the patrolled barrier between Tyne and Solway was in the end preferred to the shorter Forth–Clyde line established by his successor. Treaty arrangements with peoples beyond the

[1] There is a large and expanding bibliography on Roman frontiers. For military history and topography the surveys in Wacher (1987): Maxfield (Europe), Breeze (Britain), Daniels (Africa and Egypt) and Kennedy (the East) remain of value. The overview by Whittaker, *Frontiers* is valuable for social and economic aspects, also discussed in Wells (1996). Recent discoveries are reported by local specialists in the published proceedings of Limes Congresses, summarized as follows:

1. Newcastle 1949. Birley, E. (ed.), Durham 1952.
2. Carnuntum 1955. Swoboda, E. (ed.), Graz-Köln 1956.
3. Basel 1957. Laur-Belart, R. (ed.), Basel 1959.
4. Durham 1959 (unpublished)
5. Yugoslavia 1961. Novak, G. (ed.), Zagreb 1964.
6. Southern Germany 1964. Schonberger, H. (ed.), Köln-Graz 1967.
7. Tel Aviv 1967. Appelbaum, S. (ed.), Tel Aviv 1971.
8. Cardiff 1969. Birley, E., Dobson, B., Jarrett, M. G. (eds.), Cardiff 1974.
9. Mamaia 1972. Pippidi, D. M. (ed.), Bucharest 1974.
10. Lower Germany 1974. Haupt, D., and Horn, H.-G. (eds.), Köln 1977.
11. Szekesfehervar 1976. Fitz, J. (ed.), Budapest 1977.
12. Stirling 1979. Hanson, W. S., and Keppie, L. F. J. (eds.), Oxford 1980.
13. Aalen 1983. Planck, D., and Unz, C. (eds.), Stuttgart 1986.
14. Carnuntum 1986. Vetters, E., and Kandler, M. (eds.), Vienna 1990.
15. Canterbury 1989. Maxfield, V. A., and Dobson, M. J. (eds.), Exeter 1991.
16. Kekrade 1995. Groenman-van Waateringe, W. *et al.* (eds.), Oxford 1997.
17. Zalau 1997. Gudea, N. (ed.), Zalau 1999.
18. Amman 2000. Freeman, P., Bennett, J., Fiema, Z. and Hoffmann, B. (eds.), Oxford 2002.

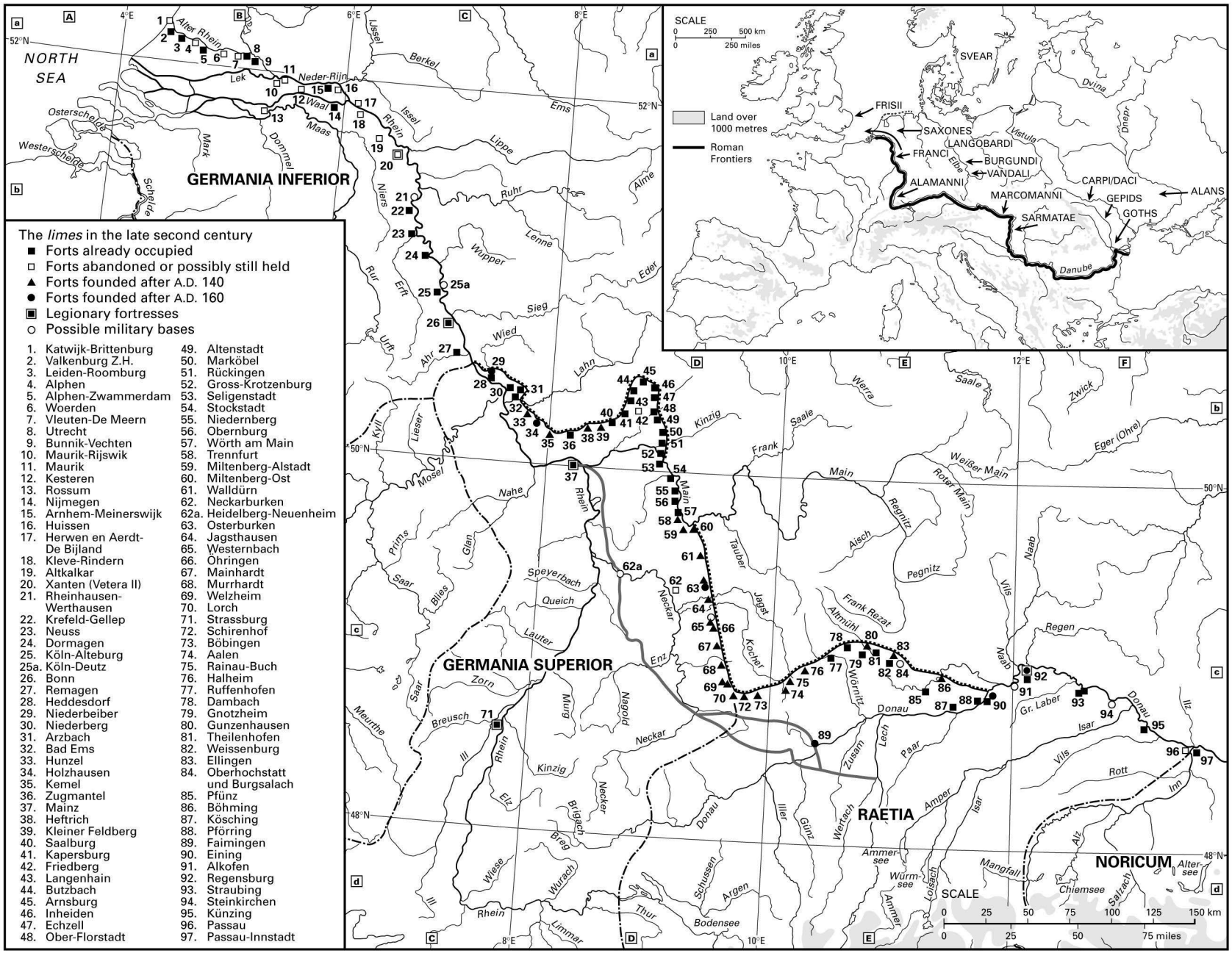
frontier broke down during the reign of Commodus but it remains far from clear why Severus should have judged that disturbances on the fringes of one of Rome's remotest provinces demanded the continuing presence of the emperor and his court from 208 until his death early in 211. Apparently successful sea-borne operations against the Maeatae and Caledonii from bases such as Cramond on the Forth and Carpow on the Tay were not intended to re-establish a Roman occupation of the Forth–Clyde line. Caracalla's settlement was to bring a long period of stability to the province and was accompanied by a continuation of the comprehensive reconstruction of existing Roman bases and roads begun by Severus after his victory over Clodius Albinus in 197. The Hadrianic frontier was reinstated with forward surveillance maintained by special units of scouts (*exploratores*) operating from forward positions.[2] Severan dispositions lasted throughout this period and many of the units recorded on inscriptions of the early third century still appear in the *Notitia Dignitatum* at the end of the fourth century (see below).

From the North Sea to the mouth of the Moselle, the river Rhine remained the Roman limit. From that point a more direct linear frontier ran across southwest Germany to the Danube above Regensburg. The *limes* of Germania Superior and Raetia had reached what proved to be its final form, having been moved forward in stages during the previous century until it embraced all the usable land as far as the forests which began beyond the river Neckar. The line of the frontier was held by auxiliary units but the legions remained in their long-established bases on the left bank of the Rhine.[3] For much of its course of over 1,700 miles the Danube was held by a chain of legionary and auxiliary bases, with several bridgehead forts on the opposite bank and the river itself patrolled by fleets along its upper and lower courses. Trajan's elaborate schemes of engineering to open navigation through the gorges below Belgrade may have been soon discarded, but his Dacian conquests remained a strategic asset, once the deployment of its garrisons had been compacted within the Carpathians by evacuating the exposed plains of the Banat and Wallachia.[4] In Dacia they controlled productive mines and the entry and exit routes along the valleys of the Someş, Mureş and Olt.[5] Under Marcus Aurelius pressure on Germans and Sarmatians on the middle (Pannonian) Danube had driven them to demand admission (*receptio*) by force. Some were expelled but others were permitted to remain and a stricter control was imposed along the river, including the regulation of access to

[2] Frere, *Britannia* 154–70. [3] Schönberger (1969) 171–80; (1985) 401–24.

[4] Military sites along the Danube and in Dacia are indicated on the relevant sheets of *TIR* accompanied by gazetteers. More recent discoveries are reported in the published proceedings of Limes Congresses.

[5] Gudea (1977).



Map 4 The Rhine-Danube *limes* in the late second century

Roman markets. Along the Sarmatian front new mounted regiments were placed in garrison and the two newly raised legions increased the strength of the forces stationed on the river in Raetia and in Noricum. A scheme which may have been considered for incorporating German and Sarmatian territory beyond the Danube was given up after the death of Marcus Aurelius. Later both Germans and Sarmatians appear to have shared in the Severan triumph of the Danube armies and there is no hint of any friction in this area for more than a generation afterwards.[6]

Since the time of Augustus the Romans had been reluctant to accept the continuing independence of Parthia and during the first and second centuries made a number of determined attempts to overpower it. Rome was usually the aggressor and the scene of conflict tended to be Armenia beyond the upper Euphrates. After the middle of the first century the Romans took on a direct involvement in the Caucasus region, where both Romans and Parthians, and later the Persians, had a common interest in preventing inroads from the north, a task which they expected the native rulers of Colchis and Iberia to perform. For a long time the limits of Roman control in the east had been the upper course of the Euphrates and the deserts of Syria and Arabia. The military road which marked the frontier ran for a distance of around 870 miles between Trapezus (Trabzon) on the Black Sea and Aila (Aqaba) on the Red Sea through mountains, valleys, steppe lands and desert. Overland traffic from the east to Asia Minor tended to pass through such places as Satala and Melitene, legionary bases from Flavian times. Most direct contact between the Romans and their eastern neighbours took place through northern Syria, where legions were stationed on the Euphrates and in the Orontes valley. The Roman counter-attack following a Parthian attack on Asia Minor under Lucius Verus followed a predictable pattern, occupation of Armenia, securing of the Caucasus passes and a strike against Ctesiphon and Seleucia from bases at Edessa and Nisibis. During his first campaign in 195 Severus had made the latter into a major Roman base and had extended Roman control to Adiabene and Osrhoene. In the second campaign (197) there was an attack on Ctesiphon but two attempts to take Hatra ended in failure. With Mesopotamia now a province, Roman control now reached to the Tigris. Further south there was also a move forward beyond the line of the *Via Nova Traiana* in Arabia into the Azraq basin through which a route led down the Wadi Sirhan to central Arabia and the Yemen. Caracalla sought to impose direct control over Armenia and Osrhoene (his father had left it under native rule). Colonial titles were conferred on such places as Singara, Nisibis, Rhesaina and

[6] Mócsy (1974) 183–93.

Edessa but Caracalla's ambition to emulate the exploits of Alexander was cut short by his murder near Circesium in 217.[7]

In Egypt there was no significant change in the military organization of a province where a legion was stationed on the western outskirts of Alexandria and auxiliary units up the Nile as far as Hierasykaminos. The army had also responsibility for some roads across the Eastern desert to the Red Sea, first developed under the Ptolemies. These left the Nile in the vicinity of Coptos and led via the porphyry quarries (Mons Porphyrites) or via the granite quarries (Mons Claudianus) to Myos Hormos. Another road with intervisible military posts led for *c.* 260 miles southeast to Berenice on the Red Sea but a coastal road between there and Myos Hormos established under Hadrian appears to have fallen soon into disuse.[8]

By the end of the second century Roman military deployment in the North African Mahgreb had been extended to enclose the productive Tell, defined on the south by the 400 mm rainfall contour (isohyet). Beyond the limits of normal agricultural settlement there was a broad band of steppe, as far as the 100 mm isohyet where the quality of seasonal grazing made pastoralism the dominant economy. The relatively modest strength of the army in Africa, a single legion and auxiliary units spread through a huge area, indicates both a lack of scope for future expansion and an absence of any threat to Roman rule. Most changes in deployment in this period were designed to ensure more efficient operation in areas that were already under Roman control. During the first half of the second century linear barriers or patrolled roads had been established across the principal migration routes in Numidia between the Hodna mountains and the plains around Cirta (Constantine). The occasional major disturbance among the tribes brought reinforcements from the European provinces, as had happened in the reign of Antoninus Pius. Further west in Mauretania Tingitana Roman contacts with the native groups were managed through regular conferences between the Roman governor and native chiefs, some of whom received Roman citizenship. Later in the second century a network of forts and watch-towers was constructed in the area of Volubilis and also along the main road north to Tingi (Tangiers). East of this area the Romans never sought to establish permanent control over the Riff mountains, and only ventured there when attacks on Spain from this direction drew punitive expeditions.[9]

[7] Braund (1994) 239–45 (Iberia); Millar, *Near East* 121–41 (Severan campaigns and frontier organization), 143–4 (Caracalla); Kennedy (1980) and (1982); Kennedy and Macadam (1985) (Azraq basin); Wagner (1983) (province Osrhoena).

[8] Daniels (1987) 223–31; *TIR* G36 Coptos, with Meredith (1952) and (1953) (desert roads).

[9] Daniels (1987) 233–50; Mattingly (1995) 68–80 (Tripolitania); Euzennat (1967) (Volubilis).

Under Severus it was decided to extend the military network further south. In Tripolitania the oases on routes leading out of the Sahara were occupied by new forts manned by legionary detachments. The object was to assert control over the comings and goings in an area where agricultural settlements had from the late first century been spreading along the Gebel and in the eastern Wadis. Further west in Numidia the southernmost line of bases was extended southwestwards along the south of the Sahara Atlas. New units were introduced from the east to man this new forward line, that in total extended for more than a thousand miles along the northern edge of the Sahara. There was a similar forward movement in the western area of Mauretania (Caesariensis) with a new southern line of forts (*Nova Praetentura*) south of the Titteri–Bibans and Ouarensis ranges. The purpose was to achieve a more effective control of the movements of pastoralists in and out of the agricultural areas after the crops had been harvested. Even during this maximum deployment of Roman garrisons, there is no suggestion that a permanent overland link was established between the two Mauretanian provinces, south of the Riff via the Tazga gap.[10]

The half-century between the death of Severus Alexander and the accession of Diocletian appears to have been dominated by inroads of peoples from the north and Persian aggression from the east.[11] In the historical sources much is made of the authorities' failure to prevent large groups entering the empire and roaming at will. Provincial armies became reluctant to leave their homelands unprotected and were more than willing to accept assertions of imperial titles and authority by their own commanders. The emperors had little choice other than to allow the invaders to remain within the empire or to offer payment of subsidies on condition that they would stay in their own homelands. Later new border fortifications were constructed, but in some areas, notably Germany and Dacia, the more drastic solution was adopted of evacuation of territory partly in order to achieve a shorter and more manageable line of control.

Sources for frontier and provincial history are generally poor both in quality and in quantity. The historical tradition (the Athenian Dexippus is the only major contemporary writer but his work survives only in quotations by later writers) derives mainly from the wealthy urban classes, most

[10] Mattingly (1995) 80–3 (Tripolitania); Salama (1953) and (1955) (Mauretania Caesariensis); Daniels (1987) 250–6 (Numidia and Mauretania).

[11] The reconstruction of events along the Rhine and Danube between 235 and 270 by Alföldi (1939a, b), republished as Alföldi (1967) 312–74, remains substantially valid. Later work is reviewed by Walser and Pekáry (1962), while the historical surveys contributed to *ANRW* II.2 (1975) report significant new evidence, in particular coins and inscriptions: Walser 604–56 (Severi); Loriot (a) 657–787 (Maximinus–Gordian); Loriot (b) 788–97 (Philip); Sotgiu (a) 798–802 (Trebonianus Gallus, Hostilianus, Volusianus and Aemilianus); Christol 803–27 (Valerian and Gallienus); Sotgiu (b) 1039–61 (Aurelian); Polverini 1013–35 (Aurelian–Diocletian). For the eastern frontier, the historical sources are now available in translation in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 15–121, and there is a detailed historical account in Millar, *Near East* 147–73.

of whom believed themselves to be remote from any danger, or at least were able to make their escape when rumours of approaching barbarians spread panic far and wide.[12] When invaders did appear, many cities were happy to offer gifts and a warm welcome in the hope that they would soon move on elsewhere. With the notable exceptions of the heroic Decius and the much lauded Probus, emperors are portrayed as either indolent or ruthlessly vindictive, their officials corrupt or oppressive, their soldiers drunken and cowardly. The flow of informative public and private inscriptions in the provinces reached a maximum under the Severi but appears to fall away suddenly *c.* 250, in fact some years before the worst of the invasions.[13] Military history can no longer be documented in detail and civic life is no longer on record at the same level of detail. Some inscriptions survive to record imperial and other official responses to cries of distress from rural communities, not from the impact of invaders but more, in the case of a petition from Asia Minor, on account of the burdens of the imperial post and transport system or, in the case of a village in Thrace, the crippling demands of soldiers and officials when visiting a local spa.[14] Coins, issued in steadily increasing quantities as inflation and debasement resulted in a near collapse of the monetary system, are an important historical and archaeological source during the middle decades of the century. The location of principal mints, of both usurpers and legitimate rulers, can be as significant as the images and messages on the coins themselves. The composition and distribution of unrecovered hoards have in the past been viewed as firm evidence for the threat of invasion. More recently this has been doubted, since the cause of hoarding is now judged more likely to have been the impact of monetary reforms that would have included a disadvantageous recall of earlier issues, while the accumulation of coins in deposited hoards was most likely a consequence of the cash donations to provincial armies during this period.[15] A similar revision has taken place in the extent to

[12] Recorded instances of the admission and settlement of outsiders to the empire are listed by de Ste Croix (1981) 509–18. A high estimate of local resistance to invaders in the Greek provinces is offered by Millar (1969), with special reference to the reported activities of Dexippus. A more sceptical view is offered by de Ste Croix (1981) 654–5 of 'the supposed exploit by the elderly Athenian historian Dexippus in 267'.

[13] On the decline of the 'epigraphic habit' by the middle of the third century, see MacMullen (1982).

[14] *CIL* III.14191 (Aragua, Pisidia) and *CIL* III.12336 = *IGRR* I.674 = *IGBulg* IV.2236 (Scaptopara); both now republ. in Hauken, *Petition and Response* pt I, nos. 5–6. The increasing frequency and scale of military movements affected even remote rural areas; see Mitchell, *Anatolia* I: 227–34, on conditions in Asia Minor.

[15] The old practice of reconstructing the course of invasions from distribution maps of coin hoards has now been generally discarded; see Wightman (1985) 198–9 (with reference to Gaul). On the other hand, there is clearly a link between the concentrations of unrecovered coin hoards in frontier areas where major invasions are known to have taken place, such as Raetia threatened by the Alamanni (Kellner (1978) 138), or the lower Danube threatened by Goths (Gerov (1980) 374–432, repr. from Gerov (1977)). For the origin of hoarded coins in the parallel handouts to provincial armies by a succession of emperors, see Duncan-Jones, *Money* 67–85.

which the effects of invasion can be traced in the archaeological evidence. The large-scale and systematic use of architectural spolia for construction of urban defences in some areas is perhaps less an indication of an indomitable civic spirit in the aftermath of destructive invasion but rather the extent to which the imperial authorities insisted on their construction, however restricted their circuit when compared with the built area of the city and however destructive their construction for the existing urban landscape.[16]

Invasions affected four areas of the empire, northern Gaul and the lower Rhine, the upper Rhine and upper Danube, the lower Danube and the Black Sea and the eastern frontier provinces Cappadocia, Mesopotamia and Syria. By comparison the rest of the frontier districts of the empire had little experience of such intrusions, although the resulting political and military dislocation will have had an impact over a wide area. Almost nothing is reported during this period of conditions in the Atlantic provinces, Britain, west and southwest Gaul and Spain. The sea-borne attacks which caused the construction of coastal defences in southeast Britain and northern Gaul may have started some time before Maximianus took charge of affairs in 285 but there is no record of them. Troops based in Britain are known to have served under Gallienus in his German campaigns and subsequently in Pannonia.[17] Later, Germans settled in Britain by Probus remained loyal at the time of a local usurpation, which may have been a symptom of disaffection in the former Gallic empire towards the Danubian regime of Aurelian and his successors.[18] The Spanish provinces appear to have been most isolated from the turbulence and the chaos which prevailed elsewhere. During the time of the Gallic empire a group of Franks crossed southern Gaul into Spain and looted Tarraco before moving south and crossing into Africa. The actual damage was probably slight but the affair was long recalled afterwards by local historians.[19] There are signs that civic benefactions in cities of the African provinces, which rose to a peak under the Severi, had faltered by the middle decades of the third century, although there seems little sign of a significant interruption in agricultural production.[20] In Tripolitania

[16] The best known example is the late Roman fortification of cities in Gaul; see Wightman (1985) 198–9. On the evidence for the role of the central authority in constructing such defences, see Johnson, *LRF* 114–16 and 135.

[17] At Cologne the British legion XX, based at Deva (Chester), celebrated the success of an expedition in 255 and later accompanied Gallienus to the Danube, *CIL* III.3223 (Sirmium), perhaps to defeat the usurpers Ingenuus and Regalianus in A.D. 260, and later the usurper Macrianus at Serdica in Thrace. See Mócsy (1974) 206–8.

[18] The episodes of Proculus (*PLRE* I.745 Proculus 1) and Bonosus (*PLRE* I.163 Bonosus 1) described by the *Historia Augusta* are shrouded in mystery. There may be a connection with the rebellion in Britain suppressed by Victorinus: Zos. I.66, who also records settlement of Burgundians and Vandals in the province, I.68. See Frere, *Britannia* 175–6.

[19] Zos. I.66; Orosius VII.22.2; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XXXIII.3. There is no certain trace of the episode in the archaeological record: see Richardson (1996) 250–1.

[20] Duncan-Jones, *ERE* 65–7, observes that the costs of civic benefactions recorded for the third century would have meant much less in real terms than similar amounts in the second century.

it would appear that peace and stability prevailed: 'the army patrolled and policed (the frontier areas), receiving runaway slaves and tribal 'deserters' or 'refugees', checking suspicious movements among local tribesmen, while issuing letters of passage to others'.[21] In 238 ruthless methods employed by tax officials under Maximinus provoked an uprising by local landowners that led to the disbanding of the legion and the accession of a second African dynasty, the Gordians of Thysdrus.[22] In Egypt the Persian victory of 260 cut off the rest of the empire from the corn supply, followed by Palmyrene control that ended in 272. Here the fall of Zenobia may have been acclaimed in public but might also, unless the entire episode is a fiction, have prompted the usurpation of Firmus, a wealthy merchant whose ships sailed as far as India.[23]

Both Syria and Asia Minor were affected by the explosive aggression of Sassanid Persia under Shapur I, although by the end of the period Roman authority and territorial control had been fully re-established and even enlarged. Between the first recorded Persian foray into Mesopotamia in 230 and Carus' invasion of Babylonia in 283 the Romans were continuously on the defensive along their eastern borders. In 230 the invaders were expelled by a powerful Roman army but a considerable part of it had to be withdrawn immediately to deal with a crisis in the west. In 242 the Romans had gained a temporary advantage but were then defeated and lost control of Armenia. In 252 the first expedition of Shapur I achieved a spectacular success when there were (on the testimony of Shapur's own monument) 60,000 Roman casualties and the capture of thirty-six cities and strongholds, including most of the major cities of Syria. Antioch itself was captured and a part of its population deported to a new settlement far away in Persia. The Persians justified their attack by a claim that the Romans had failed to contribute to the defence of the Caucasus passes. Shapur's third attack in 260 achieved the greatest success of all with the capture of the emperor Valerian near Edessa, and in the aftermath Persian columns overran Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia and even reached Galatia.[24] Roman commanders defeated a Persian force in Cilicia and the Palmyrene noble Odenathus ambushed a retiring Persian column near the Euphrates, and then proceeded to eliminate surviving Roman army units which had opted to support local usurpers who had discarded their allegiance to the far-away Gallienus. Odenathus was rewarded with overall command in the east (*Dux* and *Corrector Totius*

[21] Mattingly (1995) 89. [22] See above pp. 31–6.

[23] The episode of Firmus (*PLRE* 1.339 Firmus 1) is recorded only by the *Historia Augusta* and is, significantly, not included in references to trouble in Egypt under Aurelian by Zos. 1.61 and Amm. Marc. XXII.16.5. See Bowman (1976) 158.

[24] Sources in translation for these events in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 16–33 (Severus Alexander), 34–48 (Gordian, Philip and Shapur's first campaign), 49–56 (Shapur's second campaign) and 56–67 (Shapur's third campaign). For other evidence and narrative see Millar, *Near East* 149–67.

Orientis) and the prosecution of the war against Persia. He proceeded to oversee the recovery of Mesopotamia and launched an attack on Ctesiphon. On his death in 267, his widow, Zenobia, acting in the name of her son Vabalathus, assumed a similar authority but, when Gallienus declined to confirm this, she assumed imperial titles for her dynasty and succeeded in extending her authority over Roman troops in Asia Minor and Egypt until finally defeated by Aurelian in 272.[25]

During this period two large German groups crossed the Rhine and upper Danube apparently on several occasions. The cause of these movements remains unclear. Population increase and soil exhaustion in the homelands have been suggested, along with climatic change and marine transgression. Long acquaintance and stable relations with the Romans provided conditions for an increase in material prosperity and may also have aroused the hope of some protection against the pressures from new peoples further east. In German society the process of state formation saw the emergence of new leaders who could increase their status with better weapons and improved tactics. The Franks, a grouping of familiar smaller peoples, had earlier caused some trouble that involved the legion stationed at Bonn, but by 253 the problems caused by them had increased to the extent that Gallienus moved his residence to Cologne and remained there for several years, even when Italy and the Danube were also under threat. In 254, with the aid of reinforcements from Britain, the emperor could claim a significant victory across the river (see above), and the title *Restitutor Galliarum* was linked with the recovery of the *Agri Decumates* beyond the upper Rhine. From 259/60 until 273/4 the Rhine frontier was controlled by the regime of Postumus and his successors, whose coinage celebrated several victories over the Germans.[26] The historical tradition is consistent in denigrating any achievement of Gallienus and, by the same token, probably exaggerated the impact of the invasion of 276 by Franks, Vandals and Burgundians, in order to magnify the achievement of Probus. Nearly a century later his 'rescue' of seventy cities in Gaul was still remembered. Nine chiefs were said to have begged for mercy, hostages were taken, 16,000 were recruited to the Roman army and the remainder disarmed. His presence alone was sufficient to end a famine, when wheat fell from the heavens, but even he could not prevent the appearance of yet another local usurper at Cologne.[27]

[25] Sources in translation in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 68–110; for narrative and other evidence see Millar, *Near East* 168–73.

[26] Wightman (1985) 193 (Gallienus) and 193–8 (Gallic empire).

[27] The weight that archaeologists, relying on the historical tradition (Julian, *Caes.* 403H; cf. Eutr. IX.17, Zos. 1.67, *SHA*, *Probus* 13, Orosius, VII.24; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XXXVII), have attached to the invasions in 275–6 rests on shaky foundations in the interpretation of coin hoards and archaeological remains: Wightman (1985) 198–9.

The danger to upper Germany and Raetia came from the Alamanni, already attacked by Caracalla and Maximinus. Under Gallienus and with their kindred Iuthungi they crossed into Raetia and then into northern Italy until Gallienus appeared and defeated them near Milan. The sequel appears to be recorded on a victory altar erected at Augusta Vindelicum (Augsburg) recording a triumph in a two-day battle (24–5 April 260) over the 'Semnones or Iuthungi' by troops from Raetia and Germany and local militia (*populares*). Many of the invaders were killed or put to flight and thousands of captive Italians were set free. In spite of this success the events of that year appear to have severed unified Roman control of the upper Rhine and the upper Danube. The land frontier across southwest Germany appears to have collapsed and the Roman bases were evacuated, yet another disaster which the historical tradition attaches to the memory of Gallienus.[28] The murder of that emperor in 268 took place against a background of more invasions by the Alamanni, who once again had entered northern Italy, probably via the Brenner pass, and reached lake Garda where they were stopped by Claudius II. He could not prevent their escape or their return to Italy in the following year. The early months of Aurelian's reign were occupied with major campaigns against Germans in northern Italy. Hearing that Alamanni and Iuthungi were plundering the countryside around Milan, Aurelian hastened from Pannonia to discover that they had seized Placentia (Piacenza) at the crossing of the Po, from where they ambushed the imperial column in a night attack. He pursued them down the *Via Aemilia* to Ariminum (Rimini) and then along the *Flaminia* until he caught them in the Metaurus valley near Fanum Fortunae (Fano). The survivors escaped back across the Po but were caught again and scattered at Ticinum (Pavia). Another column of Iuthungi succeeded in escaping over the Alps but were also caught and defeated by Aurelian in Raetia. The spectacle of a mass of Germans heading for Rome down the *Flaminia* may well have prompted the decision to construct the walls of Rome, although in the event they did not risk another descent into Italy. Later, in 274 during his march westwards to eliminate the Gallic empire, Aurelian is reported to have cleared the remnants of the Alamanni out of Raetia. After some

[28] The Verona List (see below) records the occupation of the *Agri Decumates* under Gallienus by German tribes, and tradition attaches the loss of Raetia to the same emperor, *Pan. Lat.* VIII(V).10. There seems little doubt that the evacuation of the *limes* happened suddenly in 259/60. The text on the (reused) altar found at Augsburg in 1992 reads: 'In honour of the divine household and to the sacred goddess Victory. (Erected) on account of the barbarian peoples Semnones or Iuthungi killed or put to flight on the 24th and 25th April by the soldiers of the province of Raetia and from the German (provinces) and also local forces, and for the rescue of many thousands of Italian prisoners. In fulfilment of their vows Marcus Simplicinius Genialis, *vir perfectissimus* acting on behalf of the provincial governor, with the same army gladly erected (this altar) to one deserving of it. Dedicated on 11 September in the consulship of our lord emperor Postumus Augustus and Honoratianus.' For commentaries on this remarkable monument see Bakker (1993); Lavagne (1994); and Stickler (1995).

punitive forays across the Danube new defences for Raetia were organized by Probus (below), who left the province 'so peaceful that no hint of fear remained there'.[29]

The years of stable relations with Germans and Sarmatians across the middle Danube came to an end around the middle of the third century, although the scale of the initial attack by both groups appears once again to have been magnified in order to discredit the regime of Valerian and Gallienus. The Germans (Marcomanni) were reported to have reached Ravenna before Gallienus acquiesced in the settlement of some of the invaders in Pannonia and sealed a new treaty by marriage to a daughter of one of their leaders, depicted in the historical tradition as a case of undignified infatuation. Yet after this brief interlude of hostilities a peace returned to the Pannonian Danube that lasted for forty years, when a similar pattern of events was repeated in 296 or 297.[30] Asdingian Vandals appear first in the time of Marcus Aurelius as neighbours of the Marcomanni and joined in their expeditions into Roman territory. They also accompanied the Goths across the lower Danube under Decius (see below); twenty years later Aurelian was recalled from his inauguration in Rome to deal with their attacks, which he succeeded in halting but could not prevent their escape. On this occasion we learn that he had sent ahead instructions that all grain and cattle should be brought within the cities along with 'anything that the enemy might find useful'. When an embassy from the Germans arrived Aurelian demanded 2000 cavalry as a condition of peace.[31]

Since Trajan's conquest of Dacia there had been recurring trouble involving groups excluded from the Roman province, as finally defined by Hadrian. By the early third century the 'Free Dacians', as they were earlier known, were a significantly troublesome group, then identified as the Carpi, requiring imperial intervention on more than one occasion. In 214 Caracalla delayed his progress to the east to deal with their attacks on cities on or near the coast of the Black Sea (Tyras, Callatis, Dionysopolis and Marcianopolis). Later, when acting in concert with the Goths, they were still threatening the same area. In 239–40 the Roman governor refused to pay them the subsidy offered to the Goths for not attacking the Danube delta region (see below). After Philip had come in person to deal with them, he assumed the triumphal title *Carpicus Maximus* and inaugurated a new era for the province of Dacia (20 July 246). Later both Decius and Gallienus assumed the titles *Dacicus Maximus*. In 272 Aurelian assumed the same title as Philip but he allowed significant numbers of the Carpi to remain as settlers

[29] *Epit. de Caes*. XXXIV.2 (Claudius II); *SHA*, *Aurel*. 18.6 (Aurelian); *SHA*, *Probus* 13.7 and 16.1 (Probus).

[30] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXXIII.1; *Epit. de Caes*. XXXII.3; and Mócsy (1974) 206–7.

[31] *SHA*, *Aurel*. 18.2, 30.5; Zos. 1.48–9; Dexippus, *FGrH* II, p. 456, no. 100, *fr*. 7; and Mócsy (1974) 211.

within the empire. Later Diocletian permitted the remainder to move into Pannonia, along with what remained of the German Bastarnae, who were now allowed to join their fellow tribesmen settled in Thrace under Probus.[32]

Though named among the peoples of Germany by Tacitus, little is known of the early history of the Goths (Gothi or Gutones) before the middle decades of the third century. The stages by which they, along with Heruli, Taifali, Gepidae and others who appear around the same time, became identified as distinct groups are not known. A southeastward migration from the Baltic region to the lands east of the Carpathians and north of the Black Sea took place in the later decades of the second century.[33] Under the year 196 it is recorded that 'Scythians' (contemporary Greek writers often used this familiar name for Goths) had been planning an attack when three of their leaders were killed by thunderbolts.[34] Goths were being recruited to the Roman army to the extent that Persian tradition claimed that they were a prominent group in the army of Gordian.[35] Under that emperor also comes the first reference to Goths joining with the Carpi in a raid across the lower Danube (239/40). When offered subsidies by the Roman governor, the Goths released their captives and returned home.[36] Later under the emperor Philip, probably after victory over the Carpi in 247/8 (see above), a Roman decision to cease the payments proved in the end a serious error. When the new emperor Decius left the Danube for Italy, accompanied by the army units which had supported his usurpation, three columns of Goths under Cniva crossed into Roman territory. The invaders also included Carpi, Bastarnae and two groups of Vandals, Asdingi and Taifali. Their forces were also increased by Roman deserters, likely to be a more significant group than the historical tradition allows. Cniva's leadership appears to have been crucial, and reflected developments in German society in that the invaders did not scatter at the first setback but remained loyal until they eventually achieved a conclusive victory over the Romans. Two columns crossed the river Alutus (Olt) into southern Dacia. The Carpi headed northwest into Dacia while Goths under Cniva headed south along the river passing the city of Romula, whose defences had recently been repaired, to reach the Danube crossing between Sucidava and

[32] Bichir (1976) 165–73 (history and archaeology of Carpi); Gerov (1980) 251–8 (invasion of 214). On the governor Tullius Menophilus in 239–240, see Petrus Patricius, *fr.* 8 (*FHG* IV.186) and *IGBulg* II.641–2. The risks in admitting settlers from outside the empire were apparent when a group of Franks took to piracy in Greece, Sicily and North Africa and then managed to return home: Zos. I.71.

[33] Heather (1996) 11–30 (early history and material culture); Scardigli (1976) (recent work on Roman–Gothic contacts); Wolfram, *Goths* 43–57 (Gothic invasions); Paschoud (2000) 148–9 (analysis of historical sources).

[34] Dio, LXXV.3. Around this time Goths were already being recruited to the Roman army in tribal contingents (*gentiles*): Speidel (1978) 712–16 (epitaph of Guththa, son of commander Erminarius, who died in Arabia on 28 February 208).

[35] *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* ll. 6–9 (Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 35).

[36] *SHA*, *Max. et Balb*. 16.3 (from Dexippus); Petrus Patricius, *fr.* 8 (*FHG* IV.186).

Oescus. A third column, under the Goths Argaith and Guntheric, crossed the Danube further downstream and headed for Philippopolis (Plovdiv), the principal city of Thrace. After being driven off from the legionary base at Novae (Svishtov) by the governor Trebonianus Gallus, Cniva headed inland up the river Iatrus to join the others at Philippopolis. The emperor Decius now appeared and drove the Carpi out of Dacia, and then nearly trapped the Goths at Nicopolis ad Istrum but they were able to escape with their loot. When Decius pursued them south over the Haemus (Stara Planina) by the Shipka pass he was in turn nearly ambushed in camp at Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora), from which he withdrew to join Gallus on the Danube at Novae. By now Philippopolis had been captured, in spite of attempts by a local usurper to pacify them, and provided a secure base for the winter 250/1. In spring Cniva moved northeast and was met by the imperial army at Abrittus, where the Goths trapped and defeated the Romans, a historic disaster in which both the emperor and his son, recently appointed co-emperor, were casualties. Gallus managed to extricate what was left of the army, which proceeded to proclaim him emperor. Not only could he do little to prevent the escape of the Goths with an enormous haul of prisoners and loot but he had also to promise a resumption of the subsidies cancelled by Philip.[37]

The successes of the Goths in 250–1 in the provinces of Moesia Inferior and Thrace left little for later arrivals, who were forced to move more deeply into Roman territory and to take greater risks if they were to get at large cities with wealthy inhabitants. In 253 the Roman governor Aemilianus declined to deliver the subsidy due to the Goths, who promptly reappeared in Moesia Inferior and in Thrace. When Aemilianus retaliated with a successful foray north of the Danube he was promptly acclaimed emperor and straightaway departed for Italy to seek legitimation. This left the road through the Balkans to the south open and in the following year Goths reached Thessalonica on the Aegean.[38]

During the next three years the pattern of raids shifts east to the Black Sea, an open door to the Mediterranean hitherto watched by a Roman garrison in the Crimea and by the client kingdom of Bosporus. Internal strife and the collapse of lucrative commerce had caused their ships to pass under the control of the Goths. The Borani ('Northmen'), of whose origin nothing is known for certain, sailed down to Colchis on the east shore of the Black Sea but failed in an attempt to capture Pityus. In 256 a second expedition began with failure at Phasis but then scored a spectacular success with the capture of Trapezus, principal base of the Roman Black

[37] Alföldi (1939a) 143–6 and (1967) 317–21; Wolfram, *Goths* 45–6.
[38] Zos. 1.28, with Paschoud (2000) *ad loc.*; Jordanes, *Getica* 105–6.

Sea (Pontic) fleet, whose garrison ran away when they approached.[39] The impact of these raids on the civil population in northeast Asia Minor is reflected in the canonical letter of a local bishop, urging that the peace and stability disturbed by recent events should be restored as soon as possible. The bishop was also concerned to set out rules for dealing with those who had been guilty of wrongdoing during the recent emergency.[40] The west coast of Asia Minor was the next target, when an army and fleet set out from west of the Crimea and moved down the coast past Istros, Tomi and Anchialus. At lake Philia, 20 miles north of the Bosphorus, the invaders took fishermen's boats to convey the army through the passage to land at Chalcedon on the Asiatic shore opposite Byzantium. Here again the garrison fled, leaving to the Goths a huge sum of money, weapons and supplies. From here they ranged seemingly at will among the wealthy cities of Bithynia, including Nicomedia, Nicaea, Cius, Apamea and Prusa. When frustrated from approaching Cyzicus by the swollen river Rhyndacus they resumed their attentions to Nicaea and Nicomedia, the latter apparently being betrayed to them by a local citizen. Finally, 'loading their spoils on waggons and boats they turned for home and ended the second invasion'. Although the horrors of these raids in 256 and in 257 may have been magnified in order to emphasize the failings of Valerian and Gallienus, the Roman situation in the Black Sea region was now desperate, with Goths in control not only of Crimea and Bosporus but also of the river ports at Olbia and Tyras, enabling them to range at will by land and by sea.[41]

The climax of Gothic raids by the Black Sea came a decade later. An invasion of Asia Minor by the Heruli, a new group from beyond the Crimea who were both rivals and neighbours of the Goths, resulted in the capture of Heraclea Pontica. In the following year (268) Heruli from the Sea of Azov and Goths from the mouth of the Dniestr combined in a major expedition down the west coast. After landing at Tomi and failing to take Marcianopolis they moved into the Bosporus where another failure at Byzantium cost them several ships. Failing again at Cyzicus they moved on through the Dardanelles to the island of Lemnos. Off the Athos peninsula the armada divided into three groups. One headed into Macedonia, landing at Cassandrea and Thessalonica; a second group, mainly of Heruli, headed for southern Greece (Achaea) where they are said to have encountered some resistance organized by the Athenian nobleman Dexippus but which could not prevent them from taking possession of the city. Next the invaders made

[39] The main narrative is provided by Zosimus but a great deal remains uncertain; Paschoud (2000) 150 n. 53, Wolfram, *Goths* 48–9; Gajdukević (1971) 468–70 (conditions in Bosporus).

[40] *The Canonical Letter* of Gregory 'the wonder-worker' (Thaumaturgus) is analysed by Heather and Matthews (1991) 1–11.

[41] Zos. 1.31–5 (likely to derive from Dexippus), with commentary of Paschoud (2000); Wolfram, *Goths* 50–1.

a tour of the major cities of the Peloponnese, including Corinth, Argos, Sparta and Olympia. Several hastily constructed circuits of defences have been linked with the presence of the Heruli in Greece, some made almost entirely of architectural spolia, blocks of stone, column shafts and even whole statues. In Athens the emergency construction of an inner defensive wall was to have a lasting impact on the later development of the city, as the ancient agora was left unprotected and the focus of urban life shifted east to the area of the Roman market and Hadrian's library. When the Goths had appeared at Thessalonica a decade earlier the Athenians embarked on a reconstruction of their ancient walls, which had not been used since Sulla's army had besieged the city three and a half centuries before. The new defences were presumably constructed at Athens, and elsewhere, after the Heruli had departed. Their construction may have been less a spontaneous initiative on the part of public-spirited local groups and more the result of direction by the provincial authorities, concerned with the need to protect the essential fabric of government. The third group of invaders, which may have been led by Respa, Veduco and Tharro, headed east across the Aegean and ranged through the coastal areas of Asia Minor. Bithynia (again), Lydia and Phrygia, were all affected, also Side in Pamphylia and even places as far afield as Rhodes, Crete and Cyprus. At Ephesus the ancient defences of the city held off the invaders but the famous shrine of Artemis which lay outside the walls was looted. In the north Troy, then the prosperous Roman city Ilium, was also attacked and plundered.[42]

The scale of this assault on so many famous cities around the Aegean brought a decisive response from the imperial authorities in the form of Gallienus and the now formidable mobile field-army, which included new cavalry formations. The northern group of invaders was confronted in eastern Macedonia at Doberus on the river Nestus. After 3000 of the invaders had been killed, their king Naulobatus was persuaded to make peace and to enter Roman service after receiving the insignia of a Roman consul. At this point Gallienus departed for the west to confront the disloyalty of his field-commander Aureolus. In the following year his successor Claudius II gained lasting fame and the title *Gothicus* from a spectacular victory at Naïssus in the central Balkans over the Goths returning home from Greece.[43] The survivors took refuge on mount Gessax, somewhere in the Rhodope range, until they were starved into surrender. Once again the survivors of a defeated army were conscripted into the Roman army, while others were settled as farmers in the area. Only a minority of those who had set out reached their homes beyond the Danube.[44] In 270 another

[42] Zos. 1.42–3 and 46, with Paschoud (2000) 162–3, 165; Wolfram, *Goths* 52–4; Wilkes (1989b) 187–92 (construction and repair of urban defences in Achaea).

[43] There are grounds for suspecting that Gallienus' victory at the Nestus and Claudius' at Naïssus are one and the same; Alföldi (1939c) 723 and (1967) 439.

[44] Zos. 1.45; *SHA*, *Claud*. 11.6–9.

expedition down the west coast of the Black Sea landed at Anchialus and succeeded in taking Nicopolis ad Istrum but this time the invaders were eventually defeated by well-organized local forces. Imperial naval forces also achieved some successes against the fleets of the invaders but the majority of those who stayed close to their ships succeeded in returning home. In 269 the prefect of Egypt attacked the invaders with his fleet but left his province open to a take-over by Palmyra.[45] Aurelian's victory over Goths beyond the Danube, in which king Cannabaudes and 5000 warriors were killed, according to the Roman tradition marked the end of the immediate threat from the Goths. A more decisive factor may have been Aurelian's decision to evacuate Dacia, ceding a large area of Roman territory for occupation by Goths, Vandals and others, including the newly arrived Gepidae. Their appearance marked the emergence of a lasting division among the Goths, between the Tervingi west of the Dniestr and the lower Prut and the Ostrogothic Greuthungi to the east.[46]

By comparison with the preceding half-century that from the accession of Diocletian to the death of Constantine could be regarded as a period of stability, as regards Roman relations with their neighbours, although in their early years Diocletian and his colleagues were much occupied with frontier organization. On the eastern front the death of the mighty Shapur I in 270 was followed by six short reigns and, in 309, by the long minority of Shapur II. By 283 Carus was leading successful attacks on Ctesiphon and Seleucia, recalling the triumphs of Severus. Five years later Diocletian could force the Persians to accept Roman authority in Armenia, once again ruled by a branch of the Parthian Arsacids, and also occupation of Mesopotamia. In 297, after an initial defeat at Callinicum, Galerius gained a spectacular victory over Narses and captured Ctesiphon. Roman control over Armenia and Mesopotamia was again confirmed and some minor Persian districts beyond the upper Tigris were ceded to the Romans (Intilene, Sophene, Carduene, Arsanene and Zabdicene). These victories, depicted on the triumphal arch erected at Thessalonica in honour of Galerius, established a lasting peace with Persia, symbolized by an agreement that Nisibis was to be the place for conducting relations between Rome and Persia.[47]

After the ending of Palmyrene independence by Aurelian a new political grouping emerged in the deserts of southern Syria. The Arab Tanukh had migrated under their leader Jadhima, perhaps a victim of Zenobia, but his successor is credited in the Islamic tradition with the overthrow of Palmyra. Under Amr ibn Adi and his son Imru'Iqais the Tanukh developed into a new political force, centred on al-Hira west of the Euphrates, under the dynasty of Lakhmid. On his epitaph at the Roman fort Nemara in the

[45] Wolfram, *Goths* 55. [46] Wolfram, *Goths* 56–7.
[47] Millar, *Near East* 174–222 (eastern frontier and organization under Diocletian and Constantine).

Hauran he is titled 'king of all Arabs' possibly indicating a formal title conferred by the Romans.[48]

In Egypt raids by nomadic desert peoples, the Blemmyes in the east and the Nobades (Nubians) in the west, after the middle of the third century, reached a scale that the dispersed garrisons along the Nile could not contain. In 270 Blemmyes had acted in alliance with Palmyra but in 280 they gained a temporary occupation of Coptos and Ptolemais on their own account. This may be the background to a Roman withdrawal from the Nile above Syene, allowing the Nobades to take possession in return for defence against the Blemmyes.[49] Further north there was a significant increase in military deployment both in Egypt and in Cyrenaica (see below).

Roman military deployment in Africa contracted from what it had been under the Severi (see above). The legion was eventually reconstituted at Lambaesis under Valerian but there are now regular reports of conflict involving some new native groups, including Bavares, Barbari Transtagnenses, Quinquegentanei and Fraxinenses, that may have been the consequence of withdrawal from advanced positions (see below). A victory monument erected at Auzia on 25 March 260 marked only a temporary success.[50] Thirty years later serious troubles involving Bavares and Quinquegentanei brought the first reigning emperor to Africa since Severus, when Maximianus crossed from Spain at the end of 296 and advanced eastwards to reach Carthage more than a year later (10 March 298). In the west the last record of the regular conferences between the Roman governor of Mauretania Tingitana and the Baquates (see above) is dated to 280. During the following years the southern inland part of the province around the city of Volubilis appears to have been evacuated. Whatever links had existed with Roman territory to the east will have now ceased and the contracted territory was now seen as an extension of Roman territory across the straits from Spain and down the Atlantic coast to the area of Rabat.[51]

When Britain was finally recovered in 296, by Constantius after a decade of the separatist regime of Carausius and Allectus, the Hadrianic frontier system in the north may have been put back into some sort of working order after decades of neglect and dilapidation, and even strengthened by construction of new bases in the hinterland.[52] The main threat came from

[48] Based on the eighth-century Arab historian al Tabari, Bowersock, *Arabia* 132–47; although Millar, *Near East* 432–5, is more sceptical.

[49] Procop. *Bell. Pers.* 1.19.28–32; and Daniels (1987) 229.

[50] *CIL* VIII.9047 = *ILS* 2767 (Auzia) and *CIL* VIII.2615 (Lambaesis) honouring the exploits of Q. Gargilius Martialis. For the background see Benabou (1976) 214–27, and Daniels (1987) 257 and 260.

[51] *ILM* 47 = *ILAfr.* 610 dated 13 April 280. On the evacuation of territory, Benabou (1976) 234–40 and Daniels (1987) 260.

[52] Frere, *Britannia* 326–36. *RIB* 1912 (reconstruction at Birdoswald on Hadrian's wall under the tetrarchy) and 1613 (Housesteads).

the emerging state of the Picts in eastern Scotland, and there was also a growing menace from sea-borne raiding, by the Scoti in Ireland and the Franks and later Saxons from across the North Sea, although the latter may have been a greater threat to the northern coast of Gaul between the Rhine and Britanny. In Britain the coastal defences between the Wash and the Solent, known later, somewhat puzzlingly, as the Saxon Shore (*Litus Saxonicum*), may have been as much concerned with the protection of the continental mainland as with that of southern Britain. Some of the forts may have been constructed under the Gallic empire, while others were still being added in the fourth century; but no historical or epigraphic evidence is forthcoming from either Britain or Gaul to indicate when and by whom the new system of coastal defence was initiated. The few forts constructed in Britain on the coast facing Ireland were too scattered to have belonged to any system of centralized control.[53]

No attempt was made to recover territory beyond the upper Rhine and Danube evacuated under Gallienus and both rivers now defined the limit of Roman territory between the North Sea and the Black Sea. The interval between the upper courses, once screened by the *limes*, was eventually secured by a new defended line between Basel, lake Constance and the river Iller (see below). In 286 Maximianus had engaged the Franks and the Alamanni in Gaul and restored to the former their chief Genobaudes. Ten years later the defeat of the Alamanni by Constantius at 'the city of the Lingones' in Gaul was hailed as a miraculous success and does appear to have marked the start of a long period of tranquillity in the northwest. Of more lasting significance may have been a Roman acquiescence in the occupation by Salian Franks of the 'Island of the Batavians', involving a partial Roman evacuation of the lower course of the Rhine between the Waal and the North Sea, and the construction of a new line of military bases between Cologne and Bavai.[54]

Both the tetrarchs and Constantine were on more than one occasion engaged in affairs along the Danube, now the most exposed of the empire's borders. From a base at Sirmium, Diocletian and Galerius were active against the Sarmatians of the Hungarian plain, announcing victories in 289–90, 292 and 294. In 299 there was trouble further west involving the German Marcomanni and more conflicts with the Sarmatians in 299–305. A reference in a later Chronicle to the construction in 294 of two forts in barbarian territory beyond the Sarmatian Danube may be linked with the apparent absence of any wholesale reconstruction or repair, elsewhere typical of the tetrarchy, in Roman forts along the Pannonian bank of the

[53] Johnson, *Saxon Shore* and Johnston (1977) (on coastal defences in Britain and Gaul).

[54] For Maximian and Constantius in Gaul, see Mattingly (1939) 327–8, and Barnes, *NE* 57–8. Withdrawal from the Rhine below Nijmegen to the Cologne–Bavai line is accepted by Maxfield (1987) 169, though Wightman (1985) 208–9 argues for Roman control continuing until Valentinian.

river, except for a series of fortified landing-places on both banks.[55] One suggestion is that Sarmatian territory across the river was now under such pressure from peoples moving westwards through the former province of Dacia that Roman control was advanced beyond the middle Danube to a line of demarcation beyond the Sarmatians represented by a series of linear earthworks. The date of these, known today as the Devil's Dyke (Czorszarok), remains a matter of debate, with suggestions ranging between the late third and the early seventh centuries. Earthworks of a similar kind (Brazda lui Novac de Nord and Brazda lui Novac de Sud), running north of the lower Danube across the plain of Wallachia in Romania, appear to form part of a single scheme – of demarcation rather than actual defence. It is hard to discover any likely historical context for these other than sometime in the period between Aurelian's evacuation of Dacia and the collapse of Roman control along the middle and lower Danube after 378. Another suggestion has been to link both earthworks not with the tetrarchy but with the later activities of Constantine in the same area.[56] In 322 Sarmatians under Rausimodus attacked and set on fire the Roman fort at Campona in Pannonia. Constantine arrived from Sirmium and proceeded to pursue and hunt down the perpetrator in his own homeland. After this the emperor traversed the territory of the Sarmatians from northwest to southeast and recrossed the Danube into Roman territory at Margum (Orašje) in Moesia. The huge proceeds of this expedition, including captives, were distributed at the Danube fort of Bononia (Banoštor) north of Sirmium.[57] Once again many Sarmatians were allowed to cross into the empire and remain as settlers, while those who stayed in their homeland, as allies or dependents of Rome, may have been promised some protection in the area defined by the earthworks against peoples pressing against them from the east. On the lower Danube Constantine inaugurated a new Roman base at Daphne at the mouth of the river Arges, on the left bank opposite Transmarisca (the event was widely advertised on coins), and probably in the following year completed the construction of a permanent bridge across the river between Sucidava and Oescus.[58] A Roman victory is reported in 332 over the 'Goths in the territory of the Sarmatians', following which large numbers of Sarmatians were permitted to settle in Italy. Among the Sarmatians themselves internal strife caused the expulsion of the ruling minority, the

[55] *Chron. Min.* I, p. 230: '*his consulibus castra facta in Sarmatia contra Acinco et Bononia*'; see Mócsy (1974) 268–9. For a possible monument of Diocletian in the Hungarian plain see Mócsy (1969) 196 n. 11 (correcting the findspot of *CIL* III.10605a).

[56] Soproni (1978) 113–27 (Hungarian plain); Vulpe (1974) 267–76 (Wallachian plain). The case for a link with the Avars in the seventh century, argued by Fiedler (1986), does not appear strong. The Diocletianic date is preferred by Mócsy (1974) 271–2, while Soproni (1978) 126–7 opts for Constantine.

[57] Optat. VI.14ff., Zos. II.21; and Mócsy (1974) 277–8.

[58] Procop. *Aed.* IV.7, *Not. Dig. Or.* VIII.93 (Daphne Constantiana). Remains of the bridge have been identified near Sucidava (Celei), Tudor (1974) 135–58.

Agaragantes, by the Limigantes to a refuge in the empire, an event which brought Constantine back to the Danube in 334.[59] As Vandals, Gepidae and other Germans moved into the lands of the Sarmatians the earthworks beyond the Danube will have ceased to have served any purpose, marking the end of Roman attempts to control and regulate the regular movement of peoples across the Carpathian basin, begun by the generals of Augustus after the Roman advance to the Danube in 9 B.C. (*CAH* X² 551–3). However greatly the Romans strove to control this large area they were on almost every occasion forced to allow large groups to pass southwards into Roman territory. The steadily increasing pressure caused by peoples migrating westwards out of Asia that is apparent throughout this period had begun long before far away in the east of Asia, with the westward movements of Hunnic peoples following construction of the Great Wall of China.

II. EMPERORS AND PROVINCES

By the middle of the third century the political and economic integration of the Roman empire had reached a state that is perhaps best represented by a network of imperial highways which traversed mountain ranges, rivers, deserts and forest to reach every part of the Roman world. Huge amounts of labour and materials were regularly invested in maintaining them in working order, a fact recorded everywhere on numerous inscribed milestones, some bearing the names of emperors whose reigns are reckoned only in months.[60] As represented in the ancient itineraries (see below), the roads linked together all the major frontier regions and indicate how the focus of imperial activity had shifted away from the Mediterranean, from which emperors and their retinues once made brief forays to distant campaigns and soon returned. During this period the imperial highways facilitated the movements not only of emperors but also of usurpers who challenged them, and not only of Roman armies on the move but also of invaders heading for the populous inner regions.

The major roads are described or depicted on two well-known documents, both of which probably originated during this period, the Peutinger Map and the Antonine Itinerary. The *Tabula Peutingeriana*, named from the humanist Konrad Peutinger who acquired it in 1508, is a medieval copy of an ancient map extending from Britain (most of this was subsequently lost) to India and from Germany to Africa.[61] In addition to roads and distances in miles between places named in Latin (including those in

[59] *Chron. Min.* I, p. 234; Eus. *Chron.* 233H; *Origo* 32; Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.6 and Mócsy (1974) 279.

[60] Chevallier (1976) provides a general account of the construction and function of Roman roads.

[61] The map in its present form dates from the thirteenth century and consists of eleven parchment sheets joined to make a roll 6.24 metres long and 0.34 metres wide; Dilke (1985) 113–20; Salway (2001) 43–7.

Trajan's Dacia), the map records geographical features, including seas, islands, mountains, rivers and forests. Towns and major settlements are identified by symbols, ranging from the simple 'double towers' to the elaborate personifications of Rome, Carthage and Antioch. The origin and purpose of the map have been much debated but there seems general agreement that the roads represented are those used by some official agency such as the state courier service (*cursus publicus*) and that it was compiled originally in the third century and revised in the eastern empire in the early fifth century. The Antonine Itinerary (*Itinerarium Provinciarum Antonini Augusti*) is a Latin manuscript collection of 225 road routes covering every part of the empire, with the exception of Trajan's Dacia.[62] The start and finish, and the total mileage of each route are followed by a list of stopping places, each followed by a figure in miles (*milia passuum*; in parts of Gaul distances are given in *leugae*, equivalent to one and a half Roman miles) that represents the distance from the preceding place. The list of routes begins at Tingi (Tangier) in Mauretania and then proceeds across the empire to cover most areas, including some islands, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica. Crete and Cyprus are omitted and there are no roads listed for the Peloponnese. In some areas, the Danube and Balkans, Gaul and Asia Minor, the coverage is sparse. Most routes are grouped together by the regions in which they run, although there are a few which traverse the entire empire. Between the major settlements are recorded the names of rest-houses (*mansiones*) and stopping-places (*mutationes*), where facilities were available for people and goods on the move, both official and private. The list of land routes is followed by the Maritime Itinerary (*Imperatoris Antonini Augusti Itinerarium Maritimum*) containing sea passages measured in stades (around one eighth of a Roman mile), along with the names of smaller islands. Though not directly linked, the lists of land and sea routes appear to belong together.

The core of the Antonine Itinerary is an overland route between Rome and Egypt. This tallies with Caracalla's journey to the east in 214–15. It seems likely that he was the emperor Antoninus of the title and that the document originated in preparations made for that journey.[63] Eight other major routes or road networks that are linked at one point or another to the 'spinal route' are also listed.[64] These are: (1) the overland 'spinal' route between Rome and Egypt via the Balkans, Asia Minor and Syria; branches from the spinal route at Milan to (2) Spain and (3) Gaul and Britain; (4) two routes which together list camps and settlements along the Rhine and the Danube; (5) the ancient route (*Via Appia*) south from Rome via

[62] Dilke (1985) 125–8.

[63] Van Berchem (1937) 166–81. *It. Ant.* 123.6–162.4. 'From the city (of Rome) to Milan 433 miles, to Aquileia 260, to Sirmium 401, to Nicomedia 782, to Antioch 755, to Alexandria 802, to Hierasykaminos 763.'

[64] Kubitschek (1916) 2323–5, listing seventeen principal routes with local branches.

the Adriatic crossing and the *Via Egnatia* through Macedonia and Thrace to Byzantium; (6) the route between Rome and Carthage, either by direct voyage from Portus (Ostia) or via Sicily and two short sea passages; in Africa (7) the coastal highway from Tangier via Carthage and Lepcis Magna to Alexandria; in the east (8) major routes across Asia Minor branching from the spinal route at Ancyra (Ankara) to the upper Euphrates and beyond; (9) a network of routes across northern Syria leading into Mesopotamia across the river Euphrates and centred on Edessa.

The great highway between Italy and the east had been opened up by the conquest of the Pannonians under Augustus but few emperors are known to have made the journey along it before Severus. Yet every one of his successors who survived for more than a few weeks travelled at least some distance along it. The road may be divided into eleven sections, some of which were already major routes before Roman times. Between Rome and Mediolanum (Milan) the route followed the *Via Flaminia* north to Ariminum (Rimini) on the Adriatic and then the *Via Aemilia* to the crossing of the Po at Placentia (Piacenza). The passage of the Apennines had been eased by a cutting and tunnelling (Intercisa), completed under the Flavians and admired for centuries afterwards.[65] The cities along these two roads retained an exceptional prosperity well into late Roman times but by the same token were exposed on several occasions to the depredations of passing armies. From Milan, ancient centre of the Gallic Insubres and later imperial capital in the west (see below), several roads led across the Alps leading to Spain, Gaul and Britain. The main highway to Gades (Cadiz) in southwest Spain crossed the Cottian Alps (Montgenèvre) and followed the course of the Durance to Arelate (Arles) at the apex of the Rhone delta, where it joined the old coastal route, now little used, up the west coast of Italy from Rome (*Via Aurelia*), via Genoa (*Via Julia Augusta*) and then on to Spain (*Via Domitia*), crossing the Pyrenees at the Col de Perthus. From Tarraco (Tarragona) the road led down the coast to Nova Carthago (Cartagena) and then crossed inland to the basin of the Baetis (Guadalquivir). Branches from this route led to Caesaraugusta (Zaragossa) and to Augusta Emerita (Merida), centres of the road networks of northern and southern Spain.[66] The main route from Milan to Gaul and Britain also used the crossing of the Cottian Alps, although a more direct route between there and Lugdunum (Lyon) crossed the Alps by the Alpes Graiae (Little St Bernard) and then followed the Isère valley. From Lugdunum the route led north to Durocortorum (Reims) and Samarobrivae (Amiens),

[65] Radke (1973) 1536–75 (*Via Flaminia*), 1575–95 (*Via Aemilia*). The ancient tunnel of the *Flaminia* constructed in A.D. 77 (*CIL* XI.6106) was still celebrated three centuries later (Claudian, *De VI Cons. Hon.* 500–5) and remains in use today (*Il Furlo*).

[66] Rivet (1988) figs. 12, 15, 19, 26 and 52 (southern Gaul); Radke (1973) 1614–72 (*Via Aurelia*), 1681–2 (*Via Iulia Augusta*), 1668–80 (*Via Domitia*); Keay (1988) 61 map (Spain).

to Gesoriacum (Boulogne) and the short sea crossing to Rutupiae (Richborough).[67] Within Britain the Antonine Itinerary lists a dozen or so routes, most of which were linked directly with a major route to the limit of the northern frontier at Blatobulgium (Birrens), via London, the legionary bases Deva (Chester) and Eboracum (York) and Luguvalium (Carlisle).[68]

Between the North Sea and the Black Sea two routes linked all the major military bases and settlements which had been established since Flavian times along the Rhine and Danube. In the central sector an inland route linked the Danubian capital at Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica) with Augusta Trevirorum/Treviri (Trier) in the northwest, passing via Sopianae (Pécs), Pons Aeni (Innsbruck), Augusta Vindelicum (Augsburg), Brigantium (Bregenz), Vindonissa (Windisch) and Argentorate (Strasbourg).[69] The frontier route to the west follows the middle Danube and the Rhine but not the more advanced line of the upper German–Raetian *limes*. Starting at the Sava confluence with the Danube, opposite the legionary base Singidunum (Belgrade), the road links all the major military centres, including legionary bases at Aquincum (Budapest), Brigetio, Carnuntum, Vindobona (Vienna), Lauriacum, Castra Regina (Regensburg), Argentorate (Strasbourg), Mogontiacum (Mainz), Bonna (Bonn) and Vetera (Xanten), and the civil or colonial settlements at Mursa (Osijek), Augusta Vindelicum (Augsburg), Augusta Raurica (Augst), Colonia Agrippinensis (Cologne), Vetera (*legio* XXX) and beyond.[70]

From Milan two routes are listed across the northwest and central Alps, one via the Alpes Graiae (Little St Bernard) to Argentorate (Strasbourg), via Geneva and Vesontio (Besançon), and a more direct line to Mogontiacum (Mainz) over the steep ascent of the Poeninus Mons (Great St Bernard), via Aventicum (Avenches) and Augusta Raurica (Augst). The latter was passable only for a few months during each year and, although apparently engineered for wheeled traffic, only military units are likely to have made the passage without difficulty.[71] Less use was made in the Roman period of passes across the central Alps, by which routes led from Milan to Brigantium (Bregenz) via Clavenna (Chiavenna) and Curia (Chur) on the upper

[67] Chevallier (1976) 160–72 (Gaul). [68] Rivet and Smith (1979) 150–80 (Britain).

[69] *It. Ant.* 231.8–240.5: 'From the Pannonias to the Gauls by inland places, that is from Sirmium via Sopianae (Pécs) to Treveri' with a distance of 689 miles and 221 *leugae*.

[70] *It. Ant.* 241.1–256: 'Along the river bank of Pannonia from (T)aurunum into Gaul to *legio* XXX' for 1035 miles (to Argentorate) 198 *leugae* to *legio* XXX and 16 *leugae* further to Harenatium (Rindern, near Kleve).

[71] *It. Ant.* 346.10–350.3: 'From Milan via Alpes Graiae to Argentorate' 577 miles; *It. Ant.* 350.4–355.5: 'From Milan via the Alpes Poeninae to Mogontiacum' 419 miles. By the latter the distance to Argentorate via Augusta Raurica (Augst) is only 349 miles compared with the other which passes via Geneva (Geneva). For the two passes see Hyde (1935); Walser (1967); and Hunt (1998).

Rhône, mainly because of their difficult approaches. Milestones are lacking but there is enough Roman material to indicate regular seasonal use of the Malajer–Julier Pass but apparently not the shorter Splügen.[72] After Milan the spinal route leads eastwards to Verona, where branched the passage over the eastern Alps via the Brenner pass to Augusta Vindelicum (Augsburg). The other route, via the Val Venosta (Vintschgau) across the Resia/Reschenscheideck, was followed by the *Via Claudia Augusta* from Altinum on the Adriatic to Augusta Vindelicum. Opened first by Drusus in 15 B.C. and engineered in the reign of his son Claudius, this longer route had earlier been preferred to the Brenner on account of the difficult southern approach to the latter along the Eisack valley.[73] From Verona the spinal route headed east to Aquileia via Patavium (Padua) and Altinum. Between Ariminum and the latter the entire Po valley could be by-passed by branching off to Ravenna and then sailing through a succession of coastal lagoons, the 'Seven Seas' (Septem Maria), to Altinum.[74] Two major routes north from Aquileia along the Tilaventus (Tagliamento) offered a shorter passage via the Plöcken pass and the Pustertal to the Brenner, and the main Norican highway via Virunum in Carinthia then across the Tauern Alps to Ovilava (Wels) and Lauriacum at the Danube.[75]

By far the easiest land passage into and out of Italy was the Pear Tree pass (Ad Pirum) between Aquileia and Emona (Ljubljana) via the valley of the Vipava, the 'Icy River' (Fluvius Frigidus) whose banks witnessed the final victory of the Christian empire over pagan reaction in 394.[76] Starting from the colony of Emona, long recognized as a part of Italy even if not so defined by administrative boundaries, two major routes led eastwards across Pannonia to Sirmium and Singidunum, a more direct line via Siscia (Sisak)

[72] *It. Ant.* 277.4–278.2: 'Bregenz via the Lake to Milan' 138 miles (via Splügen) or by the longer route (Malajer–Septimer); *It. Ant.* 278.3–279.1 'from Bregenz to Como' 195 miles. See Hyde (1935) and *TIR* L32 Mediolanum.

[73] *It. Ant.* 274.8–275.9: 'From Augsburg to Verona' 272 miles (by the Brenner). Neither the Antonine Itinerary nor the Peutinger Map records the *Via Claudia Augusta* (*CIL* v.8002–3) via the Resia/Reschenscheideck: Radke (1973) 1609–10, but Ptolemy (II.12.4) locates two stopping places on the route along the Inn valley at Inoutrium (Nanders) and Medullum (near Landeck). See Hyde (1935) and *TIR* L32 Mediolanum.

[74] *It. Ant.* 126.5–126.7: 'From Rimini the direct route to Ravenna (33 miles) and then by navigation through the Seven Seas to Altinum.' This line saved the recorded 420 miles via Milan and Verona.

[75] The main route led from Aquileia to Veldidena (in the Inn valley on the north side of the Brenner pass), using the ancient Venetic route across the Plöcken pass still much used in the late Roman period, *It. Ant.* 279.2–280.4: 'From Aquileia by short cut (compendium) to Veldidena, 215 miles'. The route continued west along the upper Drava/Drau valley from Aguntum and then the Pustertal to join the Brenner route south of Vipitenum (Vipiteno/Sterzing). The advantage of this route was not only to by-pass the difficult passage of the Isarus (Eisack) while distance from Aquileia (275) was significantly shorter than that via Verona and Tridentum (Trento) (326 miles). *It. Ant.* 276.1–277.1: 'From Aquileia to Lauriacum' 272 miles; Alföldy (1974) 12.

[76] *It. Ant.* 128.–129.2. The Bordeaux–Jerusalem Pilgrimage (*Iter Burdigalense*) 559.14–560.7 provides a fuller list of rest-houses and stopping-places. On the battle at Fluvius Frigidus, *CAH* XIII: 109.

and along the Sava valley, and the longer but generally preferred line via Poetovio (Ptuj) down the Drava to Mursa (Osijek).[77] The major route north from Poetovio, via Savaria to Vindobona or Carnuntum on the Danube, was a part of the ancient Amber route, by which the fossilized resin was conveyed between the Baltic and the Adriatic, and offered the shortest route between Italy and the northern frontier.[78] After crossing the Sava at Singidunum the spinal route followed the Danube to the next legionary base at Viminacium (Kostolac).[79] From here started the eastern section of the northern frontier road which followed the river down to its delta via the colonies at Ratiaria (Archar) and Oescus and the legionary bases at Novae (Svishtov) and Durostorum (Silistra). After the delta the route follows the Black Sea coast down to the colony at Deultum (near Burgas), where it turned inland across southeast Thrace to rejoin the spinal route at Hadrianopolis (Edirne), continuing past Byzantium to its final destination at Nicomedia in Bithynia. Below Viminacium passage along the Danube is obstructed by a succession of gorges and whirlpools and the barrier of the Iron Gate (Prigrada), a ridge of rock across the bed of the river. At the end of the first century a fabulous effort of engineering produced a towpath through the gorges, a by-pass canal around the Iron Gate and, a few miles downstream, a bridge of timber on stone piers nearly a mile long across the Danube. Little of this costly infrastructure was retained after the reign of Trajan, and the main road along the Danube leaves the river between the upper and lower gorges at Taliata (Donji Milanovac) to cross the Miroč hills and regain the river at Egeta (Brza Palanka), thus by-passing the whole section of the Iron Gate and the circuitous course of the river below Trajan's bridge (so-called 'parrot's beak').[80] North of the Danube only the Peutinger Map preserves any record of the roads in Trajan's Dacia evacuated by Aurelian. Two routes leading north from the Danube, from Viminacium crossing at Lederata (Ram) and from Taliata crossing at Dierna (Orşova), united at Tibiscum (Jupa) in the upper valley of the Tibiscus (Timiş) and crossed into the Marisus (Mureş) basin of Transylvania. From the major Roman settlement Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (the name of the nearby Dacian royal capital) the route follows that river past legionary bases at Apulum (Alba Julia) and Potaissa (Turda) and the civil town at Napoca (Cluj) as far as Porolissum (Moigrad), the fortress complex in the northwest guarding entry into Dacia along the river Samus (Someş). The Peutinger Map also

[77] *It. Ant.* 129.2–132.1, 377 miles via Poetovio; *It. Ant.* 259.11–261.3 'From Emona via Siscia to Sirmium' 311 miles.

[78] *It. Ant.* 261.4–262.2: 'From Vindobona to Poetovio' 184 miles; *It. Ant.* 262.3–262.8: 'From Poetovio to Carnuntum' 164 miles. Both routes followed the same road as far as Scarbantia (Sopron) then diverged. On the ancient Amber route, see *OCD*[3] 70 (D. Ridgway).

[79] *It. Ant.* 131.2–133.3.

[80] *It. Ant.* 217.5–231–3: 'Along the river from Viminacium to Nicomedia' 1162 miles. For Roman engineering of the Danube see *CAH* XI[2]: 581.

lists a road across southeast Dacia to Romula on the river Alutus (Olt), the eastern limit of Dacia south of the Carpathians, along which a major road ran north to Apulum via the Red Tower pass.[81]

The spinal route left the Danube at Viminacium and followed the river Margus (Morava) to Naïssus (Niš), crossroads of the central Balkans. This was one of the most difficult sections of the route and was only fully engineered under Hadrian. Once this had been done all the Danube obstacles below Viminacium could be by-passed by the detour to Naïssus, returning to the river in the area of Ratiaria via the Timacus (Timok) valley.[82] South of Naïssus the route along the Morava and Vardar/Axios (Axios) to Thessalonica is not registered by the Antonine Itinerary, and nor is that between Lissus (Lezha) on the Adriatic at the mouth of the Drilon (Drin) and Naïssus, via the silver mines of Dardania in the Ibar and Stinica valleys.[83] Between Naïssus and Serdica (Sofia) the main highway passes from the Latin-speaking to the Greek-speaking part of the Roman empire. Situated in a remote high plain near the headwaters of the river Oescus (Iskur) in northwest Thrace, Serdica was a place of little importance until it was chosen as metropolis of Aurelian's New Dacia and was then for a few years the favourite residence of Constantine, a native of the area. After the passage of 'Trajan's Gate', the ancient Succi pass (Ihtiman pass), the spinal route entered the Thracian heartlands of the Hebrus (Maritsa) valley centred on Philippopolis (Plovdiv), a foundation of Philip II of Macedon.[84] From Hadrianopolis (Edirne), where the Hebrus is joined by the Tonzus (Tundja) and is navigable along its southward course to the Aegean, the spinal route crosses the Odrysian plain of southeast Thrace to join the coastal route of the *Via Egnatia* at Perinthus, an ancient settlement of the Samians famous for its resistance to Philip in 340–39 B.C. The place became a prosperous port on the Sea of Marmara and appears to have been the preferred residence of the Roman governors of Thrace, later to be re-named Heraclea in honour of Maximianus but also to evoke its legendary founder Heracles.[85]

The route across Asia Minor from the Bosphorus to Tarsus in Cilicia may not have been planned as an arterial route when the Roman road system

[81] Miller (1916) 542–5 (Viminacium–Tibiscum), 545–51 (Taliata–Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa–Apulum–Napoca–Porolissum), 551–3 (Egeta–Romula), 553–6 (Romula–Apulum).

[82] *It. Ant.* 133.3–134.5: Viminacium–Naïssus 119 miles. Fragments of an inscription probably from Viminacium appear to record construction of a new (*via nova*) and a more direct (*compendium*) from the river Margus (Morava) south into Dardania: Mirković (1980) and revised in *IMS* II n. 50. Reconstruction rather than a new construction is preferred by Speidel (1984) 33.

[83] Miller (1916) 555–9 (Lissus–Ulpiana–Naïssus–Timacum Minus–Ratiaria, *c.* 314 miles); 571–3 (Naïssus–Scupi–Stobi–Thessalonica). For communications between Naïssus and Scupi, see Hammond (1972) 82–3.

[84] *It. Ant.* 134.5–136.4 (Naïssus–Serdica–Philippopolis, 201 miles). On Serdica as an imperial capital, see below.

[85] *It. Ant.* 136.4–138.5 (Philippopolis–Hadrianopolis–Byzantium/Constantinopolis, 216 miles). On Perinthus, see Oberhummer (1937) and Sayar (1998).

was first being constructed under the Flavians. Then the key routes were those leading east to the upper Euphrates and Armenia but by the early fourth century it had become not only a part of the principal highway of the empire but was also the increasingly important Pilgrims' Road to the Holy Land. After the Bosphorus crossing from Byzantium to Chalcedon the route led to Nicomedia (Izmit), royal capital of Bithynia founded in 264 B.C. and later the scene of Hannibal's suicide. From here the old route across the north of Asia Minor via Paphlagonia to Pontus and Armenia, used by the armies of Lucullus and Pompey, appears to have fallen out of use by this period. After Nicomedia the spinal route passed via Nicaea (Iznik) and Iuliopolis, the ancient Gordium, along the Sangarius valley to Ancyra (Ankara), metropolis of Galatia. From here there continued two important military routes to the main military bases on or close to the upper Euphrates, via Tavium, Sebasteia and Nicopolis to Satala, and by the west of lake Tatta via Caesarea Mazaca, Comana and Arabissus to Melitene. The spinal route continued southwards to Archelais and Tyana to pass through the high range of the Taurus by the Cilician gates and reach Tarsus in the plain of Cilicia (though that place happens to be missing from the list of the Antonine Itinerary). After skirting the plain of Issus, where Severus' victory over Niger in 194 had emulated Alexander's triumph over Darius five centuries before, the road crossed the Amanus range to reach Antioch on the Orontes, founded in 300 B.C. by Seleucus I and perhaps the greatest city of the eastern Mediterranean. By this period Antioch had become the centre of a network of roads linking the Cappadocian centres Nicopolis, Germanicia and Doliche, with Samosata and Zeugma on the Euphrates and Edessa beyond.[86]

The main road followed the coast south of Antioch passing Laodicea, Berytus (Beirut), Tyre and Sidon. At Tyre the inland route up the Orontes valley linking Apamea, Emesa, Heliopolis (Baalbek) and Damascus, returned to the coast. From Syria it was tempting for some to follow the easy route south to Egypt, passing Caesarea, Diospolis (Lydda), Ascalona and Gaza, crossing into Egypt at Raphia. From Pelusium, where stood Pompey's monument, at the mouth of the easternmost branch of the Nile the road crossed the delta to Alexandria, the only Mediterranean foundation of Alexander the Great.[87] From there the long route up the west bank of the Nile (the registered distance is 763 Roman miles) terminated at Hierasykaminos near the border of Aethiopia. Here the travelling sage Apollonius of Tyana once observed the operation of an African market

[86] *It. Ant.* 139.1–147 (816 miles). For surviving milestones and detailed topography, see French (1981). For roads east to the Euphrates, see Mitchell, *Anatolia* I: 127–9 with maps 8 and 9. On roads from Antioch, see Bauzou (1989) with map.

[87] *It. Ant.* 147.1–154.5 (802 miles). On roads in Iudaea–Palaestina, see *TIR* Iudaea–Palaestina.

using 'blind barter', where buyers and sellers stayed apart until each was judged to have deposited a satisfactory amount.[88]

Alexandria was the terminus of a route which began beyond the pillars of Hercules (straits of Gibraltar) on the Atlantic coast of Africa south of Rabat. Between Tingi (Tangier) and Siga, a distance of 577 miles, there was in fact no road and the passage had to be made by ship. At Iol-Caesarea (Cherchel) there branched the main inland route through Mauretania Caesariensis to Sitifis (Sétif) and on to Cirta/Constantina (Constantine) in Numidia. The coastal road ran from Carthage to Alexandria for a distance of more than 1540 Roman miles, and there is also an inland detour around the frontier districts of Tripolitania between Tacapae and Lepcis Magna. After the three cities of Tripolitania, Sabratha, Oea (Tripoli) and Lepcis Magna, the route of the Antonine Itinerary lists twenty-two stopping-places along the desert coast of the Greater Sirtes, and entered the Greek world at the Pentapolis of Cyrenaica, the cities of Berenice (Benghazi), Tauchira (Tocra), Ptolemais, Cyrene and Darnis (Derna). Then another stretch of desert road led to Alexandria, passing the spacious harbour of Paraetonium, from where Alexander the Great travelled into the desert to consult the oracle of Zeus Ammon at the Siwa oasis.[89]

The period opens with Pertinax ruling in Rome and ends with the death of Constantine after a decade of almost uninterrupted residence in or near his new capital on the Bosphorus. In the intervening years emperors appear to have been almost continually on the move, mostly along the major highway between east and west described above, or along branches from it leading to the northern or eastern frontiers (see Appendix II).[90] Some major regions of the empire almost never saw a reigning emperor during the entire period, notably Spain, except for the transit of Maximian between Gaul and Africa late in 296. Apart from Severus' visit to his patria in 203 (the city of Lepcis Magna was as a result endowed with new civic buildings and amenities), the eastward progress of Maximian towards Carthage in 297–8 was Africa's sole acquaintance with a reigning Augustus. Britain received the undivided attention of Severus and his two sons, both now promoted Augusti, from 208 until early in 211. Yet almost a century had passed before the next appearance of a legitimate emperor, when Constantius Caesar

[88] *It. Ant.* 154.5–162.4. For places along the route see Map 5. Philostr., *Vit. Apoll.* VI.2.

[89] *It. Ant.* 2.2–22.5 (Mercurios–Tingi–Rusadder–Mauretania Caesariensis–Saldae–Rusicade–Hippo Regius–Carthage); 56.7–70.1 (Carthage–Thenae–Lepcis Magna–Alexandria). For Roman roads in the Maghreb, see Salama (1951), (1953), (1955); in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, *TIR* H/1 33, H/1 34 and Mattingly (1995) 61–7.

[90] Details of imperial movements A.D. 193–284 are furnished by Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 216–42. For movements of the tetrarchs and their successors, see Barnes, *NE* 47–87 with some revision in Barnes, 'Emperors' 543–44 (Diocletian and Galerius in 296–9).

landed in 296 to reclaim Britain from a decade of separatism under Carausius and Allectus. Several emperors were attracted to Egypt, usually when dealing with imperial affairs from a base in Syria, Severus in 199–201, Caracalla in 215–16, possibly also Severus Alexander, Aurelian in 273, Galerius Caesar in 293–5 and Diocletian in 297/8 and possibly again in *c.* 301. Curiosity was the motive of Severus and his son but the presence of Aurelian and the tetrarchs was in response to usurpation or disturbances involving border peoples. Imperial visits appear to have followed a similar pattern, with a period of residence at Alexandria, that was sometimes troubled by the riots and demonstrations for which that city was famous, followed by a journey up and down the Nile for which elaborate arrangements had to be made in advance.

Long before the middle of the third century Rome or its vicinity had ceased to be the accustomed residence of the ruling emperor, as it had been since Augustus had fixed his permanent abode on the Palatine hill, and was followed by the Flavians with their great residence. That name subsequently acquired the meaning of imperial residence (*palatium*), wherever it might be located. The pattern of unceasing imperial travel which dominates the period was established by Septimius Severus, whose first decade was marked by only three brief sojourns in the capital, a month in 193, and three or four months in late 196 and in late 202. These periods were remembered as periods of great activity, characteristic of that ruler, and recalled the pattern of life of the dictator Caesar following his crossing of the Rubicon. Severus' longer residence in Rome after 203 was terminated after barely four years when he decided, in spite of increasing infirmity, to take personal charge of relatively minor operations in the northern highlands of Britain, residing at Eboracum (York) until his death (4 February 211). What moved Severus to desert the capital was even at the time a subject of considerable speculation, centred on the conduct of his two sons. Nevertheless it appears in the longer term to mark a severing of the close links which had existed between the emperor and the people of the capital since the time of Augustus.[91]

Caracalla followed the example of his father. The period of residence in Rome after his return from Britain in 211 was dominated by the removal of his brother Geta, and the capital was not to see him again after his departure for Gaul and the upper Rhine before the end of 212. From there he moved eastwards, wintering successively at Sirmium (213/14), Nicomedia (214/15), Alexandria (215/16) and finally Edessa in Mesopotamia (216/17). Except for the periods of enforced residence in Rome for the minority rulers Elagabalus (219–22), Severus Alexander (222–31) and Gordian III (238–42), the imperial exodus from Rome had become a fact plain to all

[91] Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 216–23 and, for a fuller discussion of Severus' intentions, Birley, *The African Emperor* 173–4.

before the middle of the century. Only Gallienus during his sole reign appears to have reverted to the old ways, but his presence in and around Rome, interrupted by an excursion to Greece, was terminated in 268 by an emergency campaign against Goths. Gallienus' years in Italy were in part an enforced residence, following his humiliation at the hands of Postumus in Gaul and the near total collapse of imperial organization in the east after the capture of Valerian by the Persians in 260.[92] Whenever possible, emperors proclaimed in the provinces still made an early visit to the capital to confirm through the senate the legitimacy of their accession and also to assume the dignity of the consulship, highest office in the Roman state. Emperors who made such ceremonial appearances in Rome include Philip (244), Decius (249), Trebonianus Gallus (251), Valerian (253), Gallienus (253), Claudius II (268/9), Aurelian (270/1) and Probus (276). Others were heading in that direction when their reigns were terminated, Maximinus (238), whose regime disintegrated during an ill-judged siege of Aquileia, Aemilianus (253) and Quintillus (270). The number of emperors who never came near Rome is small; most were proclaimed far away and their tenure of power was brief: Macrinus (217/18), Tacitus (275/6), Florianus (276), Carus (282/3), Numerianus (283/4) and Carinus (283–5).[93]

By the time of the tetrarchy, the centre of imperial administration had shifted to permanent new establishments in the provinces (see below) and visits to Rome were now little more than ceremonial occasions. Though in Italy during the first year of his reign, Diocletian did not enter the city until the celebration of his *vicennalia* late in 303, from which he was more than happy to withdraw, preferring to assume the consulship of 304 at Ravenna.[94] The usurper Maxentius resided there from 306 until his defeat by Constantine on the outskirts of the city in 312. The victor soon left the city to reside among his own supporters at Trier and subsequently returned there only twice, for three months in late summer 315 and for one month in summer 326.[95]

The arrival and departure of emperors from Rome continued to be commemorated by special issues of coins with traditional legends of *Adventus* and *Profectio*. The arrival of an emperor in a provincial city was the occasion for formal receptions, involving deputations, presentations and speeches, the sort of scene depicted on the arch of Galerius at Thessalonica. On his arrival at Augustodunum (Autun) in Gaul in 311, Constantine was welcomed by a large crowd. Earlier the meeting of Diocletian and Maximian at Milan in 290/1 had been witnessed by a large gathering. Things did not always go according to plan on such occasions: Septimius Severus had no

[92] Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 223–30 (Caracalla), 230–1 (Elagabalus), 231–2 (Severus Alexander), 233–4 (Gordian III), 236–8 (Valerian and Gallienus).

[93] For what is known of their movements see Halfmann, *Itinera Principum*.

[94] Barnes, 'Emperors' 544–6.

[95] Barnes, *NE* 12–13 (Maxentius), 71–2 and 77 (Constantine).

hesitation in exiling (a penalty that also excluded residence in any place where the emperor was also in residence) a local sophist (Oppian) who had pointedly boycotted his ceremonial welcome at Anazarbus in Cilicia. At Alexandria scandalous rumours circulating regarding Caracalla's role in the death of his brother Geta led to a particularly fraught encounter between the welcoming civic delegation and the visiting emperor late in 215.[96]

It was widely acknowledged, even by the emperors, that the passage of the imperial court, their armies and their supply trains, could be a heavy burden for provincial communities. Such journeys were evidently planned in some detail, with routes and stopping-places specified and supplies requisitioned in advance from local communities. It could prove an act of great generosity when a local citizen came forward to bear the cost of entertaining the emperor and his court or those of the passage of convoys of goods and supplies for an imperial expedition. Papyri furnish many details of the preparations judged necessary in advance of the visits by Severus and Diocletian to Egypt, which appear to have strained the bureaucratic administration of that country.[97] The frequency of long journeys made by emperors during this period (see Appendix 3) was unprecedented. A person raised to, or who aspired to, the imperial dignity needed not only mental resources for the role of head of state and commander-in-chief but also exceptional physical stamina. It was essential that the emperor kept in close contact with armies in the provinces, unless he was prepared to run the risk of local usurpations of the imperial authority often demanded by regional armies and their associates. It was apparently Gallienus' long sojourn at Cologne that caused the Danube armies to feel neglected and gave rise to local disaffection that led to the rebellions of Ingenuus and Regalianus in 260, which forced the emperor to make two return visits to the area in rapid succession.[98]

Many emperors are found travelling the main highway between Italy and Syria, several of them more than once and after brief intervals. It seems clear that few emperors could countenance the delay and isolation of the potentially more comfortable sea voyages by which emperors in the past had travelled to their eastern provinces. Severus did sail from Brundisium to Syria for his Parthian campaign (197) and will have sailed to and from Africa in 203, though by which passage (see above) is not recorded. Elagabalus may have sailed from Syria to Bithynia following his accession, though presumably the decision is not likely to have rested with the fourteen-year-old emperor. For his visit to Athens and Eleusis during the years 263–7 it is

[96] For these and similar incidents, see Millar, *ERW* 31 (*Adventus* and *Profectio*), 31–2 (arch of Galerius, Diocletian and Maximian at Milan, Constantine at Autun and the exile of Oppian). For Caracalla's arrival at Alexandria, Dio, LXXVII.22.

[97] Millar, *ERW* 32–5. [98] Mócsy (1974) 205–8.

likely that reasons of security and convenience caused Gallienus to choose travel by sea.[99]

It is not surprising that there is little incidental or anecdotal evidence relating to most emperors of the period either in their residences or on their travels. During his years of residence at Rome in 204–7, Severus' pattern of life seems to have been little different from his first- or second-century predecessors, residing either in the city or in one of the several villas in the vicinity that had passed into imperial ownership. It was recalled that Aurelian in 270/1 disliked so much the confined existence within the palace that he chose to live in one of the city's parks, in the manner of a military camp, where he could ride out daily. A generation later the indolent Maxentius could be ridiculed for treating a journey from the palace to the same park as 'going on an expedition'.[100]

It was by now well understood that wherever the emperor chose to reside for more than a few days would normally be referred to as 'the palace' (*palatium*), and Severus Alexander is recorded to have named a purpose-built *palatium* at Baiae near Naples after his mother Julia Mamaea. Similarly, responses to letters or petitions and other imperial pronouncements could be issued from wherever the emperor happened to be at the time, and the pattern becomes even more marked with legislation after the accession of Diocletian. In 197 Severus and Caracalla sent a response to the shrine of Delphi from their residence in Campania. After the Severi little is heard of imperial residences and villas in and around Rome but when emperors appeared in the city there was evidently suitable accommodation prepared for them. The great complex created by Maxentius on the outskirts of Rome between the second and third milestone of the *Via Appia*, with its full size race-track (*circus*), circular monument dedicated to his son Romulus (d. 309), and villa whose reception rooms were designed for the increasing ceremonial of the imperial court, belongs to a new era of imperial architecture that saw the creation of new imperial capitals in the provinces (see below).[101]

Regular appearances by the emperors among their armies did not inevitably make them more visible or more accessible to their provincial subjects in the same regions. This happened when emperors visited and resided in the larger cities, usually in transit, sometimes to visit a major shrine and occasionally, as Caracalla in Asia in 214, simply to emulate the progress of Alexander the Great. On such occasions individuals might solicit

[99] *SHA*, *Sev.* 15.2. Severus may have sailed from Brundisium to Aegeae in Cilicia and perhaps also in 203 from Rome to Carthage (Birley, *The African Emperor* 129 and 146). For Elagabalus, who subsequently travelled overland to Rome by the main highway, Dio, LXXIX.3.1–2. For Gallienus, at Athens and Eleusis in either 264/5 or 266, *SHA*, *Gall.* II.3–5; cf. Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 238.

[100] *SHA*, *Aurel.* 49.1–2 (Aurelian in Rome); *Pan. Lat.* XII(IX).14.4 (Maxentius).

[101] *SHA*, *Sev. Alex.* 26.9 (*palatium* at Baiae); Severus and Caracalla at Capua in Campania, *FD* III.4.3 no. 329 (confirming the privileges of Delphi). On the villa of Maxentius, see below, p. 681.

and obtain favours on their own behalf or on behalf of their community, more often than not in the context of local rivalries. It was a considerable, if costly, distinction to have been host to the emperor in one's own city, and that public service was advertised by the magistrate of Thyateira in Asia, who entertained Caracalla in 215.[102] Longer periods of residence could give rise to imperial decisions and judgements bearing upon local matters, as happened with Severus during his stay in Alexandria between December 199 and April 200.[103] Awareness that an emperor was residing in the region was a stimulus to local embassies and delegations, and participation in such enterprises could carry exemption from civic charges. It is also remarkable to discover that some delegates chose to seek the emperor's attention even when the latter was even farther away than Rome. One delegate from Athens undertook the long journey to seek an audience with Severus during his residence in northern Britain (208–11). The most remarkable example of long-distance travel on behalf of one's city is the record of a citizen of Ephesus during the reigns of Severus and Caracalla. The list begins with several journeys to Rome (presumably in 203–7). He also travelled to Britain (208–11; he may have had to seek out Caracalla in his tent) and later sought an audience with Caracalla when he was visiting the shrine of Apollo Grannus (Faimingen) in Upper Germany (213). Later journeys were made to Sirmium (214), Nicomedia (214/15), Antioch (215/16) and even into the military zone of Edessa (216/17).[104]

Few incidents are recorded to illuminate the character of these journeys, whether planned or unplanned. Some emperors were caught unprotected while travelling and killed, as when Caracalla was murdered while stopping for relief on the journey between Edessa and Carrhae in Mesopotamia (8 April 217). Aurelian perished when a corrupt official, seeing that the emperor had set out from Perinthus for Byzantium with an inadequate bodyguard, contrived his murder during a stop at the road station Caenophrurium ('Newcastle'), where his army marked his burial with a magnificent monument.[105]

One can only speculate on the extent to which travelling enlarged emperors' knowledge of the empire over which they ruled but it is hard to imagine that most were not better for the experience. All sorts of chance encounters with individuals from the provinces and even from beyond the empire are

[102] On the burdens of an imperial visit see Millar, *ERW* 31–6. The number and identity of places visited by Caracalla remains a matter of debate: Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 227–9; at Thyateira, *IGRR* IV.1287 citing the contribution of Alkippilla, daughter of Laelianus.

[103] Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 220–1 (Severus in Egypt); also Westermann and Schiller, *Apokrimata* for the legal decisions of Severus.

[104] *IG* II² 3707 (Eleusis, honouring the young priest Cassianus for an embassy to Britain); *SEG* XVII.505 = *IEph*. III.802 (Ephesus) and Millar, *ERW* 44.

[105] Dio, LXXVIII.5.4–5 (the assassin of Caracalla was killed by one of his 'Scythian' (i.e. Goth) bodyguards); *SHA*, *Aurel.* 35.5; Zos. 1.62 (murder of Aurelian).

likely to have taken place. Typical may be an encounter, recorded by the historian Cassius Dio, between Severus' empress Julia Domna and the wife (unnamed) of the Caledonian Argentocoxus. At an informal gathering following the concluding of a treaty there was an exchange of witty repartee between the two ladies on the freedom in sexual relations then enjoyed by women in Britain.[106]

Among the many imperial journeys in this period one of the best documented, and perhaps the most politically motivated, was that by Severus and his family through the Danube lands in the early months of 202, on his return journey from the second Parthian campaign and visit to Egypt. Escorted by the Danube legions and auxiliaries on their homeward march, it may have been intended that they should reach Carnuntum to celebrate the start of the tenth year since his accession (9 April). Roads and bridges were repaired and many public and religious buildings were constructed or refurbished for inauguration on the occasion of the imperial visit. Countless statues of members of the imperial family were erected on bases inscribed with fulsome tributes. The lavish outlay may have in part been prompted by the increase in army pay, later supplemented by Caracalla (an estimated 8–10 million *denarii* were added to the income of the two Pannonian provinces alone). Yet there seems little doubt that there was in the camps and settlements along the Danube a genuine feeling of loyalty towards the dynasty they had set in power. Since the imperial party had already reached Sirmium by 18 March 202 the journey through Thrace will have been made in wintry conditions. Severus diverted from the main highway to visit Augusta Traiana (Stara Zagora) and may have witnessed the rededication of the shrine to Zeus Sabazios. At Philippopolis they left the main road again to cross the Haemus and visit Nicopolis ad Istrum, recently transferred from Thrace to Moesia Inferior. The city's satisfaction at this state of affairs would seem to be indicated by the fact that no less than twenty-one out of a total of forty-six civic dedications surviving from the city are addressed to Severus and Caracalla. Already in 198 there had been a round of feasting and a sum of cash had been raised by public subscription for donation to the two emperors. Several statues were unveiled on the occasion of the visit and the city also acquired new buildings and other monuments.[107] It is not known for certain whether Severus and his party continued their detour to the north in order to visit the legionary bases on the lower Danube though they would have had good cause to do so (in the civil war the legion based at Novae had made the first move on his behalf against the forces of Niger controlling the Bosphorus). In between the civic festivities some longer-lasting changes were made. In a region

[106] Dio, LXXVI.16.5 (Julia Domna and the Caledonian).
[107] Mihailov (1963) 120–3 (Severus in Thrace and Moesia Inferior).

where the cities controlled extensive territories, Severus was concerned to strengthen the role of rural settlements, most likely with the state's need for organized local manpower and resources chiefly in mind. A new emporion, consisting of a settlement of 173 households, was established in the year of his visit at Pizos on the main highway south of Augusta Traiana. The settlers were drawn from suitable persons in nearby villages, for which the new settlement would serve as a political focus, and attracted by specified exemptions from obligations to local cities such as the provision of corn and other supplies for local garrisons and the imperial travel service. Several other similar centres, mostly on the major roads between cities, were founded around this time in Thrace and Moesia Inferior. Some continued to function into the fourth century, by which time they had developed into fortified centres, from which officials could oversee the collection of materials and the requisitions of services required by the state. Concern for the revenues of the state in this area is also reflected in Severus' letter of the previous year to the city of Tyras north of the delta and outside the Roman tax area. The emperor ordered that names of all Romans they proposed to enrol as 'honorary citizens' (the intention was obviously to offer a tax haven to wealthy provincials) had to be approved beforehand by the Roman governor of Moesia Inferior.[108]

In Pannonia, Severus and his party crossed the Drava at Mursa and followed the Danube road northwards. At the fort of Intercisa (Dunaújváros) they witnessed the dedication of a new temple by the garrison cohort of Syrian archers to the god of their homeland Emesa, Deus Sol Elagabalus, ruled by the family of Severus' empress Julia Domna. Further north at Aquincum the loyal and formidable legion II Adiutrix finally reached its home base amid great celebrations and thanksgivings. During the succeeding years the old shacks of the *canabae* were cleared away for the laying out of a new grid of streets, a sanctuary of Dea Roma, public baths and several well-appointed private houses with private bath suites and enclosed gardens. From here the imperial tour continued west along the Danube to Carnuntum, where the civil town had, like that at Aquincum, been raised to the dignity of colony. Retracing his line of march on Rome, Severus may have paused at Savaria (Szombathely) to witness the dedication of an impressive shrine and precinct dedicated to Egyptian Isis, which may have had a particular attraction given his widely advertised interest in that of Serapis. On a more practical note, a few years later Severus may have sought to mitigate the harsh rescinding of privileges and exemptions, enjoyed by the clothworkers guild in return for the provision of emergency civic services, at Solva in Noricum. It seems that the provincial governor had suspected

[108] *IGBulg* III/2.1690 (= *ARS* 274) and Mihailov (1963) 123–4 (emporion at Pizos and other places in Thracia); *CIL* III.781 (cf. 12509) = *ILS* 423 = *IGRR* I.598 = *FIRA* I.86 (= *ARS* 272) (Tyras).

some wealthy citizens of seeking improperly to join the association in order to protect their property from civic charges.[109]

Before the tetrarchy there is no indication that references to a *palatium* (or *basileion*) in this or that city denoted the existence of a purpose-built complex of buildings that could accommodate a reigning emperor and his court. When Severus and Caracalla responded to a petition at Eboracum (York) in May 210, they may have been occupying the usual residence of the legionary commander either inside or outside the fortress. Perhaps a similar arrangement was in force when Constantius Augustus died there on 25 July 306, by which time imperial palaces were a permanent feature in several major cities.[110] Until these were created emperors would normally occupy the residences of provincial governors, palatial constructions such as those identified at Cologne in Lower Germany and at Aquincum in Pannonia Inferior, or in the residence of the commander (*praetorium*) within a military camp. (So far no remains have yet been identified to indicate the nature of several places named *Praetorium* by the Antonine Itinerary or the Peutinger Map.) In some places the residence of a provincial governor may have been enlarged to accommodate an emperor, and that may well have happened during the third century in places such as Perinthus, Nicomedia and Antioch. It was their situations in the imperial road network which led emperors to reside at such places as Milan, Trier and Sirmium, although none (except perhaps Trier) had hitherto been used by provincial governors or was even a military base.[111]

Sirmium had regularly been used as a base by emperors engaged in Danube campaigns since the time of Marcus Aurelius. Several emperors of this period were born (Decius, Aurelian, Probus and Maximian) and two (Claudius and Probus) died there, while Diocletian spent most of his first decade in residence there. Remains of the imperial palace include a 400 metre long hippodrome (*circus*), while elsewhere in the city large storehouses (*horrea*) and large baths are also linked with the imperial presence.[112] Remains of imperial residences have also been identified at two other places in the Balkans on the main highway, at Naïssus (Niš) and Serdica (Sofia). Three miles east of the former a large residence at Mediana (near Brzi Brod) was constructed by Constantine, a native of the area, and was regularly used by him. At Serdica, used first by Galerius and later by

[109] Fitz (1982) 11–13 (Severus in Pannonia); but others are more sceptical towards reconstructions of imperial journeys from inscriptions: Halfmann, *Itinera Principum* 221, and Birley, *The African Emperor* 143.

[110] *CJ* III.32.1 (5 May 210); Eus. *Vit. Const.* 1.21.2. On imperial residences in general, see Millar, *ERW* 40–53.

[111] Hellenkemper (1975) 795–802 (Cologne); Mócsy (1974) 111 and n. 119; Póczy (1995) (Aquincum).

[112] Popović (1971) 119–33 and Millar, *ERW* 47 with n. 69 (Sirmium); on Sirmium as the home of emperors, Syme, *Ec&B* 194–5, 208–9.

Constantine, the probable remains of the palace, if not perhaps the residence of the governor of Dacia Nova, have been identified alongside the civic forum. At Thessalonica, also used by Galerius and by Constantine, the impressive remains of the palace, including a hippodrome, cover a large area (*c.* 800 × 200 metres) in the southeast of the city.[113]

Military needs may have dictated imperial movements and influenced the choice of imperial residences but a continuing affection for a Danubian homeland may account for the frequent use of Sirmium and Serdica. Earlier the emperor Philip is said to have embellished his native city, a modest market town south of Damascus, with colonnaded streets and several new buildings, including a palatial residence intended for his own use.[114] Later the tetrarchs planned for their years of retirement by constructing in advance palatial and well-protected residences at secluded locations in their native lands. Diocletian's villa at Split on the Adriatic has since the time of Palladio been among the best known of all Roman buildings. This can now be matched with that of his Caesar Galerius at Romulianum (Gamzigrad) between Naïssus and Ratiaria, where, in the vicinity of a fortified palatial villa, mausolea were constructed both for himself and for his mother Romula, after whom the site was named. More recently a similar residence, with mausolea intended for Galerius' Caesar Maximinus and his own sister, has been identified at Šarkamen in the same area.[115]

Antioch, even when deliberately slighted by Severus for its support of a rival (he chose for this reason to reside at its neighbour and rival Laodicea), never lost its pre-eminent role as the seat of authority in the eastern provinces, in spite of a succession of destructive earthquakes. An 'island' between two branches of the Orontes, linked to the rest of the city by five bridges, was the site of the palace constructed by Gallienus after the Persian occupation. This was rebuilt by Diocletian but is only known from a detailed description by the orator Libanius, a native of the city.[116] Allegiances in civil war also caused Severus to favour Perinthus at the expense of Byzantium. Nicomedia, which had also given its support to Niger (Severus for this reason chose to reside at its rival Nicaea), had already become the preferred imperial residence in the Bosphorus region by the reign of his son Caracalla. Cassius Dio provides a scornful account of his activities when residing there in the winter 214/15, while those of Elagabalus and his Syrian entourage, who wintered there in 218/19, proved no less distressing to the historian, a native of Prusa in the same province. Diocletian, who became emperor at Nicomedia, resided there in the years prior to his abdication,

[113] *IMS* IV, p. 49 (Mediana); Hoddinott (1975) 169–75 (Serdica); *TIR* K34 (Naïssus) 143–4 with plan (Thessalonica).
[114] J. Rey-Coquais: *PECS* 705–6 (Philippopolis).
[115] Split: Wilkes (1993); Gamzigrad: Srejović (1993); Šarkamen: Srejović *et al.* (1996).
[116] Lib. *Or.* XI and Millar, *ERW* 50.

having, it was said, inflicted on the city his notorious passion for construction followed by reconstruction. His many projects included a palace, an arms factory, a coin mint and new dockyards but not the long meditated scheme to by-pass the Bosphorus by a canal from there to the Black Sea.[117]

Milan was the obvious choice for an imperial residence in the west, on account of its central location in the imperial road system (see above). It was already fulfilling this role in the reign of Gallienus and later, once his Caesar Constantius had become established at Trier, became the principal residence of Maximianus until his abdication. Although not used regularly by Constantine, Milan was later the regular imperial residence in the west until Honorius withdrew the court to Ravenna early in the fifth century. Except for a set of monumental baths and a polygonal tower, nothing remains of the tetrarchic capital and the several surviving Christian basilicas date from the city's later prominence under bishop Ambrosius (*CAH* XIII: 249–50). Aquileia, founded to secure Roman control over northeast Italy and in this period famous for its organized resistance in 238 to the Danube army of Maximinus (see above), was long familiar with the passage of emperors and their armies but was not destined to become a regular imperial residence. There was apparently a *palatium* there and the remains of such a complex, with baths, arena and hippodrome, have been located in the southeast of the city. It was Ravenna, a naval harbour since the time of Augustus, which eventually provided a secure residence for the last emperors in the west.[118]

Colonia Agrippinensis (Cologne) and Mogontiacum had been the principal centres of Roman authority along the Rhine until the Gallic empire, when the centre of authority shifted to Augusta Trevirorum/Treviri (Trier) on the Moselle, for some time already the residence of the governor of the province Belgica. Maximianus and then Constantius based themselves there and it was their presence that provided the city with some of the most impressive monumental architecture that survives from this period. A new mint was established to produce large quantities of gold and reformed bronze issues. The imperial palace lay in the east of the city, and elsewhere an entire district of housing was levelled in order to construct a set of imperial baths (*Kaiserthermen*) to match the city's already impressive civic baths (*Barbarathermen*). In the event the new baths were never fitted out or used as had been intended. A hippodrome was dedicated during the residence of Constantius but there are few buildings of the period that can compare with the great reception chamber (*auditorium*) over 60 metres long, a physical expression of the emperor's role as the dispenser of justice

[117] Dio, LXXVII.17.1–18 (Caracalla), LXXVIII.35.3 and LXXIX.7–8 (Elagabalus); Lact. *DMP* 7.9–10 (Diocletian); Miller, *ERW* 51–2.

[118] *PECS* 561 (Milan), 79–80 (Aquileia); Millar, *ERW* 44–5.

(*sedes iustitiae*). The shift to Milan and later to Constantinople left Trier isolated, and rarely used by emperors as a residence, though a convenient placement for troublesome ecclesiastics such as the formidable Athanasius who was dispatched there by Constantine in 335.[119]

The last years of this period mark the beginning of the long history of perhaps the greatest of all imperial capital cities. The refoundation of Byzantium as New Rome by Constantine, after his victory over Licinius in 324 on the opposite shore of the Bosphorus, was a dramatic change of fortune for the ancient Megarian settlement, for whom this period had opened with a two-year siege by the army of Severus, resulting in demotion to the status of a village subject to its rival Perinthus. The physical realization of Constantine's New Rome, with its 'seven hills', fourteen regions, capitol, golden milestone, imperial *fora*, baths, etc., although doubtless conceived by its founder, belongs to the reign of his son (*CAH* XIII: 38–9).

III. FRONTIER ORGANIZATION

> For beyond the outermost circle of the inhabited world, indeed like the second line of defence in the fortification of a city, you have drawn another circle, which is more flexible and more easily guarded, and here you have put up your defensive walls and have built border cities, filling each in a different place with inhabitants, and supplying them with useful crafts and providing them with other adornments.
>
> (Aelius Aristides, *To Rome c.* 81, trans. Behr (1981): 90–1)

Many of those who heard the panegyric by the orator from Smyrna delivered around 145 in the presence of the emperor will have lived to hear of Germans in northern Italy twenty years later. None in the audience is likely to have survived to witness around the middle of the following century Persians in Antioch or Goths at the gates of Ephesus. That sense of security which had made the Roman empire of the Caesars such a comfortable world to inhabit, at least from the standpoint of the urban upper classes in Ionia and similar areas, still prevailed under the Severan emperors, though signs of impending danger can, with hindsight, be detected in the later years. As regards frontier security, Aristides' notion of a protective 'ring of steel' with an unbroken chain of garrisons in distant provinces is best exemplified by those stations along the banks of the Rhine and Danube, manned by almost half of the entire strength of the Roman army (12 legions and more than 100 units of auxiliary cavalry and infantry) in permanent bases with little or no forward deployment, except for a few bridgehead forts on the opposite bank and nothing whatsoever in the rear. Rapid movement along the imperial highways was the key to the enduring success of this unusual

[119] Wightman (1970) 98–113 and (1985) 234–9; Millar, *ERW* 45–6.

pattern of deployment, developed under Hadrian and destined to be for the most part discarded before the end of this period.[120]

The river frontiers of Europe were divided into eight provincial commands (from west to east): Germania Inferior (2 legions), Germania Superior (2), Raetia (1), Noricum (1), Pannonia Superior (3), Pannonia Inferior (1), Moesia Superior (2) and Moesia Inferior (2). Detachments from the lower Danube army were from time to time stationed in the Crimea, and at other places along the coast north of the delta. Yet the Romans evidently never felt it necessary to close the gap between the Danubian garrisons on the west of the Black Sea and those from the Cappadocian command stationed in the east on the coast of Colchis north of Trapezus. Here the land routes were of less importance than the sea passages controlled by the Pontic fleet from bases along the south coast of the Black Sea.[121]

A different pattern of deployment, consisting of legions placed at the centres of road networks linking auxiliary bases, persisted in the two northern additions to Augustus' 'natural frontiers', the Britannia of Claudius and the Dacia of Trajan. By this period both contained elements of linear frontiers imposed by the tidy mind of Hadrian. The two legions of Dacia (nominally divided into three provinces but from Marcus united under a single governor as Tres Daciae) were stationed in bases (Apulum and Potaissa) at the heart of the road network within the natural fortress of Transylvania. An inner ring of cavalry units was placed between these and the outer ring of infantry units which guarded ways into the province over the Carpathians. Outside the mountains the lower course of the river Alutus (Olt) served as the main frontier line, but with the garrisons for local tactical reasons deployed a short distance in advance along linear barriers between the Danube and the Carpathian foothills (so-called *Limes Transalutanus*).[122] In

[120] The purpose of this section (along with the accompanying table in Appendix 3), is to offer an overview of the evidence for Roman frontier organization and military deployment during the period. This is based on a comparison between arrangements in the relatively stable era of the Severi (A.D. 193–235) and in that of the tetrarchy and Constantine (A.D. 284–337). In addition to the steady accumulation of evidence over the years through archaeological and topographical studies, there is a growing debate on the nature of the Roman frontiers in their military, social and economic roles. Recent attempts to detect strategic thinking behind Roman frontier organization empire-wide, notably by Luttwak, *Grand Strategy*, have been rejected, e.g. by Mann (1975) and (1979). There has also been a sceptical reaction to those who argue for the notion of a 'frontier system' at a regional or provincial level, e.g. by Parker (1986). At the same time these studies, along with the work of Whittaker, *Frontiers*, remain the starting-points for further debate and for research in the field. The continuing role of the Roman army for internal security, argued for the eastern provinces by Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, has also become a topic of lively debate. For most of this period the term *limes* is best avoided, since it was evidently not applied to frontier organization and military installations until the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine brought it into general use; see Isaac (1988).

[121] For Roman troops in the Crimea, Sarnowski (1987) and Zahariade and Gudea (1997) 35–6; in Colchis, Gregory (1995) 212–13. For Roman fleets on the Black Sea, Bounegru and Zahariade (1996), Starr (1960) and Rostovtzeff (1917–18).

[122] Gudea (1977) and Cătăniciu (1981) 32–7 (date and function of the Transalutanus linear barriers).

Britannia the linear frontier (Hadrian's wall) first established by Hadrian was garrisoned by seventeen auxiliary stations; four outposts were maintained to the north and there were four stations down the west coast. The frontier hinterland of the Cumbrian mountains and the northern Pennines had up to thirty-three auxiliary stations linked by a road network, though not all of them will have been held at the same time, and some may never have been intended to accommodate an entire unit. The focus of military deployment in northern Britain remained the legionary base at Eboracum (York) on the north bank of the river Ouse, but only four auxiliary bases were maintained in its immediate area. Six forts in the southern Pennines and in North Wales were centred on the legion at Deva (Chester) on the river Dee. Five other bases, that seem likely to have been occupied at this period, were controlled from the legionary base at Isca (Caerleon) on the river Usk, both legionary fortresses being accessible from the sea. Two forts that were later to form a part of the Saxon Shore system (see below), at Brancaster and Reculver, had already been established during the Severan period, although for what purpose remains unclear.[123]

The general character of Roman frontier deployment in the European provinces has long been known but only recently have there emerged detailed accounts of the eastern frontier between the Black Sea and the Red Sea. Attempts to identify a frontier 'system' have on more than one occasion been received with scepticism, and there seems little doubt that a heavily defended linear frontier on the European model was never established in the east. Cities and interconnecting roads were of greater importance than elsewhere, while military construction in the east appears to fall into one or other of three categories. These consist of (1) legionary or auxiliary forts of traditional design in remote areas where no settlement existed, (2) the reconstruction of the defences of long-established cities to serve as military bases and (3) the construction of chains of intervisible small forts along the roads between the major settlements.[124] Between the coast of Colchis and the Taurus range the defence of Cappadocia was based on the legionary bases Satala and Melitene and a chain of small military posts which guarded the main east–west routes and the engineered road that formed the main axis of the frontier. North of the Pontic Alps, crossed by the Tzigana pass, the coast of Colchis and Pontus east of Trapezus, principal base of the Pontic fleet, was guarded by seven forts starting in the north at Pityous.

[123] Breeze (1982) and (1987).

[124] Freeman and Kennedy, *DRBE*; French and Lightfoot (1989); Kennedy (1996); Gregory (1995) 19–38 (earlier research) and 243–7 (frontier interpretations). In some areas the frontier line itself and the roads leading into the empire are seen as elements of a single scheme: 'since the whole Anatolian (road) system was an organic unity, with each individual road functioning as an integral part of a much larger scheme, logic suggests that the whole network was conceived and built (in its essentials) as soon as was practicable after the establishment of the frontier itself', Mitchell, *Anatolia* I: 124.

Their function was to maintain control of the sea routes, while the native rulers of Colchis and Iberia were entrusted with the task of defending the passes over the Caucasus. By way of contrast with what had gone before there is almost no evidence from this period of military activity in Armenia. Attempts to reconstruct military deployment in Mesopotamia, the northernmost region of the fertile crescent between the middle Euphrates and the upper Tigris, have been based on overconfident identification and dating of the remains of fortifications when in fact they could belong to several periods. The key strategic points were long-established cities along the main east–west routes between the two rivers, Nisibis, Singara, Amida, Resaina, Edessa, Carrhae, Callinicum and Circesium. The Severan garrison of Mesopotamia consisted of two new legions whose bases are likely to have been Nisibis and Singara. The date of the much discussed fort at Ain Sinu east of Singara remains in doubt, although limited excavation has yielded evidence for a Roman occupation in the early third century. Otherwise, except for a milestone of Severus Alexander near Singara, evidence for the Roman presence in the area is scarce.[125]

In Syria Coele the Euphrates had marked the limit of Roman territory only from the Taurus downstream to Sura. From there a desert road, first garrisoned under the Flavians, led south via Resafa to Palmyra and served to define the limit of Roman territory. By the time of Severus, Roman control had been advanced further down the river to Dura Europus and perhaps as far as Kifrin. With the organization of Mesopotamia as a province two legions in Syria were moved down from their earlier bases at Samosata and Zeugma to Sura and Oreza, the latter on the desert road to Palmyra. Behind this outer line the major centres of northern Syria, such as Apamea and Cyrrhus, still retained their strategic importance. When the Persians took possession of Dura Europus (256 or 257) a newly fortified base at Circesium became the limit of Roman occupation down the Euphrates. South of Palmyra, in the province of Syria Phoenice, the line of the desert road passed Souhne, the likely site for an early fort. After construction of the fortified desert road under Diocletian (*Strata Diocletiana*), with named and dated milestones, the main route lay parallel with this but ran behind the Jebel Rawaq, continuing past Dmeyr to Damascus. Diocletian's road headed south along the east side of the Jebel Druze in the direction of the Azraq oasis, thus overlapping with but not directly joined to the *Via Nova Traiana* constructed two centuries earlier. Along the line of the *Strata Diocletiana* is a series of small square forts (*quadriburgia*), of similar construction and located at regular intervals at each water source around one day's march apart. The round towers in the north and square towers in

[125] Kennedy (1987) 279–80; Gregory (1995) 212–19. On Singara (Sinjar), Oates (1968) 73 (milestone of Severus Alexander).

the south indicate probably the work of two different construction groups on what was evidently a single integrated military cordon. The larger fort at Dmeyr could have held a legion, although it is smaller than Lejjun (Betthoro?) in Arabia, and may be Danaba, to which the single legion of the province (III Gallica) was moved forward from its earlier base at Raphanaea.[126]

Recent excavations have increased significantly knowledge of Roman military deployment in the provinces of Palaestina (two legions) and Arabia (one legion). In the latter the great north–south highway marked by milestones of III (*Via Nova Traiana*) followed the western of two parallel roads which converge at Philadelphia (Amman). Further south the modern desert highway follows the more eastern line in order to avoid the obstacles of the Wadis Mojib and Hesa. Starting in the north at Bostra, legionary base and residence of the governor replacing the earlier Nabataean capital at Petra, the road has not so far produced evidence for any scheme of regularly spaced Roman forts. North of Philadelphia only Samra has been dated. Several remains along the line have been claimed as Roman but on no good evidence, while the securely dated sites, including the late legionary bases at Lejjun and Udruh, lie between the two north–south routes. In the south, a region that was important for its copper mines, two routes linked Petra with Gaza on the coast, a more southerly by Moyet Awad, Avdat and Elusa, and a northern by Hazeva, Mampsis and Beersheba. There are few traces of the Roman presence in Arabia before *c.* 200 and it may be that the road stations of the Nabataean kingdom were until then adequate for Roman needs. The Severan presence in the Azraq region may have been linked with forward movement down the Wadi Sirhan in the direction of Arabia. Even when Roman fort-building reached a peak under the tetrarchs only three places (Kahf, Bshir and Yotvata) have yielded epigraphic evidence, while there are Constantinian records at Azraq and Aqaba. Nor does there seem to be conclusive evidence for a *Limes Palaestinae* running northwest from the southern end of the Dead Sea. The notion, based in part on an assumed Diocletianic date for *quadriburgia*, that the 'Arabian frontier' was significantly strengthened during this period rests on the dating of many sites that seem likely to belong to the late fourth century. The legionary base at Bostra had become also a walled city by the middle of the third century, while the secure situation of Petra was improved by new defences. Both Philippopolis (Shehba) and Adraha (Dera'a) also received new defences around the same time. Rather than a sudden increase of occupation under the tetrarchy, it appears that the spread of agricultural settlement took place more gradually, and was linked with new schemes of irrigation and water conservation

[126] Kennedy (1987) 283–6; Gregory (1995) 219–24. Many sites in this area are illustrated in Kennedy and Riley (1990).

between the Hauran and the Negev. When Diocletian divided the province of Arabia along the Wadi Hesa (see above), the southern part was attached to Palaestina. Around the same time one of the two legions stationed in the latter province was moved forward to the new base at Udruh constructed *c.* 300. If that legion was the X Fretensis, hitherto stationed at Jerusalem, then its stay at Udruh was brief since by 324 it had moved down to Aila (Aqaba) on the Red Sea.[127]

Under Diocletian military deployment in Egypt (now well documented in the papyri) was significantly increased. Units were stationed in the settlements of the Delta, around Suez and Pelusium, in the western oases and up the Nile at Philae near Syene, where the island was converted into a base for a new legion. New forts were constructed at Dionysias in the Fayum and at Luxor the temple was converted to serve as a fortification to contain a legionary detachment. In Cyrenaica, where the ample (400 mm) annual rainfall of the Green mountain (Gebel el Akhdar) guaranteed the harvests of the coastal settlements, the problem was to contain incursions by Marmaridae and Nasamones. When they attacked in 268–9 the governor of Egypt had to come to the rescue. After Diocletian security was increased by a cordon of small military posts between Berenice (Benghazi) and Msus on the south side of the Gebel. In the north another line of posts ran from Berenice to Ptolemais, while the metropolis of Cyrene had a protective cordon between Kuf and Derna.[128]

Archaeological discoveries have furnished more detailed evidence for the Severan extension of military deployment into the northern fringes of the Sahara. In Tripolitania a series of eight forts, some occupied by detachments from the legion at Lambaesis, between Bu Ngem in the east and Mizda in the west, all with associated outposts, were established at oases on routes leading north out of the desert. Further west, beyond the existing system of linear control around Gemellae and Mesarfelta a network of forts and fortlets was extended through el Gahra and Ain Rich to Castellum Dimmidi (its construction is dated by inscription to 198) and via Medjedel to Ain el Hamman. This scheme of confident expansion was based on the dispersal of small detachments over a huge area (other sites which belonged to the system include Bou Saada, el Guelaa, Korirein, Djelfa, Tadmit and Zenina) whose purpose was to maintain control over peoples passing through the Saharan Atlas, which ran along the southern edge of the High Plains. Perhaps the most surprising feature of the extended Severan deployment in North Africa was the fact that a system extending over more than 1000 miles still depended on a single legion (III Augusta), based at Lambaesis north of

[127] Gregory (1995) 224–9; Parker (1986) 129–31 (Severan) and 135–43 (Diocletian and tetrarchy) and (1987). For a historical overview, Millar, *Near East* 127–41 (Severan organization), 180–9 (tetrarchy) and 208–12 (Licinius and Constantine).

[128] Daniels (1987), 229–30 (Egypt); Goodchild (1976) 185–209 (Cyrenaica).

the Aurès mountains. A comparable forward deployment was also carried through further west in Mauretania Caesariensis. Between Sitifis (Sétif) and Siga the northern line of forts first established in the first century was reconstituted with the construction of a dozen or so new auxiliary bases. A new southern line (titled on milestones as *Nova Praetentura*) ran from Aras in the east through a line of around fifteen forts as far as Numerus Syrorum, the most westerly base in the province. The double cordon formed by the two lines has been seen as designed to control the north–south movement of pastoralists. Construction of the new system continued under the Severan emperors but how long it survived afterwards remains unclear. Castellum Dimmidi was evacuated around the time of the disbanding of the legion at Lambaesis during the troubles of 238 but evidence of any wholesale withdrawal is lacking. In Mauretania Caesariensis there was still a Roman presence along the southern line but its continuing military function must remain in doubt. To the east in Tripolitania the system of oasis forts described above appears to have collapsed, to be replaced by a different system of control based on large numbers of fortified posts (*centenaria*), some of which were constructed by local groups in imitation of more 'official' constructions elsewhere. Under Diocletian the evacuation of territory in the south of Mauretania Tingitana was not apparently matched elsewhere. Arguments that the western bases in Mauretania Caesariensis were given up appear to be contradicted by material evidence, and there is a considerable amount of evidence for reconstruction and new construction in the south of Numidia under Diocletian. Several new *centenaria* have been identified, e.g. at Tibubuci, and a major new base was constructed at Aqua Viva west of the Mesarfelta frontier section. Forts of the *quadriburgia* type have been identified at several locations, implying an intention to strengthen existing frontier lines.[129]

The increase and elaboration of frontier fortifications, often cited as one of the most notable developments of the late third century, are visible along the Rhine and the Danube, when a multitude of frontier installations and major civilian settlements were enclosed by new perimeter defences of rubble concrete faced with brick and stone. These can be found not only at the major cities but also at almost every small settlement along the major roads, which became increasingly important for the security of the empire. In some areas the defences may have been constructed as a result of local initiative but the majority, which include some massive building projects, were almost certainly co-ordinated by the provincial or military authorities. More telling

[129] For Tripolitania, Mattingly (1995) 90–115 (Severan organization), 186–201 (late Roman frontier organization); for Africa, Numidia and the Mauretanias, Daniels (1987) 250–7 (Severan organization), 257–62 (Diocletianic organization); for the army in Numidia, Fentress (1979); for Castellum Dimmidi, Picard (1947).

evidence for a growing sense of insecurity which lies behind the building of defensive walls is the appearance of many hill-top refuges, including some ancient prehistoric forts, in the hinterland of frontiers between the North Sea and the Black Sea. Notable examples of these include Wittnauer Horn, Moosberg and Lorenzberg bei Epfach, while many are also known behind the lower Danube in the hills of Thrace. These will have served as protection for the rural populations and their moveable possessions when threatened by armies, foreign or Roman, engaged in invasion, defence or civil war. Inscriptions that record the construction of new frontier fortifications, most of the tetrarchs or Constantine, contain boastful language often proclaiming quite modest new fortifications as 'a guarantee of peace' or 'everlasting protection'. The limits of Roman territory were now precisely defined, both physically and legally in the modern fashion, while frontier districts were now subjected to an unprecedented level of surveillance with every place under the eyes of frontier guards in watchtowers and road-stations. Commerce and other cross-frontier contacts could now be stopped or permitted at a stroke and this sanction remained a potent weapon in Roman policy towards neighbouring peoples.[130]

New schemes of fortification, such as that across northern Gaul between Colonia Agrippinensis and Bagacum (Bavai), were constructed, first in timber then in stone, possibly as a direct consequence of Frankish settlement along the lowest course of the Rhine (see above). Construction of a new line of defensive forts, following the evacuation of the upper German–Raetian *limes*, was begun under Probus (Isny and Goldberg) and was still continuing under the tetrarchs (Basel, Zurzach, Burg-bei-Stein am Rhein, Arbon, Konstanz and Kempten). The former emperor, who never receives less than his due in the historical tradition, is credited with the inception of systems of coastal defence in southeast Britain and northern Gaul. Forts in the former include Brancaster, Burgh Castle, Walton Castle, Bradwell, Reculver, Richborough, Dover, Lympne, Pevensey, and Portchester. Few comparable purpose-built forts are known in Gaul, Brittenburg (now lost in the sea) and Oudenburg near Bruges, but several others listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* have not so far been located. A defensive and strategic role in this area was played by the fortified towns, Nantes, Vannes, Coutances, Aleth near St Malo, Avranches and Rouen. Along the Danube there was a comprehensive programme of reconstruction, particularly in the area of the gorges between Viminacium and Oescus, once again a frontier after the withdrawal from Dacia. Under the tetrarchy reconstruction is attested at Castra Regina (Regensburg), Schlögen, Passau-Innstadt, Vindobona (Vienna), the

[130] General surveys of late Roman fortification by von Petrikovits (1971) and Johnson, *LRF* remain fundamental for the Rhine and Danube areas. On hill-top refuges in Gaul, Wightman (1985) 243–50, and for a brief survey of tetrarchic and Constantinian frontier inscriptions, Wilkes (1977).

Danube gorges, Diana (Karataš), Transmarisca (Tutrakan) and Durostorum (Silistra). Changes in military organization under Constantine did not bring a halt to the construction of massive fortifications along the frontier, a hallmark of the tetrarchy. Along the Rhine new bridgehead forts were created at Deutz opposite Cologne, Mainz Kastel and Whyten opposite Kaiseraugst. Smaller bridgeheads were constructed along the Pannonian Danube, opposite Brigetio at Iža/Leanyvar and opposite Aquincum. In the same sector many of the existing forts were reconstructed with new gate towers and corner towers of a distinctive design. In addition to the bridge across the river at Oescus (see above), Constantine's principal new construction on the lower Danube was Daphne Constantiniana opposite Transmarisca.[131]

The period is also marked by a huge effort, directed rather than spontaneous, of urban fortification behind the frontier line. Under Gallienus the defences of cities affected by inroads across the lower Danube were repaired at Serdica, Montana (Maihailovgrad) and Philippopolis. Similar activity in the northwest was credited to Aurelian (rather than to the Gallic regime he eliminated), at Dijon and several other smaller settlements. The highest praise in the historical tradition is accorded to Probus for his 'restoration' of many cities, to which over the years archaeologists have tended to pay due attention. Thus Probus is seen as likely to be responsible for new programmes of urban defences in northern Gaul (Belgica Prima, Belgica Secunda and Germanica Secunda) and in Pannonia (at Sopiana, Scarbantia, Savaria and Sirmium). One may suspect that the real effort was made in the more ordered world of the tetrarchs, whose activity is commemorated by inscriptions at Burg-bei-Stein am Rhein, Oberwinterthur, Cularo (Grenoble) and Tomi on the Black Sea. New small forts of Diocletian have been detected behind the frontier line in Sequania.[132]

One of the earliest new defensive systems to be constructed within the Empire was a series of forts linked with barrier walls (*claustra*) and towers designed to protect Italy against invaders from the northeast. The barrier walls were located to ensure that traffic kept to the main roads (notably the 'spinal route' between Italy and the east described above) from Emona (Ljubljana) via Nauportus (Vrhnika) across the Julian Alps to Aquileia. The summit of the Pear Tree pass was occupied by the fort of Ad Pirum (Hrušica), whence the road descended towards Italy and the fort Castra (Adjovšćina) and then continued to Aquileia. The barriers were extended southwards in order to direct traffic to the main coast route at Tarsatica (Rijeka) on the Adriatic, from where it crossed northern Istria to Tergeste (Trieste). When the Claustra Alpium Iuliarum (the name is first used by Ammianus Marcellinus (31.11.3), referring back to the events of 352) were

[131] See the survey in Johnson, *LRF* 245–57.
[132] For a survey of urban defences, Johnson, *LRF* 82–135.

constructed is not known but it seems reasonable to accept a recent judgement that 'the bulk of the Claustra appears to be of single-phase build, typologically attributable to the Diocletianic-Constantinian period (c. 305–325) but unlikely to post-date Constantine'.[133]

Roman fortifications followed the models of more ancient traditions, hellenistic, Etruscan and even those of Iron Age Europe, in the protective walls of settler colonies from the fourth century B.C. onwards and in the army base camps of which traces on the ground first appear in the second century B.C. Then came the first development of the distinctive 'playing-card' shape that was fully developed by the middle of the first century A.D. Most of the distinctive features of late Roman fortification can be traced to earlier Roman models and other traditions. Nevertheless the rapid construction of a large number of new perimeter defences with broadly similar characteristics, mainly on the eastern and northern frontiers, changed the face of the Roman world. Above all they furnish the most telling evidence for the damage, both physical and spiritual, caused by the military defeats at the hands of Germans and Persians during the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus.

In methods of construction and materials employed, the new defences reveal few novelties. Perimeter walls were set on solid foundations, with care taken to compensate for man-made and natural weaknesses in the subsoil by deeper foundations or vertical piles. The lower courses of many town walls use large and closely fitted blocks of architectural spolia, as the recommended protection against the battering-ram. In the past this mass of reused material was viewed as indication of the amount of devastation caused by recent invasions, notably in Gaul in the time of Probus, but this now seems unlikely. Aurelian's walling of Rome, never molested by invaders, is instructive on this point: to complete such a huge project it was necessary to level to the ground a swathe of standing structures, except where they could be incorporated into the new curtain wall and towers. Walls consisted of a rubble-concrete core faced with coursed stones and bricks, with bonding through-courses of the latter. This became the standard form of construction for both military and civil defences in the northern provinces. In some areas the Roman tradition of brick-faced concrete continued (large bricks were split across the diagonals to provide four triangular facing bricks that would make a good bond with the mortar core). The top of the walls (their height was *c.* 6–8 metres and at 3–4 metres thick, roughly twice that of early defences, removed the need for a supporting bank at the rear) were usually finished with merlons, often depicted on representations of urban defences and still visible in a few places, behind which ran a patrol-walk. A few surviving wall façades have

[133] Christie (1991) 417.

patterns of bricks and coloured stones (Cologne and Le Mans are well-known examples) resembling mosaics. Massive towers projecting beyond the line of the curtain walls were fronted by a single broad and deep ditch, replacing the multiple ditches of earlier periods. Centuries before, Vitruvius (1.5.5) had stated that rounded or polygonal towers were preferable to square types (the polygonal shape is famously visible in the south façade of the fortress at Eboracum (York), dated to the early fourth century). On the ground, projecting towers appear in a variety of shapes, including circular, pear-shaped, horseshoe-shaped and fan-shaped. Some were evidently the preferred form in a particular area: in Noricum and Pannonia fan-shaped towers were added to the corners of existing forts as the most practical way to achieve an economical conversion to meet the needs of defensive warfare in the early fourth century. Towers of a rectangular plan were judged suitable for the gates, both for main entrances and to protect the narrower 'posterns' (*c.* 1.5 metres wide) that were often angled through the thickness of the wall, even when those at the corners were rounded. Towers were generally solid to the level of the height of the curtain wall but then rose to contain two storeys with arched openings at the front and side for torsion artillery. Most towers appear to have had ridged or conical roofs but many square towers also had flat roofs. Gates usually consisted of a single passage flanked by rounded towers (Aurelian's wall again furnishes a prototype) but there are a few examples of triumphal or monumental entrances preserving the earlier tradition of double carriageways and flanking foot-passages. It is noteworthy that little or no differences can be observed between the gates of military forts and those of cities while unusual designs can be linked with regional preferences rather than functional needs, such as the gates of the Saxon Shore forts in Britain flanked with round towers.[134]

The traditional shape of the rectangular or square camp, with rounded corners known already to Polybius in the second century B.C., was discarded in favour of a variety of regular shapes. Irregular perimeters suited to the lie of the land as more and more forts were sited on higher locations, for example Pone Navata (Visegrád-Sibrik) near the Danube bend in Pannonia constructed in 325–30. By comparison with the great mass of evidence for the design and construction of perimeter defences and gates, information regarding the internal arrangements of late Roman forts is scarce and often difficult to interpret. Nor is there any material evidence for how Roman garrisons were accommodated within cities. A few examples are known where the traditional subdivisions of the interior layout of a fort were retained, perhaps as much as anything for practical reasons such as street lines and drainage. There are examples of wholesale changes, notably in the late bridgehead fort at Drobeta (Turnu Severin) on the Danube

[134] Johnson, *LRF* 31–50; Lander (1984); Biernecka-Lubanska (1982) (lower Danube).

and at Aquincum where the earlier legionary fortress appears to have been replaced with a very different structure on a slightly different site. Generally new forts of this period had a smaller area and were less regular in shape. The internal buildings included storehouses and granaries (*horrea*) and a distinctive form of courtyard building that may have served both as headquarters (*principia*) and perhaps also as commander's residence (*praetorium*). Baths are found within some forts but intelligible arrangements of barrack accommodation are scarce, as excavations often reveal only traces of flimsy timber constructions. The late third-century fort at Isny, situated on an irregular promontory east of lake Constance, is known to have contained a courtyard building, a bath-block opposite the main entrance and, along a side wall, a narrow structure that may have been used for storage, but there is no sign of any accommodation for a garrison.[135]

The study of Roman military remains along the eastern frontier appears to have been impaired by the overconfident dating of many sites to the Roman period. Anything with an approximately square plan and external square towers has often been not only taken as being of certain Roman origin but has also been added to a list of *quadriburgia* constructed under Diocletian. Chronologies and typologies based on round/rounded towers as against square/rectangular towers must usually be dismissed as both simplistic and unrealistic. Notions of western and eastern traditions in Roman fortification rest on somewhat firmer foundations, with forms both along the lower Danube and in North Africa exhibiting an 'eastern' character. Too much reliance has perhaps been placed on the walls of Rome built first under Aurelian and those of Constantinople erected under Theodosius II as secure points of reference for establishing chronologies and changing fashions in design. In the matter of towers it does seem that projecting rounded designs appear first in the northwest (cities of northern Gaul and the Saxon Shore in Britain). Large U-shaped towers first appear in the east in the reconstruction of Diocletian and Constantine, while fan-shaped corner towers, combined with U-shaped interval towers appear to have been a unique regional tradition of the middle and lower Danube. Projecting square towers appear to have been preferred for smaller fortifications, notably *quadriburgia*, and a few forts with large square towers are known in the west. Examples of square towers which project for only a half of their width (Dibsi Faraj on the Euphrates and Palmyra furnish examples) seem to appear in the reconstruction commenced by Aurelian, and these are also found at Sucidava on the lower Danube. Many of the variations in tower design seem to derive from attaching new designs to existing camps, which happened on the Saxon Shore in Britain and in the east at Satala and Singara. The need to discard general assumptions of a Diocletianic

[135] Johnson, *LRF* 50–4.

date for *quadriburgia* is confirmed by sites in the east dated to that period (Kahf, Bshir and Yotvata) which are very different in plan and construction. Some large square forts with square interval and corner towers, in Raetia at Irgenhausen and Schaan, and in Arabia at Dajaniya and Muhattef-el-Haj, have been cited as distinctive forms of the tetrarchic period but comparisons elsewhere suggest a less confined dating. In Africa the large fort at Aqua Viva is dated by an inscription of 303 (on which it is described as a *centenarium*) but another fort of similar design at Bourada is dated to 324–30 and is similar to Qasr Azraq in Arabia, also dated to the 330s. In Egypt forts of this design (Dionysias and Abu Sha'ar) appear to have been constructed *c.* 300.[136]

After Hadrian the security of the empire as a whole still depended on the continuing capacity of the army for offensive action beyond the defined limits of Roman territory. There was no strategy or contingency plan for defence in the modern sense. The proliferation of linear frontier works was intended to improve surveillance of cross-border traffic. Neither these nor the permanent bases of military units were intended to serve as protective fortifications. The latter were placed on the main routes in and out of Roman territory often at exposed situations, with less regard for tactical advantage than for logistical convenience. Central authority's response to major disruption of the stable frontier, such as happened under Marcus Aurelius, was to provide more of the same, with an increased supervision of frontier movements and the addition of more troops. Thus the two legions raised under Marcus Aurelius were placed in new bases of traditional design along the German section of the upper Danube (II Italica at Lauriacum in Noricum, III Italica at Castra Regina in Raetia). Up to the middle of the third century this arrangement achieved a degree of security in the frontier areas that resulted in the growth of many unprotected civil settlements, closely linked to the local garrisons.

From the time of Augustus central authority had relied for its immediate security on the cohorts of the praetorian guard, at first stationed around Italy but later concentrated in a single camp on the outskirts of Rome, where they remained until disbanded by Constantine. While they might escort emperors on expeditions from Rome they were not designed as an élite fighting force to assist the provincial armies, against whom they generally made a poor showing in the civil wars of A.D. 69 and 193. When doubled in size by Severus, recruited from the Danubian legions and combined with other urban units and the newly raised legion II Parthica based a few miles outside Rome at Albanum, their military value will have increased

[136] Detailed studies of typology and dating are to be found in Gregory (1995) 125–55 (eastern frontier design) and 158–92 (typology).

considerably. Nevertheless, during the Persian campaign of Severus Alexander a generation later the scope for military action was significantly curtailed by the provincial ties of the European troops who made up the imperial expedition. The value of a central reserve was its mobility and its absence of constraining local ties. By the time of Gallienus a succession of external threats had led to the creation of a mobile cavalry reserve. This was based mainly at Milan but was also to be found at other places along the great imperial highway (Aquileia, Poetovio and Sirmium), although the capacity of this force for 'rapid response' should not be exaggerated. At the same time it was this light-armed cavalry composed of 'Dalmatian' or 'Moorish' units (*equites Dalmatae* and *Mauri*) that played a key role in Aurelian's campaigns of reunification.[137]

Our understanding of Diocletian's military reforms and the subsequent modifications of Constantine starts with Zosimus (2.34):

> Constantine also did something else that afforded the barbarians free access into the territory of the Roman people. Thanks to Diocletian's foresight all the frontiers of the Roman empire had been fortified in the manner already described [lost in a gap between books 1 and 2] with towns and citadels and towers where the entire soldiery lived. Thus the barbarian could not break in anywhere as forces would encounter them and repel invasions. Constantine abolished this defence by removing the greater part of the troops to cities that had no need of protective garrisons.

Even allowing for the author's bias against the Christian Constantine, the role of Diocletian in strengthening the frontiers appears fully confirmed in several areas by archaeological remains. There is some indication also that Diocletian maintained a mobile force which moved with the emperor (*comitatus*), composed of élite cavalry units and an imperial guard (*protectores*). The size of this force may not have sufficed for major expeditions and the old practice of assembling task forces from frontier legions and auxiliaries evidently continued.

Material remains and inscriptions certify the construction of new roads and fortified bases under Diocletian, in the desert regions of Africa, Arabia and Syria, along the Rhine and Danube and even on the remote northern frontier of Britain. At the same time it is hard to be certain of the extent to which Diocletian was carrying forward the programmes of his predecessors. There is little contemporary evidence for individual army units and their

[137] The role of Septimius Severus as the originator of the Roman field-army, anticipating the formations of Gallienus, the tetrarchy and later, is stressed by E. B. Birley (1969), esp. 66–9. The mobile cavalry formations of the third century may have been created out of the mounted guards and escorts (*stratores*) of provincial governors, and this may be the origin of the units listed as *Equites Stablesiani* in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, according to Speidel (1974). From 197 to 202 II Parthica had its winter base at Apamea in Syria, and appears to have returned there when emperors subsequently undertook eastern campaigns; see Balty (1988) and (1993).

role in relation to the new strongholds, before the lists of the *Notitia Dignitatum* were drawn up around a century later.[138] On some sectors Diocletian's arrangements did not survive until then but in some areas they appear with little or no signs of modification. On one crucial matter, the size of individual units, the evidence is deficient: it may be that the numerous vexillations of cavalry had the same manpower (*c.* 500) as the *alae* and cohorts of the Severan era. Diocletian's new legions may have been significantly smaller than those of Severan times, but it is also possible that the strength of the latter had also been significantly reduced from what it had been in Severan times. It may be significant that along the Danube and in Egypt both old and new legions were similarly subdivided between several bases. On the eastern frontier the *Notitia* preserves Diocletian's deployment of legions, cavalry vexillations and *alae* and cohorts, while units added at a later date can usually be recognized from their dynastic titles. All but one (VI Ferrata) of the Severan legions, including the II Parthica moved from Italy and the IV Italica raised under Severus Alexander, appear in the list: Egypt and the Thebaid have three new legions, Isauria three, Pontus, Mesopotamia, Phoenice and Arabia, one each. In the later field-army I and II Armenica and V and VI Parthica are likely to have been created to occupy territories taken in the Persian wars of Diocletian and Galerius. Overall, whatever their actual numerical strength, the total of legions created by Diocletian and the tetrarchs was to double the number in existence a century earlier. Seventy vexillations of cavalry along the eastern front included twenty-four introduced by Aurelian following the defeat of Palmyra. Around a dozen may have been reformations of existing units but the rest were evidently net additions to the Severan deployment. Some of the fifty-four *alae* and fifty-four cohorts date back to the second century but at least fourteen were formed under Diocletian and his colleagues.

All twelve legions based along the Danube under the Severi survive in the *Notitia*, and there are five new ones, all creations of Diocletian. Except for Raetia, where the tetrarchic deployment of legions, cavalry vexillations, *alae* and *cohortes* survives, the *Notitia*'s lists include mostly units formed at a later date. There was evidently no significant reduction of the garrison under the tetrarchs, and the much-reduced numbers in the *Notitia* reflect subsequent withdrawals of effective units begun under Constantine and continued under a succession of usurpers. The *Notitia* records little change in Spain (one legion and five cohorts; but two *alae* are missing). In Africa the

[138] Most studies of the late Roman military system are one way or another based on the *Notitia Dignitatum* or 'List of Offices', edited by Otto Seeck (Berlin, 1876). The eastern chapters appear to date from 395 or earlier but the western contain some material of the early fifth century. The best modern study remains Jones, *LRE* III: 347–80, along with the papers contributed to Goodburn and Bartholomew, *Notitia Dignitatum*. Known military commanders and provincial governors in the period after 260 are listed in *PLRE* I.

Severan garrison of one legion and numerous auxiliary units was increased by the introduction of seven new legions in the mobile army, one each in Tingitana and Tripolitania, five, including the old *legio* III Augusta, in Numidia, one each in Africa and the Mauretanias, and eighteen vexillations of cavalry. Old-style *alae* and cohorts appear only in Mauretania Tingitana, while elsewhere there are only commanders of frontier sectors (*praepositi limitis*), locally recruited formations, some of which were already existing in the mid-third century. Deployment in the Rhine area under Diocletian does not appear in the *Notitia*. Some of the old legions appear among the later field-armies and there are traces of several new legions with titles that indicate tetrarchic origins.[139]

To sustain this enlarged army a ruthless conscription was imposed within the empire that was to prove deeply unpopular. Outside manpower was also employed, including both prisoners of war and willing recruits. On the eastern front there are more than twenty units with ethnic titles, many from beyond the Rhine and Danube (Chamavi, Sugambri, Franks, Alamanni, Iuthungi, Saxons, Vandals, Goths, Sarmatians and Quadi), also from the Caucasus region (Tzanni and Iberi) and local Assyrians (Cordueni and Zabdueni). In Gaul and Italy groups admitted en bloc to the empire (*laeti*) were permitted to occupy designated areas with an obligation for military service that continued to their descendants.[140]

Less is known of the changes made by Constantine, except that he enlarged the field-army and instituted for it a new command structure of marshals of infantry (*magistri peditum*) and cavalry (*magistri equitum*). The new formation may have come into existence after his victory over Maxentius' Danubian army in 312, when there were good reasons for retaining a force drawn from the northwest provinces that was loyal to the house of Constantine. Little is known of the individual units that made up the new field-army (*comitatus*). Some of the auxiliaries were new formations with ethnic titles of Celtic and German origin. There is some evidence that Constantine added units to the provincial armies but only along the middle and lower Danube do the lists of the *Notitia* record a wholesale Constantinian organization. In Scythia, Dacia and both Moesias, vexillations of cavalry were replaced by new cavalry formations (*cunei equitum*); in Valeria and the two Pannonias the old vexillations and the new formations appear side by side. Legions are divided into three or more detachments, while only a few cohorts and none of the old *alae* survive. It seems likely that Diocletian's arrangements in this area needed major overhaul following the Sarmatian wars late under Constantine (see above).[141]

[139] Jones, *LRE* 1: 52–9. [140] Jones, *LRE* 1: 59–60.
[141] Jones, *LRE* 1: 97–100; Hoffmann (1969–70) (field-armies).

The tetrarchic fortifications along the north, south and eastern frontiers, are among the most visible remains of antiquity but understanding of their intended function remains limited. Even the inscriptions that record their construction contain grandiloquent promises of everlasting security but provide little information regarding their functions or their occupants. Some of the former can be assumed: secure storage for food and other supplies (including water), while the surrounding country was stripped bare; a barrier to the crossings of rivers and mountain passes; observation and even obstruction of the movements of intruders; a secure base from which local garrisons could plan retaliation and ambush; a refuge for the valuable field-armies when battle could not be risked. Once constructed, the new strongholds had little to fear from potential attackers who lacked both the ability and the inclination for sustained siege warfare. Significantly the role of artillery (stone-throwing and bolt-firing machines), which had once been an offensive arm of the legions, was now a reactive and static means of defence, incorporated in the towers and gates of the new fortifications, both civil and military. When strongholds did fall, the cause was often either the flight of the garrison or collusion from within. At the same time their existence is over the years likely to have diminished the offensive instincts of Roman armies in earlier days. The most significant consequence of the new strongholds was to leave large numbers of provincials to find their own place of safety in time of danger. Links between provincial armies and the now defended large civil settlements may have continued but there can have been no longer any real sense of security for those dwelling on or near the traditional migration routes between north and south and east and west. Diocletian's fortified frontier ensured that the empire remained intact for another century, though at a hugely increased cost, both financial and political.[142]

[142] See the discussion of Luttwak, *Grand Strategy* 130–45 ('Defense-in-Depth').

CHAPTER 9

DEVELOPMENTS IN PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

JEAN-MICHEL CARRIÉ

1. INTRODUCTION

What did it mean to be a 'provincial' for those who inhabited the Roman empire between the accession of Septimius Severus and the death of Constantine?

The period that concerns us here has long been defined by historians as one of transition between the 'principate' and the 'dominate', a transition that some have placed under the Severi, others under the tetrarchy, or even under Constantine. This period was said to be marked by a uniform and steady movement towards administrative centralization and bureaucratization, with all the negative connotations that were associated with those terms in nineteenth-century liberal thought. The very nature of the documents available led to this view of the matter. The high empire has left us nothing like the collection of public and administrative laws that is the *Theodosian Code*, or the catalogue of officers of the state that is the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The administrative history of the first two centuries of the empire is reduced, as a rule, to the study of the careers of the ruling personnel, while the actual practice of government remains hardly accessible. However, we should reject any idyllic notion of a 'golden age of the Antonines', which can only exaggerate the contrast with the subsequent epoch that begins with the Severi. The administrative records of the principate are already suggestive of the complex working of the state, the princeps' finicky supervision and the frequent clashes between administrators and administered: but their scarcity strengthens our impression – well-founded, moreover – of an apparatus of government that was remarkably light. We must not deduce from this that the state was at that time less exigent in its demands: at any rate thanks to the relative prosperity of the times, the pressure of public administration was less intense. The empire's need, from the middle of the third century, to mobilize continuously and more exactingly than before its economic, financial and human resources in order to meet the demands of collective defence, entailed a strengthening of the administrative structure at all levels – central (the *palatium*), provincial (the numerous offices, or *officia*) and local (imperial agents or local communities). This denser

network left behind it a more solid body of documentary evidence which suggests that supervision by the state had become heavier, with increased encroachment on the freedom of the individual. Taken together with the increasingly authoritarian or threatening style adopted by the drafters of laws, this has enhanced the sympathy felt by historians for Rome's subjects, whom many authors of that time themselves presented, in their polemical exaggerations, as so many defenceless victims.[1]

Another legacy of past historiography is the idea that, by bringing to the forefront the army and its leaders, the third-century crisis produced a profound and definitive militarization of the empire which affected its organization and methods as well as its political orientation. The activity of the military men who were seconded to the central or provincial offices was alleged to have given expression to the aspirations of the army as a whole, its programme for domination and social control. Functions and powers were said to have been merged: 'civilian turned soldier, soldier turned civilian in a "rapprochement" to a middle ground of waste and confusion'.[2] Recent developments in the study of documents relating both to the army and to the administration have discredited such conclusions, even to the extent of reversing them.

As for the sphere which concerns us here, namely, the provincial and local administration, the relations between provincials and the imperial power, between administrators and administered, we need to know whether the period between 193 and 337 marked a break with the preceding centuries or continuity with them, and, if break there was, at what moment in this period there occurred the transition to a more thoroughgoing 'statization' than the traditional theory had uncovered. On points such as the constraints imposed on individuals, the crisis of curial society and the encroachments upon municipal autonomy, recent research has brought about radical revisions. Today there can be no question of minimizing the importance of the transformations which, *inter alia*, affected the administrative sphere during the period that runs from the Severi to Constantine – for example, the institutionalizing of the war economy with its consequences for the fiscal organization, the inflation of staffs in the provincial offices, or the development of the imperial 'palace' along the lines of an oriental style court. However, these changes took place later and within a cultural and ideological context that was more settled than had generally been supposed. The revision of traditional theories has had the effect of modifying the chronological periodization, by showing the Severi to have been more continuators of the Antonines than precursors of Diocletian, and by redefining the tetrarchy itself as a phase in the transition between the

[1] The most typical example is Lact. *DMP*, especially 23 (description of the census).
[2] MacMullen (1963) 152. Jones (1949) had already refuted these assertions.

classical imperial system and the most characteristic innovations of the late empire, which do not appear before Constantine. The period covered here thus takes in both the continuation of the structures already dealt with in the previous volume and, from the 310s onward, a break and the beginning of a profoundly different situation which, nevertheless, would not cease evolving in its turn. We must therefore be careful not to anticipate, by projecting them on to Constantine's reign, patterns that apply in the rest of the fourth century. Within one or two generations the institutional reforms, together with the general evolution of the empire, produced an altered distribution of power, so that the provincial and municipal landscape of Libanius' time was very different from what it had been at the beginning of the century – for which, unfortunately, we lack a source of information equally rich, precise and lively, despite its partisan distortions.

II. THE IMPERIAL STATE AND ITS 'PROVINCIALS'

Historians have written, with justification, of a 'Severan policy' towards the cities. The first twenty years of the period under consideration, i.e. from the accession of Septimius Severus to the Edict of Caracalla, saw an accentuation of the process of promoting the peregrine cities from *canabae, populi, pagi* or *vici* to the rank of cities under Latin or Roman law (e.g. the *pagus civium Romanorum* of Thugga, which was finally united in 205 with the peregrine city on the same spot, to form a *municipium*); from *municipia* to the rank of colonies (Aquincum, Carnuntum) or from Latin colonies to colonies under Italic law (Carthage in 208?, Lepcis Magna, Utica), especially in Africa. This was when Tertullian, intoning a panegyric on *romanitas*, exclaimed: '*Ubique domus, ubique populus, ubique respublica, ubique vita!*': 'everywhere dwellings, everywhere people, everywhere cities, everywhere life!'[3] On the other hand, those cities which had chosen the wrong side in the civil wars were temporarily degraded. Thus, in 194 Antioch, metropolis and capital of the province of Syria, had been reduced by Septimius Severus (until his pardon granted in 202) to the rank of *kōmē* (village) of Laodicea, its great rival.[4] In the same way Byzantium paid in 196 for its support of Clodius Albinus by being reduced to the rank of *kōmē* of Perinthus, before being restored to its former status by Caracalla.

The question of the effects – fiscal, juridical, political – produced by the Edict of Caracalla (*Constitutio Antoniniana*) has an important bearing on the study of administrative life in the succeeding period.[5] The chief

[3] Jacques Gascou (1982a) 11; Tert. *De Anima* 30.3 (CCSL II.827); Lepelley (1990).

[4] Herod. III.14; III.2.10; III.3.3; *D* L.15.1.3; cf. Downey (1961) 239–43.

[5] *P. Giss.* 40 (212?) = *FIRA* I.445, no. 88 = *LoisRom* 478–90 (= Mélèze-Modrzejewski (1990) x); now *P. Giss. Lit.* 6.1. Cf. above, ch. 6.

point of uncertainty lies in the restoration of lines 8–9 of the text.[6] What is most probably at issue is a safeguarding clause which is supposed to have guaranteed respect either for the forms of city-state organization or for the local juridical and statutory rules, depending on how the text is restored (the difference is slight). The second interpretation, which is to be preferred, can be translated thus: 'the legal status of the city of origin being safeguarded'. If this is right, the extension of citizenship, far from abolishing the concept of *origo*,[7] which had spread from the second century, decisively confirmed it. It was *origo* which made the sons of curials *obnoxii* to their *curia genitalis*. Thus the edict seems to have granted citizenship to individuals without any change in the status of the cities – were it not for the fundamental fact that, because they were thenceforth inhabited entirely by Roman citizens, these cities were turned into Roman cities (if they were not so already).

Politically, the *Constitutio Antoniniana* marks an important stage in the levelling of municipal statuses, by depriving of their meaning the old distinctions of status between *civitates*, *municipia* and *coloniae*. This is why, after Gallienus' reign, there were hardly any more advancements in status, and the relevant vocabulary itself came increasingly to be restricted to the term *civitas*, except in certain provinces: Africa, for example, where the old distinctions were retained rather like titles of nobility,[8] and where we find cities still asking for and obtaining (as a purely honorific favour) the status of 'free town' or 'colony'. Or else, in a city which had received promotion late in the day, we observe that municipal law retains the clause about Roman citizenship being obtained *per honorem*, even after all the free inhabitants had been made citizens.[9] In any case, the general movement towards promotion of the status of cities did not have the effect, either before or after the Edict of Caracalla, of rendering uniform, in a general *lex municipalis*, the various constitutional regimes. We note, however, that the idea that there was a common basis to the arrangements adopted by the cities as a whole became widely shared among the jurists.[10] As for public opinion, already in the second century Aulus Gellius remarked that it saw no difference any more between a *municipium* and a colony, even if the latter *condicio* was still held to be superior to the former.[11] From this point of view, public opinion would therefore not have regarded the Edict of Caracalla as a revolutionary measure. As for the peregrine cities, before 212 they were not treated any differently from the cities of Latin law. Only the

[6] Here are only two out of more than thirty suggestions that have been made; μένοντος [παντὸς γένους τῶν πολιτευμ]άτων (Meyer in *P. Giss.*); μένοντος [παντὸς δικαίου τῶν πολιτευμ]άτων (Seston (1966) 879).

[7] See Y. Thomas (1996). [8] Gascou (1982a) II: 317; Kotula (1974).

[9] At Lauriacum in Noricum: *FIRA* I.220, no. 26 = *LoisRom* 242–4 (with brief comments by W. Seston).

[10] *CJ* VII.9.1 (Gordian); Ulpian in *D* L.9.3: cf. Galsterer (1987).

[11] Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* XVI.13.9; commented on by Cracco Ruggini (1989) 211.

idea that the *munus* was a typically Roman concept has led some modern commentators to think otherwise,[12] though there is no reason to assume any difference between the Latin *munus* and the hellenic liturgy.

The relation between the provincials and the emperor nevertheless still needs to be analysed in two ways – as a direct personal participation in the empire through the application of the imperial authority to all Roman citizens, under the supervision of the provincial administration, and as a relation that was mediated by the cities, so that it was as citizens of their city that individuals participated, in one degree or another, in the rights and duties which were established or recognized by Rome. This distinction was doubtless more theoretical than real, in a political society existing fifteen centuries before the liberal individualist credo came to be formulated. In fact, apart from the exercise of their traditional prerogatives, which provided the ordinary framework for the life of the local community, cities were also utilized as relay agencies with responsibility for imposing the imperial directives upon their members, and, increasingly, were made collectively responsible for everyone's behaviour. This may even have been the actual purpose of the de facto abolition of the peregrine cities. There was, nevertheless, a third aspect of the relation between provincials and the emperor, namely, that established directly by the latter with individuals by virtue of privileges conferred on a personal basis, as against the *beneficia* accorded to a city as a whole. This two-tier structure is to be understood, above all, in relation to the hierarchy of social statuses. With the extension of citizenship the possibility of appealing to the emperor (another illustration of this personal relation) became a privilege reserved to members of the upper classes, the *honestiores*, whereas the juridical horizon of the *humiliores* stopped at the borders of their province and with its governor.[13]

What were the fiscal consequences of this? When Caracalla granted (in 212?) to Antioch the status of a colony under Italian law, he accompanied this grant with a clause safeguarding the interests of the treasury: *divus Antoninus Antiochenses colonos fecit salvis tributis*, which, as Mommsen realized, means 'the tribute remaining untouched'.[14] This measure, coming perhaps a few months before the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, is a discouragement to any belief in the disappearance of the *tributum capitis*, which many historians and jurists have assumed was an automatic effect of the universalizing of Roman citizenship. As we have seen, the cities retained their previous status, and only a minority of the cities called *liberae* were also *immunes*, i.e. exempt from the *tributum*. The case of Egypt supplies

[12] Abbott and Johnson (1926) 103.

[13] Garnsey (1970) 79–85, and 272–80, shows that the decurions themselves, who were considered *honestiores* by the jurists, did not actually benefit from their guarantees and privileges.

[14] *D* L.15.3.8; Mommsen (1905) 167–8.

proof enough that the poll tax was not abolished in 212: for a time the fiscal advantages (more symbolic than substantial) which had been established since the reign of Augustus for the benefit of the ruling groups were kept in effect there, until they disappeared along with the tax itself in the middle of the third century. On the other hand, the generalizing of citizenship did alter the political significance ascribed to the provincial tax: from a symbol of political subjection it became the sign of active participation in the great imperial confederation.

As regards the juridical consequences, the 'unifying' school of thought, in the tradition of Mommsen, has long seen in the *constitutio Antoniniana* an attempt to eliminate all traditional local laws and replace them with Roman law. A rejection of this theory has developed along with the advances in juridical papyrology to the point of establishing that, after 212, the Roman power preserved for local laws the same place that they occupied previously within provincial law.[15] Here is one pointer among others: in Egypt, in the drafting of juridical acts, we see appearing after the *constitutio Antoniniana* the formula *kai eperotētheis homologēsa*, a formula of *stipulatio* which confers a value in Roman law upon a contract drawn up in accordance with local customs.[16] The extension of citizenship did not, therefore, *ipso facto* entail generalized application of Roman private law in the provinces, nor did it debase Roman law by provincializing it. What it entailed was a compulsory adaptation of local laws to Roman juridical principles, thereby making more necessary the intervention of the 'notary', a licensed legal technician who knew the correct formulae. The light cast by the *lex Irnitana* on the nature of the Latin *municipia* of the first century has enabled us to establish the extent of juridical Romanization for the inhabitants of these cities, but also its limits, in that local usages survived so long as they did not contradict Roman law.[17] This is how, similarly, we need to understand the effects of the assimilation of the peregrine cities to the Roman *res publica* after 212. For the rhetor Menander of Laodicea, listing in or about 270 the required themes for someone composing the eulogy of a city, one should not include its constitution and laws, because these no longer applied. But we ought to see this as a consequence not of the Edict of 212 but of the Roman conquest itself, which ended the juridical independence of the hellenic cities and subjected what remained of their legislative activity to approval by the provincial governors. This text does

[15] On the universalizing of Roman law after 212: Mitteis (1891), followed by scholars including Arangio-Ruiz, H. J. Wolff, etc.; *contra*, Taubenschlag (1955); Mélèze-Modrzejewski (1982=1990 XII); Galsterer (1987). See the historiographical résumé by Volterra (1974) 55–64. Supporting the idea of some degree of provincial variety organized by Rome, Schönbauer in Crawford, *L'impero romano* 24: *contra*, Wolff (1976).

[16] Cf. Simon (1964); Archi (1938).

[17] González (1986), reprinted in *AE* 1986.333; Jacques (1990a) 382–3; Lamberti (1993).

not, therefore, constitute proof of abandonment of local laws in the third century, but rather confirms their earlier reduction in status from *nomoi* (laws) to *ethē* (customs) – customs kept in force by the goodwill of the Roman authority but which, through their function as 'interface' between Roman and local law, recovered a degree of creativity in the formation of legal rules.[18]

Throughout the whole period the diplomatic relations maintained by the various emperors with the eastern cities, in the purest traditions of hellenism (exchange of letters, despatch of embassies) seem to conform to the ideal expressed by Aelius Aristides (*Eis Rhōmēn*) some decades earlier. In craftily coded language the emperor still presents himself as the permanent and all-round 'benefactor' of the cities. Generally taken at face value,[19] this 'vocabulary of gifts' is deceptive. Systematic semantic study would lead us to discount both the idea of personal generosity on the emperor's part and that of public finance, and to understand how the various terms meaning 'gift' and 'present' (*dōrea, munus*, etc.) had come, metonymically, to signify gifts such as 'the royal law' or even the mere authorization given to a civic decree. This lexicon was enriched with abstract terms of moral value denoting 'generosity' in various forms (*philanthrōpia, euergesia*, and then their Latin equivalents, *indulgentia, liberalitas, munificentia*) which ended by designating these same referents as objects through which the sovereigns displayed this virtue.[20] These rhetorical figures served the common interest of the parties involved – the emperor who, by his euergetism, revealed his superhuman nature, and the leading men of the cities whose prestige was enhanced by their privileged relations with the emperor.

It would appear that the reality was not so rosy. Epigraphic documents have preserved for us a series of 'calls for help' addressed to the emperor by the provincials.[21] Although documents of this type are no more typical of this period than of others, the negative judgement passed by modern historians on the Severan period has encouraged commentators to take their dramatic tone literally. Indeed, some continue to ascribe to the Severi a preconceived political programme of authoritarian centralization, in the light of which they interpret the legislation and reforms of the epoch. They explain in this way the illusory coherence which they imagine between the building of a public administration that integrated the cities' institutions, reduced to uniformity, the development of a standardized normative apparatus applicable to all local communities, and the defining of an immediate and direct relation between emperor and taxpayers. Besides the alleged abandonment of provincial laws in favour of Roman law alone,

[18] Mélèze-Modrzejewski (1982=1990 XII); Nörr (1966) and (1969).
[19] Jurists: Kloft (1970); Wickert (1979) 339–60, esp. 351. Historians: Millar, *ERW* 421–2.
[20] Carrié (1992). [21] 'Hilferufe': cf. Herrmann, *Hilferufe*; Hauken, *Petition and Response*.

the clearest manifestations of this policy are said to be a change in the nature of the *munera*, a redefining of fiscal responsibility and fresh powers given to the procurators.

If we take the *munera* (obligations of all kinds laid upon the citizens), not only the facts but also the texts of the Severan and post-Severan jurists refute such an analysis. In Diocletian's time local administrative institutions were still so little unified that Arcadius Charisius, in his classification of the *munera* (*D* L.4.18), mentions some that existed exclusively in certain cities and others that, according to the local law (*D* L.4.18.27: *ex lege civitatis suae*), could be personal or, on the contrary, assessed on patrimonial assets – proof that, in this matter, imperial legislation unified only those norms that were of interest to it (e.g. regarding exemptions from *munera* or obligations to perform them), without intruding upon the constitutional domain of the cities, which retained their identity intact. This categorization does no more than record the pre-existing situations, without modifying them. On the other hand, it deals indifferently with those *munera* which benefit the city and those that operate in the empire's interest – not by treating them as the same, but because possible conflicts over *munera* always occurred at city level, thus setting the city against its own inhabitants and not against the state. The very meaning to be ascribed to the assimilation, under Diocletian, of *honores* to *munera* loses its dramatic character when we compare it with the evolution of the *corpora* assigned the task of provisioning the capitals.[22]

The second argument put forward concerns the taxation system. It is claimed that the Severi substituted taxing of individuals for taxing of communities. By introducing a new theory of taxation they are supposed to have put an end to the fiscal autonomy of the cities which, contrary to what Mommsen thought, had survived under the high empire in both the imperial and the public provinces.[23] This is tantamount to attributing to the Severi the transformation which Rostovtzeff located under the Antonines, deducing it in particular from the spread of the *dekaprōtia*.[24] For anyone who sees the reform of the Egyptian administration carried out by Septimius Severus during his stay in that country in 199/200 as a trial-run of reforms subsequently extended to the empire as a whole, it is with its introduction in Egypt that should be dated the more precisely fiscal definition of the *dekaprōtia*, preparatory to a general alignment of the local administration on a single and unique model.[25] Papyrology has recently upset this theory by confirming that the *dekaprōtoi* were not introduced in Egypt under Septimius Severus, and putting that date forward to 242/246. Moreover, it is quite arbitrary to say that, with the Severan reform, the Egyptian *boulai* were integrated into the imperial administrative apparatus.

[22] Sirks (1989) 109–10. [23] Mommsen (1887) II.1094–5.
[24] Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE* 391; *contra*, Grelle (1963).
[25] Grelle (1963) and also Spagnuolo Vigorita (1978a) 72ff., despite J. D. Thomas (1974).

In sum, the Severan reforms are said to have revised the political presuppositions and the juridical configuration of the land tax. Mediation by the city is said to have become no longer necessary – at the level of tax assessment – but merely practical, at the level of tax collection. The taxpayer's relationship with the empire, it is assumed, was no longer a function of his belonging to a city (as a *munus civile*) but rather (as a *functio publica*) directly connected the taxpayer with the *populus Romanus* represented by the emperor, while the personal aspect of taxation tended to prevail over the patrimonial. However, the designation of taxes as *munera publica* was not the work of Papinian: we find it already in Tacitus, where, rather than assimilating a fiscal to an administrative concept, it illustrates the polysemic character of the term *munus*.[26] And, as regards personal taxation, the subsequent imposition of a *capitatio* on an empire-wide scale merely extended to cities or confederations the system of collective tax assignments which would appear to have existed, partially at least, since the time of Augustus.[27] In general, we may wonder whether the texts of Severan jurisprudence, by being inserted in the *Digest*, have not thrust into oblivion older texts that already set forth the same principles. Thus, the same commentators who wish to find in them the reflection of a decisive stage in a process of state unification are obliged, in the case of the *ius pignoris* (pledging a taxable property as guarantee of the tax due), to relate this arrangement to the hellenistic precedent known as *prōtopraxia*.

The juridical literature is capable of producing an illusion of the same order regarding the jurisdictional powers ascribed to the equestrian procurators where fiscal or other matters were concerned. Thus, the jurists often tend to situate an extension of such powers under the Severi, while usually failing to distinguish, in the documents which record the activity of the procurators, between what belongs to their administrative role and what to their judicial capacity. For historians the jurisdiction of the procurators in fiscal matters is not a Severan innovation – it goes back to Claudius – and in actual fact its significance has been linked less with a juridical evolution than with the varying orientations of imperial policy, which either kept them within the limits laid down by law or, on the contrary, unleashed them against private persons, and which turned either in their favour or otherwise the power relationship between their tribunal and that of the governors. From this standpoint, Caracalla's innovation in transferring from the governors to the emperor appeals against the judicial decisions of the procurators consisted in the fact that it wrote into law the possibilities of abuse which had previously depended above all on the political support given by the emperors to their financial agents.[28] Moreover, it is undeniable that judicial

[26] Tac. *Hist.* IV.73–4; Papinian (*Lib. I respons.*) in *D* L.5.8.3; variously, Grelle (1963) 67–8 and 87–9.
[27] Rostovtzeff (1902) 90–2, and *SEHRE* 518–20; Brunt, *RIT* 340–1.
[28] Brunt (1966), esp. 473 and 479–83.

needs increased continually after 212, making demands on every category of the empire's personnel, senatorial or equestrian. Thus, a judicial request addressed to the provincial authority by the villagers of Coele Syria would seem to point to the existence in the third century of procurators, not strictly concerned with finance, who were responsible for a judicial subdivision or *conventus* (in Greek, *dioikēsis*) and were equivalent to the Egyptian *epistratēgos*.[29]

The confiscation of land and property in abeyance (*bona vacantia et caduca*) as a result of fiscal delation offers another example of the frequent contrast in points of view between legal and political historians.[30] The former ascribe to the Severi a radical change of direction in this area, whereas for the latter the practice of fiscal delation was nothing new: it went back to the very beginnings of the principate, and with it the judicial prerogatives of the treasury. Its worst excesses occurred under Domitian. If the attitude taken by the emperors varied as between one reign and another, this was above all in moral condemnation of the informers, aimed at restricting the extent of the phenomenon, and finding periodical expression in isolated and spectacular measures of repression. On the other hand, from the juridical standpoint neither were the bases for the public action based on delation ever abolished, nor were the penalties laid down in cases of false accusation made heavier.[31] The treasury's interests were too considerable for an emperor to deprive himself of this source of income. The importance to be given to the phenomenon depends essentially on the information we possess, which is very uneven from one period to another, and from which it would be rash to deduce a tendency to evolve. We know, for example, that it was rife under Maximinus the Thracian and that the revolt in Africa in 238 arose from a fiscal lawsuit. When Gordian became emperor he did not rest from exiling fiscal informers and objecting to the arbitrary conduct of the *procuratores*. Yet the moral rigour of Quirinus, that *advocatus fisci* who, according to Philostratus, treated the local informers with contempt, did not excuse him from pronouncing, however much he disliked doing this, the inevitable condemnation of the victims of their denunciations.[32]

The modern legal historians situate under the Severi what is alleged to be an enlargement of the sphere originally allotted to the procedure of delation, the claiming for the treasury *bona caduca et vacantia* in virtue of the laws

[29] *P. Euphr.* 1 (*inv.* 5) and 2 (*inv.* 1) = Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents' 556–7, fully published in Feissel and Gascou (1995). For a different point of view, see Burton (1975), 104–6; Millar (1964) 180–7 and (1965) 362–7; Brunt (1966).

[30] Among the jurists: Spagnuolo Vigorita (1978a) and (1984) 167–82, commenting on Callistratus (*Liber I de iure fisci*) in *D* XL.14.1.*pr.*, also (1978b). Historians: Brunt (1966); Millar, *ERW*.

[31] Spagnuolo Vigorita (1984) 207–8, 212.

[32] Herod. VII.3.2 (repeated by *SHA*, *Maxim.* 13.5) and VII.6.4 (cf. *SHA*, *Gord.* 13.7); *CJ* X.11.2 (238, Gordian): *ne quid in persona tua quod est sectae temporum meorum alienum, attemptetur*; and the comments of Spagnuolo Vigorita (1978a); Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* II.29.

of Augustus (essentially the *Lex Papia Poppaea*), by applying this to other types of cases, such as that of the unworthy heir. It will be objected that the imperial state did not invent informers, since it had long had before it the example of the Greek cities, where justice did not refrain from resorting to delation in respect of a wide range of financial offences.[33] As for 'public' delation (in which the treasury was the direct addressee), the change did not actually come until Constantine, who by an edict of 312 condemned to death informers, that '*exsecranda pernicies*', before rescinding Augustus' laws on marriage, which had laid private fortunes open to the assaults of fiscal delation.[34]

Altogether, the transformations which modern legal historians have credited to the Severi concerning local administration, the definition of the emperor's power and the nature of his relations with his subjects seem to be less radical than they thought, and so the question of continuity or break, the essential issue in this debate, is answered, rather, in favour of continuity. As regards provincial organization, a characteristic phenomenon of the following period (the middle of the third century) was, in connection with the troubles of that time and the weakening of the imperial power, the multiplication of supra-provincial appointments, placing devoted and worthy *equites* over senatorial governors. A typical example of these temporary appointments is that of *rector Orientis*, held by Julius Priscus, brother of Philip the Arabian (διέπων τὴν ὑπατείαν, exercising consular powers), during the whole of his brother's reign, and then, between 252 and 256, by Pomponius Laetianus, who had previously been procurator.[35] Similarly, at a lower level, we find *correctores, duces* and even a *katholikos*,[36] all terms that prefigure the later divisions of territorial authority but which, contrary to the separation between civil and military power which was to prevail from Diocletian's time onward, emphasized, for a moment, the military responsibilities of the provincial governors. So, *equites* were called upon to serve, and they were the only personnel to acquire high military commands after Gallienus' reform. These military super-prefects either replaced the ordinary governor or else, if he stayed in office, supervised him.

If, finally, we wish to define the orientations of the tetrarchy and of Constantine, we shall need not so much to describe their policy towards the cities as to examine the way in which the functions of local administration were affected by the great reforms of imperial and regional administration.[37]

[33] At Mylasa: *OGIS* 515 (209/211, and so before the *Constitutio Antoniniana*). On the hellenic antecedents for escheated property being handed over to the city, see Mélèze-Modrzejewski (1961) 79–113.

[34] *CTh* x.10.2 (corrected date): prescription repeated in 313 (*CTh* x.10.1): see Spagnuolo Vigorita (1984) 26–70, who, incidentally, rules out any Christian inspiration for Constantine's policy in this sphere (24–5 and 218).

[35] Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents' 552–4. [36] Parsons (1967). [37] See ch. 6.

More than ever the provincial representatives of the imperial authority were at the same time the local agents of the major administrative services, both central and regional. The financial administration continued to be more concentrated than the provincial administration, as can be seen in Egypt, where the *katholikos* (created in 286 to replace the *dioikētēs*) still wielded authority over the whole country, despite its division soon afterwards into first two, then three provinces. The imperial domain had its own administration, directed by a *magister rei privatae*.[38] A consular or presidial *officium* was made up of several sections of *numerarii* or *tabularii*, as well as of accounts staff, messengers and an armed escort.[39] The local agents of the central power served as relay agencies for any of the various branches of the civil administration. In Egypt the *strategos*, then the *exactor*, were responsible for applying the directives both of the governor and of the financial procurator, of the *magister rei privatae* or of the *praefectus annonae Alexandriae*. In addition, however, each of the central higher officials sent out on local missions his own subordinates (variously entitled *cohortales, officiales* or *apparitores*) of different ranks: *speculator, ordinarius.* Even if the reforms of the tetrarchs and then those of Constantine did obviously result in an increase in the numbers employed in the state's administrative apparatus, it is going too far to say that thereafter the empire was collapsing under the weight of the bureaucracy, in accordance with the cliché, as accommodating as it is incorrect, which survives among many commentators following Lactantius' polemical attacks.[40] The disadvantage for the population was due, rather, to the fact that the members of the *officia* were paid, more than in the form of wages, in allowances which were either regular (fixed) or irregular (gratuities).[41]

The fiscal and monetary reforms also had consequences for local administrative life, by multiplying the duties imposed on the provincials. An example is the price control, which required that corporations (and especially the goldsmiths) state the prices asked *in foro rerum venalium* for various basic articles, as for precious metals, in line with the policy of an official rate of exchange between the various currencies in circulation.[42]

We must, finally, estimate what the consequences were at the local level of the remodelling of social categories carried out under Constantine, and the attraction of the senatorial and equestrian orders for the curial milieu. The general redistribution of competences and modes of recruitment of

[38] Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées*. [39] Jones (1949) and *LRE* 592–6; Lallemand (1964) 72–5.

[40] Thus MacMullen, *Corruption*; *contra*, Bagnall, *Egypt* 133 (cf. also 66), speaks of persistent 'undergovernance'.

[41] Jones, *LRE* 605; on the fight against peculation, *CTh* 1.16.7 (331); Palme (1999).

[42] *P. Oxy.* LI.3624–6 and commentary by J. Rea on p. 61; goldsmiths, *P. Ant.* 1.38, now *SB* X.10257 (300), *P. Oxy.* XXXI.3570 (329), LI.3624–6 (later, in 359). On the taxation system itself, see ch. 12, and Carrié and Rousselle, *L'Empire romain* 580–2 (for control of prices); 593–615 (for tax system); see also Carrié, 'Fiscalité'.

provincial administrators coincided with the last phase in the evolution of the two *ordines* in which the upper classes of Roman society were grouped. Constantine followed a policy of large-scale promotion of the richest *equites* to senatorial rank. Thereby the equestrian order was devalued, though not to the point of disappearance: it was even increased in numbers through the influx of a large number of new *equites* from the metropolitan *curiae* and the provincial offices.[43] A static description of Rome's social divisions could make one believe that they amounted to a rigorously compartmentalized 'caste-system'. We need, on the contrary, to emphasize the way in which all these levels of dignity and function were intercommunicating, and, in particular, how they 'rubbed shoulders' at the municipal level. The census of African *honorati* shows that only the *clarissimi* were exempt from all municipal burdens,[44] and that the children born before their *adlectio* continued to be *curiales*. As for the *equites*, if they were not *perfectissimi*, they were not exempt from curial burdens unless actually in the emperor's service, and, in any case, their titles were not hereditary.

The inflation of equestrian titles inevitably led to the devaluing of the lower grades of the *ordo* (*eques,* then *egregius* and sexagenarian). Consequently, what the *principales* of the provincial cities sought to attain was the status of *perfectissimi*, though the absence for them of any advantage in possessing a dignity shared with the bureaucrats to whom they felt much superior was not slow in weakening their desire to obtain it or speak of it. Gaining admission to senatorial rank, which was to crown more and more public careers from Constantine's reign onward, seemed more worthy of curial ambition. That emperor promoted numerous eastern *curiales* in order to fill up the senate of his new capital.

In the fourth century the duties connected with the *munera* became heavier, and this gave rise to a certain degree of distaste for municipal office, from which members of the curial class increasingly tried to withdraw. A legal way of doing this was to enter the imperial offices. We must not, indeed, forget that this category continued, through its social standing and its education, to constitute the breeding-ground wherein emperors could find the administrators whom they needed in growing numbers. This was why respect for their legal attachment to the *curia* was only rarely imposed on *curiales* who were bureaucrats. The municipal album of Timgad in the 360s[45] enables us to observe the results achieved by Constantine's policy in this matter. Here we find mentioned 70 *officiales* of Africa and Numidia belonging to local curial families and keeping up a connection with the *ordo*. As has rightly been noted, the desertion of the *ordo* by the richest

[43] Lepelley (1986). [44] Lepelley (1979) 260–4 and 266–9.

[45] 362/3 according to Chastagnol (1978), the most recent editor of this text; between 365 and 367/8 according to Horstkotte (1984). Cf. also, below, p. 304.

decuriones was not motivated by the excessive financial burden of curial functions (for intrigues aimed at acquiring imperial dignities entailed even greater expense) but by desire to escape from the *munera personalia*, those that meant making themselves actually available in person.[46]

III. THE CITIES IN THE SERVICE OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE IMPERIAL STATE

In our period the cities were increasingly used to enable the imperial 'public services' to function. The encouragements given to municipal life by the Severi, going even so far as to establish it definitively in places where it had not existed in complete form, as in Egypt, must be seen as due not so much to any liberalism on the part of this dynasty as to their finding a means to save on public expenditure by multiplying the duties incumbent on private persons to serve the state. Thanks to the principle of collective responsibility, which guaranteed each person's performance of his duty, the municipal framework offered every advantage. We can say simply that the Severi transformed the municipal assemblies into organisms for appointing the richest private individuals to state service; which is clearly the opposite of the out-and-out bureaucratization of the administration which modern writers have so often alleged.

In the Roman empire, a regime of forced confederation, as in our modern centralized states, responsibility for recording civil status lay with the local communities. It remained one of the principal instruments and symbols through which was asserted the identity of that political microcosm, the 'free and independent' city.[47] The keeping of records of civil status and the carrying-out of periodical censuses were a recognized part of the cities' remit. In Egypt, where under the high empire these tasks fell to two different services, the *Constitutio Antoniniana* put in the background the registering of Roman citizens or of certain fiscally privileged categories and sacrificed the municipal recording of civil status to the elementary needs of the state's taxation system. The very practice of conducting censuses at fourteen-year intervals ceased in 257/8, though we cannot deduce from this a relaxation of control over the taxable population, or grasp just what the reasons were for such changes in methods. The assumption is that transformations in the taxation system resulted in making this type of census pointless.[48] Subordinate personnel were responsible for keeping up to date the registers of taxpayers: *librarii* in the west, *grammateis* in the east.[49] In the African *municipia* censuses were the responsibility of the quinquennial *duumvir*, a

[46] Lepelley (1979) 252 n. 22. On the evolution of curial society, see below, pp. 00–00.

[47] This highly political function of recording 'civil status' fits perfectly with the absence of any demographic interest in the matter, as has been rightly noted by Mertens (1958) 46.

[48] Mélèze-Modrzejewski (1985 = 1990 1) 262; Bagnall, *Egypt* 183.

[49] E.g. *P. Oxy.* XLVIII.3400.

function still evidenced under Constantine:[50] everywhere, gradually, this responsibility subsequently passed to the *curator*.

We need above all to beware of the habit contracted by modern commentators of talking about *cadastres*, a term inappropriate to the type of documentation kept in Roman municipal archives. Proof of this is provided by the establishment of the new taxation system introduced by Diocletian, which required an updating of both inventories of landed property and census rolls. This time what was undertaken was a 'heavy', exceptional census-and-land-survey operation which the imperial administration had decided to apply to the empire as a whole. Like Augustus' census, of which we know that in Gaul it took more than thirty years to compile, the famous universal census of Galerius, necessitated by the tax reform of 287, appears also to have been a long time in the completion. For Egypt we know the names of some imperial census-takers (*censitores*), and that in 310 the exercise had not yet ended.[51] It is not to be supposed that such an operation could have been repeated every five years, as is usually claimed, and the impression to be gained from the Egyptian documents, of a high degree of fixity in the *cadastre* is confirmed through particular cases. A piece of land in Egypt that was sold in 342 continued to be defined by reference to Sabinus' census (which was being carried out in the Arsinoite Nome between 302 and 306, at least).[52] It would be surprising if this were otherwise, given that our modern states cannot do any better.

Another function that was traditionally municipal was registration. The deeds of transactions between private persons were deposited and kept in the *archivum* or *grammatophylakion* (Ulpian in *D* XLVIII.19.9.6). A contract for the sale of some land in Hermopolis, dated 319, besides featuring the upper levels of the curial milieu, casts unusual light on the way the archives of the *nome* functioned.[53] Registration was carried out by a Hermopolitan *misthōtēs tabelliōnōn*: a copy was kept *en dēmosiōi*, and a member of the *boulē* who acted as its archivist also added his *subscriptio*. This is the last time the *bibliothēkē enktēseōn*[54] is mentioned, as well as being the first appearance of the word *tabellio* to describe the ancestor of our notary, a personage whose role in society was steadily to grow in importance and his professional status to become defined, along with his fees (*Edictum Diocl. de Pretiis* 7.41).[55] Independently of the conservation of these private deeds, the cities kept up to date their *acta* (or *gesta*) *publica* (or *municipalia*).[56] The material they were written on varied, from parchment to papyrus and including wax tablets.

[50] *CTh* IV.6.3 = *CJ* V.27.1. [51] *SB* III.7073; *P. Stras.* 42.

[52] *P. Col.* VII.181; cf., similarly, *CTh* XIII.10.1 (313): *professio antiqua*; XI.28.12 (418): *professio antiqua et vetustatis adscriptio*, etc.

[53] *SB* VI.9219; cf. Gerstinger (1950) 471–93.

[54] Similarly, 307 in the Arsinoite collection (*P. Graux* II.17–19), 309 in the Oxyrhynchite (*M. Chr.* 196). On the link between the archives of the cities and of the province, see Burkhalter (1990).

[55] Amelotti and Costamagna (1975) 23–4 and 78 n. 21. [56] Lepelley (1979) 223–4.

The taxation system provides the clearest example of the evolution referred to above, in which the cities were transformed more and more into organs for the execution of undifferentiated state directives and made collectively responsible for the conduct of their members. The chief municipal liturgies concerned the raising of taxes (*apaitēsis/exactio*) from the whole territory of the city, their collection (*hypodochē*), their distribution (*diadosis*), and *epimeleia*, a generic term which was not restricted to the mere supervision of these operations.[57] The job of tax collector was not altogether cushy. A large number of papyri mention arrests of fiscal liturgists. In one case, concerning the comarchs of a village, consideration is given to calling on their wives to come and take their place as hostages.[58]

Diocletian's tax reform, even if it failed to reduce to uniformity the mode of assessment,[59] did a good deal to bring into line the fiscal regimes of the various cities, by making them give up the benefit of exceptions and special provisions to which their 'local patriotism' was probably traditionally attached. In compensation, the reform laid down principles of equity between the different communities, which were thenceforth jointly liable within *formulae* of apportionment, the existence of which is known to us both at diocesan level and at that of the Egyptian toparchy (a subdivision of the *nome*).[60] Thus, any reduction in a city's tax burden had to be made up by the other cities of the circumscription, unless, improbably, the amount demanded from the province or diocese was diminished in consequence. In so far as the *capitatio* part of the new tax system was based on the distribution principle (as against the proportionality applied in the *iugatio*), it involved, like all systems of this type in any epoch, an element of arbitrariness which was denounced, for example, by a landowner of Karanis, Aurelius Isidorus. The village's comarchs 'share out tax obligations just as they please'.[61] Actually, at first, the task of defining each person's share of the burden fell to curial liturgists who were responsible for the levy. The abuses to which this system gave rise resulted later in a reaction which barred decurions from exercising the function of tax collector, replacing them with *officiales* – who were to prove not much more honest.[62]

Among the tasks imposed on the cities priority was given to those which related to the *annona* to Rome and the *annona militaris*. A group of inscriptions in Pamphylia which dates from the second quarter of the third century[63] shows us the role played by the cities in the victualling of troops stationed some distance away (*parapompē*), in this case in Syria. Their

[57] Palme (1989).
[58] *P. Panop. Beatty*, *passim*; *P. Oxy.* XLVIII.3397; XLIII.3104; *P. Amh.* II.80; comarchs: *P. Oxy.* XLVIII.3409.
[59] Carrié, 'Fiscalité'. [60] *Pan. Lat.* V(VIII); *P. Oxy.* XLVI.3307; Carrié, 'Fiscalité' 41 and 61.
[61] *P. Cair. Isid.* 71.8 (314). [62] *CTh* XIII.6.7 (365); Giardina and Grelle (1983).
[63] Bean and Mitford (1970) 38–45 nos. 19–21 = *AE* 1972.626 (244/249), 1972.627 (238), 1972.628 (242).

editors link these inscriptions with military campaigns, but the almost routine repetition of these supply convoys, inserted among the classic functions in the municipal cursus, suggests rather that this was a regular, annual duty, such as we see in other third-century documents,[64] consisting in the despatch of the *annona militaris* to provinces where there was a substantial military presence. By analogy with the way the imperial postal service worked we may assume that this liturgy concerned transport within the bounds of the city's territory. Transport alone (extremely costly, at that) had to be paid for by the cities, whereas the supplies themselves were obtained by requisitions that were compensated under a system which seems to have lasted until the transformation of the *annona militaris* into a tax under Diocletian. As is often the case with individual acts of euergetism, the personal financial contributions made by some liturgists, and emphasized in their inscriptions, amounted merely to a 'handsome gesture' which lightened, in a striking but exceptional way, the burden represented by the collective obligation weighing upon the city. The ordinary institution is thus known to us mainly through untypical cases, those which gave rise to a celebratory text. Visits to the provinces by the emperor, which seemingly made it possible, among other things, to check on the proper functioning of the imperial logistic apparatus, remained special cases, since in 300 they still occasioned extra levies which had to be paid for, just as in the time of Septimius Severus a century earlier.[65]

The episodic problem of victualling expeditionary forces, cases of which became more frequent during the third century, tended to give way, with the tetrarchy's reorganization of the military establishment, to a problem of permanently furnishing supplies to those garrisons stationed in frontier zones which were not self-sufficient. Consequently the organization of the operations of *parapompē* (*prosecutio annonae*) underwent modification at the end of the third century. Responsibility, which was increasingly burdensome and complex, for long-distance movements of supplies (*expeditio*) was bureaucratized, becoming the task of the head of the provincial *officium* when he left office, under the title of *pastus primipili*, which thenceforth ceased to bear military significance, in Diocletian's time at latest.[66] Thus, the provinces that came under the praetorian prefecture of the east had to supply the armies in the prefecture of Illyricum. Movements of supplies at medium distance (e.g. in Egypt, from the lower Thebaïd to Syene or the western oases) became mere municipal liturgies, which in the east

[64] *IGRR* III.68 (where παραπομπή is inserted among ἄλλας ἀρχὰς καὶ λειτουργίας; *AE* 1972.627 (Gordian III); *IGRR* III.60 (Bithynia, Septimius Severus); the case of *IGRR* III.1033 = *OGIS* 516 (Palmyra, 229) is perhaps a little different, despite Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE* II.723, no. 46.

[65] Septimius Severus: *PSI* 683, ll. 14–16; Diocletian: *P. Panop. Beatty* I (298), ll. 245–6, and *D* L.4.18.4.

[66] *CTh* VIII.4.11: Jones, *LRE* I.67 and 124, with n. 117; Carrié (1979), followed by Horstkotte (1991).

were given the name of *diadosis*, a term also used for the delivery of the *annona* to local units.[67]

A similar evolution is observable in a related sphere of obligations, the *hospitium* given to armies passing through, or going into winter quarters. This duty, an everlasting source of conflict between the imperial personnel and the civilian population, is very well known for the later period, in which it was subject to detailed regulation. Its antecedents, which fell to the responsibility of the cities and their richer citizens, have remained better hidden.[68] In the light of these *munera* we can see how the transformation of the system of financing public expenditure and the tax system consisted to a large extent of defining and exacting in fixed and permanent fashion charges which previously had borne an *ad hoc* character, determined by needs; hence the name of *munera extraordinaria,* thereafter largely anachronistic, which they subsequently retained. Thus the list of additional taxes grew longer.

The *cursus publicus* was neither militarized[69] nor 'statized' under the Severi.[70] Without going so far as the laws of the fourth century, the papyri of Panopolis, under the tetrarchy, show that the *conductores* (responsible for the relay stations of the postal service, and known elsewhere as *mancipes* or *praepositi mansionum*) were civilians, appointed by the *boulē* from among the non-curials or even the lower-ranking decurions.[71] If in this same document an order is given to furnish the *mansiones* with various supplies, that was something exceptional and temporary, in anticipation of the next visit by the emperor. It proves that the relay stations had not, under the Severi, been given the chief and regular task of centralizing the *annona militaris* in kind, distributing it to the local garrisons and conveying it to the troops stationed further off. Of the two branches of the *cursus publicus* the more important seems to have been the *cursus velox*, which enabled the agents of the state to move quickly across the imperial territory. As for the branch entrusted with heavy transport, less well known (and mainly for a later period), this seems to have served not so much the *annona militaris*, which had its own circuits, as the movement of other fiscal goods.[72] We glimpse the way it functioned in the third century through the record of

[67] At medium distance: *SB* VIII.9875 (312; from Oxyrhynchus to Memphis), *Stud. Pal.* XX.91 (340); local: *P. Wisc.* 3 (as early as 257/259); *P. Panop. Beatty* I (298).

[68] For the second century, *IGRR* III.60 (215), *IGRR* IV.173 (Thyatira, Lydia); the protest of the Thracian village of Scaptopara dating from the third century: *CIL* III.12336 = *OGIS* 888 (also Hauken, *Petition and Response*).

[69] This was the thesis set out in 1902 by Domaszewski (*Westdeutsche Zeitschrift* 21), adopted by Pflaum (1940), and expanded by van Berchem (1937); a more moderate position is taken by Jones, *LRE* II.831.

[70] Despite the statement to this effect of *SHA*, *Sev.* 14, accepted by Pflaum (1940), quoted on 92–3 and 163; *contra*, Seston (1943).

[71] *IGRR* I.766. See also *CTh* XII.1.21 (335 rather than Seeck's 334); Gaudemet (1951).

[72] *CTh* VIII.5.13, 16, 33, 47, 48 (all measures dating from 360–80).

an arbitration between two villages in Phrygia regarding their respective duties of *angareia* (public transport), shared proportionally with the taxes that they paid in other ways.[73] The general interest and the necessity of the service could even cause the imperial authority to instigate the creation of a civic structure, with a view to making a curial group responsible for the functioning of public transport. This happened at Pizos, in Thrace, where the management (*epimeleia*, for Latin *conductio*) of an important *statio* on the road, originally looked after by the military, was passed to the neighbouring village notables who were raised to the status of members of the *boulē* of an agglomeration (*emporion*) which was created from scratch by moving in people from round about.[74]

Under the heads of law and order, we touch on spheres in which municipal and imperial institutions were still rivals, though unequal ones. Parallel and separate, they each had their sphere of competence. We need to speak of division and hierarchizing of tasks rather than of collaboration.

The example of Asia Minor Robert to say that 'each city had its own police force, and where documents do not make this known, we should assume it'.[75] The fight against local brigandage was still itself a responsibility of the cities, which mobilized citizens (*iuvenes, neaniskoi*, or others) under the orders of *paraphylakes* or of irenarchs: they constituted troops that were more or less adequate to their task. Intervention by the army was ordered only in cases of exceptional gravity. Otherwise, there were the *stationarii*, the designation for all the executive agents of the various provincial services – governmental, fiscal, postal – who were present at particular points in the territory. Some of these were always civilians: others were military men down to the time of the tetrarchy and then became civilians. The best-documented *stationarii* are the governor's *beneficiarii*, who were responsible for public order and justice. The way these soldiers operated in the sphere of local policing is well illustrated, for the Severan epoch, by a Berlin papyrus.[76] A decadarch (*decurio*), apparently subordinate to the 'resident centurion' of the Arsinoite Nome appeared before the prefect's tribunal on a charge of having illegally tortured one of his 'catches'. The *decurio* boasts of having captured and handed over 650 brigands, an astonishing number. Various allusions in the text suggest that these 650 arrests were a matter of routine for the 'resident centurion', or 'territorial centurion', as the annual meeting of the prefectoral *conventus* drew near: putting under arrest all persons involved on the wrong side of the law, initial 'sorting

[73] *AE* 1961.258; cf. Frend (1956); cf. Brunt (1966) 484.

[74] *IGRR* 1.766 ll. 18–19 (τοπάρχους βουλευτὰς); see also Robert (1940) 307 n. 5.

[75] Robert (1937) 99.

[76] Rea (1983), *P. Berol. inv.* 7347: the document could date from 207, with the trial held in 202/3. 'Brigands' stands for the Greek λησταί, the interpretation offered here differing in part from that of the editor.

out' in the presence of the *strategos* of the *nome*, first investigation of the case, possibly taken as far as the use of torture – all this in preparation for the appearance of the accused before the prefect or his delegates. It appears, moreover, that in order to bring them to court, the soldier had press-ganged some of them as sailors. In whatever way we reconstitute the debates, this document need not be related to a large-scale police operation directed against organized bands of robbers. That being so, however, to reduce this evidence to the dimensions of everyday practice by the soldiers who were acting as auxiliaries in the sphere of law and order does not diminish the importance of the role they played, by means of which a remote and abstract state authority manifested its effective and omnipresent vigilance. The second third of the third century now offers the parallel case of centurions of territorial police in Mesopotamia.[77]

The phenomeon of personnel bearing military titles does not, in fact, give any support to the theory that the Severan administration became militarized. In the third century the centurions and decurions stationed (*benephikiarios statizōn*) in various localities in Egypt for the purpose of keeping 'the peace' (*epi tēs eirēnēs*) are no different from the *beneficiarii* of previous centuries or from the centurions of whom Pliny the Younger speaks in his correspondence with Trajan.[78] One cannot therefore conclude that the army encroached on spheres that had been traditionally reserved to the civil administration, and, in any case, these soldiers had been detached from their units in order to perform these specific tasks.[79] The decurions and centurions who acted as *stationarii* were the normal consignees of petitions addressed to higher judicial authority: there is no proof to be seen here of the alleged solidarity between peasants and soldiers.[80] They were, furthermore, nothing like the *frumentarii* or *curiosi*, those special agents of the emperor, detested by the public, who were abolished under the tetrarchy only to be soon replaced by the *agentes in rebus*, evidenced in 319, but perhaps created by Diocletian, with the function not only of political surveillance but also of supervision of the way the administration worked and how the laws were applied.[81]

Under Diocletian the *munus iudicandi* always figures among the tasks of the decurions.[82] It is hard to make out to what extent in the third century the city jurisdictions remained active (we have proof of it at Aphrodisias, at least),[83] but we cannot doubt that they kept their traditional prerogatives (in respect, particularly, of minor civil actions, matters of property

[77] Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents' 557–8, and (1995) 87 and 108: *P. Euphr.* 2 l. 12, and 5 ll. 1–2: τῷ (ἑκατοντάρχῳ) ἐπὶ τῆς εὐταξίας Σφωραχηνῆς, 'to the centurion whose police precinct is the Sphoracene'.

[78] *P. Oxy.* XVII.2130; Robert, *Hellenica* X.175f.; Pliny, *Ep.* X.27–8 and 77–8.

[79] Gilliam (1940). [80] Rostovtzeff *SEHRE* 411ff.; Campbell, *ERA* 431–5.

[81] Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XXXIX.44–5; outside our period, Giardina (1977) 64–71.

[82] Arcadius Charisius in *D* L.4.18.14. [83] Reynolds, *Aphrodisias.*

and inheritance and the appointment of guardians), since we can see that in Africa they were still exercising them in the fourth and fifth centuries. The survival of municipal justice was endangered, above all, by the attitude of the plaintiffs themselves. Indeed, the latter seem in the third century to have sought more and more to have their cases heard by the Roman governor, even though this meant incurring higher costs to the extent that it became necessary to increase the number of provinces; the governors were more and more often referred to by the title of *iudex*, which expressed what was their principal activity (apart from supervising fiscal operations). The *Passions* and *Lives* of the martyrs frequently reproduce extracts from the official records of trials before a governor,[84] proving that judicial decisions (*commentarii*) could be consulted in provincial archives (*apud acta praesidis provinciae*), together with the *subscriptiones* giving the sentences pronounced in civil cases. All of which does not prevent the African documents (again) from testifying to the active role played by the *duumviri* both in the investigation phase and in the hearing of cases dealt with by the proconsul.[85] The episcopal court (*episcopalis audientia*) granted to the Catholic Church from Constantine onward[86] introduced a more effective competitor to provincial justice in so far as the new religious mentality might favour attempts to arrive at amicable settlements (on this last point 337 is too early to enable us to form an opinion).

In our period the cities were more and more directly involved in army recruitment operations. Under the Severi, as in the second century, it appears that voluntary enlistment (by soldiers' sons in particular) met the bulk of the requirements for the levy of troops. When this source proved insufficient it may be that contingents were demanded from certain cities, but our documentation of that subject is still inadequate. The main innovation during the period under consideration was the institution of a fiscalized system of recruitment which was to last all through the fourth century and even beyond: the *tironum praebitio* or *synteleia tirōnōn*. The earliest juridical mention of the *prōtostasia* (the *munus* of providing a recruit), in a law that can be dated between 285 and 293 (*CJ* x.62.3), is contemporary with the ephemeral appearance in Egypt of liturgists called *prōtostatai*. Soon after this, the *Acta Maximiliani* describe to us a conscientious objector being presented for recruitment by a *temonarius* (a synonym of *prōtostatēs*), while another law, *CJ* x.42.8 (of between 293 and 305) already bases the duty of provision of recruits on landed property and, more precisely, on the same fiscal unit – the *capitulum*, a multiple of the *iugum* – as eighty years later.[87]

[84] For example, the *Acta Maximiliani* (Musurillo (1972) no. 17), or, later, the *Acta apud Zenophilum* (Optat. *App.* I in CSEL XXVI (1893) 185–97); cf. Aug. *C. Cresc.* III.28.33, III.56.62, III.61.67, III.70.80).

[85] Lepelley (1979) 161–2, 216–22 and nn. 104–33 (based especially on the *Acta Purgationis Felicis* (Optat. *App.* II in CSEL XXVI.197–9), concerning a trial in 314).

[86] *CTh* I.27.I: Cimma (1989) 31–79. [87] Carrié, 'Fiscalité' 50–1, 61 and n. 138.

The first appearance in papyri of a fiscalized *praebitio tironum* dates from 324. It is all the more interesting in that it shows us this obligation being met (in actual recruits, not money) by a corporation of artisans: the requirement was therefore imposed not on landed fortunes alone but also on commercial incomes.[88] That the provision of actual recruits predominated in the first decades of the system's existence is further demonstrated by a text which can be dated to 330–7, conveying the list of the *tirones* presented by a *pagus*, along with the accounts for the collection of various taxes.[89] Payment of a tax in money, in substitution, did not become widespread, apparently, before the second half of the fourth century. The system introduced by Diocletian was thus not restricted to fiscalizing recruitment; it was also the imposition of a new type of *munus*, by which the state shifted the burden of that task on to the cities, the villages and the great estates.

The period saw much work done to fortify towns, in Gaul, Britain, Greece, the Balkans and the east. While expenditure on this work was in the interest of the population it also provided the army with strategic bases. In order to be defensible, enclosing walls had not to exceed a certain length, with the result that they left a large part of the inhabited area outside: archaeologists and historians have eventually accepted that this was the case, and ceased to take these narrow perimeters as proof of urban depopulation. As these works of town-fortification were evidently in the public interest, commentators have been led to presume that public finance was directly invested in them. However, once again, the ambiguity of the terminology of legislative 'euergetism', mentioned earlier, has caused the amount of public financing to be overestimated. A formula like *ek dōreas sebastou* or *sebastōn* in the dedications of ramparts newly built at Adraha (from Valerian's to Aurelian's reign)[90] means nothing more than that the emperor had given his official permission for the works. Rulers had been more generous in the previous century, when Marcus Aurelius built at his own expense – the formula was explicit in this case – the walls of Philippopolis and Serdica. At best, in this period of budgetary restrictions, the burden imposed on municipal finances by such works might be lightened by the provision of soldiers as work-force.

In completing this outline of the functions assigned to the cities within the overall framework of the empire's administration, we need to mention forms of local bodies other than cities: villages, imperial estates, even native tribal structures (*gentes*).

The villages were of very varying size: some had been, or might become, cities, whereas others were more modest.[91] The network of villages was

[88] *P. Oxy.* XLV.3261.
[89] P. Vindob. Inv. G25840 = PER NN 37, re-edited and improved by Bagnall (1983) 4–6.
[90] Pflaum (1952); cf. Carrié (1992) 422–3; Lewin (1991).
[91] Harper (1928); for the later epochs, Bagnall, *Egypt*; Dagron (1979).

hierarchically structured, and the title of *metrocomia* most likely designated the main settlements of the districts (*pagi* and so on). Even a village could address the emperor directly. Thus, we have the petition from Scaptopara, in Thrace, dated 338, already mentioned. Gaul continues to present special situations, such as that evidenced by an inscription at Agedincum (Sens) dated to 250. Within the *civitas* of the Senones, which possessed its own magistrates, the chief town, Agedincum, held the rank of *vicus*. One and the same person could assume functions in the city (aedile, *duumvir* of the treasury, *actor publicus* or treasurer, etc.), in the *vicus* (aedile again) and in one of the *pagi* (*actor publicus* again). It is probable that the city magistrates oversaw all of these territorial institutions.[92] Contrary to what has often been claimed, this system was not peculiar to Gaul. In the third century, in the confederation of Cirta (in Numidia), the *pagi*, which had already in the previous century been endowed with an *ordo decurionum* and a public treasury, received the rank of *res publica*, and in some cases adopted the title of *castellum* – an example of an incompletely achieved evolution to the status of a city proper.[93]

A strictly Roman district, the *pagus* had been re-established in Italy by Augustus as the basis for census-taking. Its role as a fiscal unit allows us to assume that it was established everywhere that 'there was a large agricultural population to be organized and taxed' – in Baetica, for example.[94] Diocletian's abolition of the immunity from taxation enjoyed by Italy revived it there, as is witnessed by a Lucanian document dated 323, the Tablet of Volcei,[95] and this is later confirmed by the Tablet of Trinitapoli. In any case, it was under the tetrarchy that the *pagus* and its *praepositus* were introduced into Egypt. Continuing both the tradition of direct administration and that of *adtributio* to the nearest *civitas*, the state had on the spot, in the person of the *praepositus pagi*, a sort of equivalent of its new representative in the city, the *curator*. Like him, the *praepositus* was usually recruited from the metropolitan curial class, which thus retained its old powers of administration of the city's territory (the *chōra*), and, like the *curator*, the *praepositus* was responsible to the provincial authorities.

However, the villages reproduced, in part and on a smaller scale, the range of public functions and liturgies that existed in the cities. We find, for example, under the chairmanship of the comarch (probably the new name of the *grammateus* or village secretary), a *koinon* i.e. a college of village notables made up of the 'elders' (*presbyteroi kōmēs*), later called 'principals' (*prōtokōmētai*).[96] In the west we find the same village institutions under

[92] *ILS* 7049 (Agedincum, Lyonnaise; 250) = Jacques (1990b) 66.
[93] See the texts quoted and commented on by Jacques (1990b) 62–3.
[94] Curchin (1985) 327–43 (quotation at 342).
[95] Volcei: *CIL* x.407 = *InscrIt* III.1 no. 17; Trinitapoli: Giardina and Grelle (1983) = *AE* 1984.250.
[96] Missler (1970); J. D. Thomas (1975b) 113–15; Lallemand (1964). Numerous *prōtokōmētai* are in *MAMA* III (Cilicia) and VIII (Phrygia), *IGBulg.* (Thrace).

the names *magister* (*vici*, or *pagi* or *castelli*),[97] 'magistrates' and a council of *seniores*, even a *curator rei publicae*.[98] The tax system gave rise, here as well, to a multitude of village liturgies. A papyrus of 329 (*P. Oxy.* LI.3621), which lists the appointments communicated to the *praepositus pagi* by the *tesserarius* and two comarchs of a village, shows us their range. There were eight collectors of taxes in kind: two for corn, two for meat, two for straw and hay, and two for soldiers' clothing (*sticharia* and *pallia*). The villages also had their own policemen. In Egypt these were called *epi tēs eirēnēs* (from the time of the Severi until the beginning of the fourth century), a title which later competed with *epistatai eirēnēs*, and finally with *irenarchs* (when they disappeared from the *metropoleis*, being replaced by the *riparii*).[99] It was the same in Africa, after our period, in the *castellum* of Fussala in Augustine's day.[100] At village level the functioning of the liturgies had to overcome two obstacles: the slenderness of fortunes (the 'estates' on which a large part of the local wealth was concentrated were classified as district administrative entities) and the short average life-span. The former meant that little respite was permitted to the richest villagers, while the second, contrariwise, meant that the obligation was frequently switched and imposed on very young persons.[101]

Under Septimius Severus the movement towards promotion to municipal rank of those civil *vici* which had developed near the military camps along the Danube continued, which meant that *canabae* disappeared. However, this tendency allowed for exceptions: e.g. the *vicus* of Mogontiacum (Mainz) did not become a city until after 276.[102] In Africa it was also the Severi who solved the problem of what to do with the territory of Carthage, by authorizing progressive fusion with the peregrine *civitates* (in the form of *municipia*) of the *pagi*, which had previously constituted the framework for Roman citizens. Naturally, the taxes that these cities had previously paid to Carthage were diverted so as to flow directly into the coffers of the state.[103] Generally speaking, we can say that practice varied: villages might either be improperly exploited (in terms of taxes and *munera*) by the city on which they depended, or, on the contrary, might constitute a place of refuge for residents of the city who wanted to escape their obligations. From this intense conflict arose. Despite the distinction carefully established by Severan legislation between the city's *munera* and the *munera* for which the

[97] Festus (ed. W. M. Lindsay, Leipzig (1913), 502): *magistri vici, item magistri pagi quotannis fiunt*. On the diversity of realities covered by the term *pagus*, cf. Curchin (1985).

[98] *Magistratus* and *seniores*: *castellum* of Aïn Tella (*CIL* VIII.17327, period of the tetrarchy). At Biracsaccar (another proconsular *castellum*): *suffetes* under Antoninus (*CIL* VIII.23876), *ordo* and *curator* in 374 (*CIL* VIII.23849).

[99] Geraci (1991).

[100] Aug. *Ep.* 20*.6 (ed. Divjak, *Oeuvres de St Augustin* 46B, letters 1*–29* (Bibliothèque Augustinienne, Paris, 1987, 300): *ad nocturnas custodias vigiles.*

[101] Bagnall (1978). [102] *ILS* 7079. [103] Gascou (1982b).

villages were responsible, decurions, or *boulē* members of the metropoleis were greatly tempted to designate for the fulfilling of their own obligations the richest villagers in their *chōra*. This was done around 250 by the members of Arsinoe's *boulē* – but the villagers protested. As the rules required, the dispute was submitted to arbitration by the prefect of Egypt. To justify their wrongdoing the Arsinoites pleaded poverty: 'Severus promulgated his law in Egypt when the towns were still prosperous'. Behind this argument of convenience, which we need not accept at face value, may be perceived not so much a general impoverishment of the province as the emergence of a certain degree of wealth among the villagers.[104] For this same reason many villages asked to be given independence through promotion to city status, a decision which required the emperor's authorization.

The village was not the only form taken by the 'non-city'.[105] The imperial domains were put under direct administration: for instance, in the event of dispute with the imperial procurators who managed the great *saltus* of Africa, there was no alternative to a direct appeal to the emperor. In the east the tribal structure of the local populations had often been left in place. On the Euphrates, however, there had been preserved or introduced villages, as we have recently been shown by the example of Beth Phouraia, attached to the territorial jurisdiction of Appadana.[106]

IV. THE FATE OF THE MUNICIPAL WORLD: CRISIS OR ADAPTATION?

In a rather loose way, modern bourgeois ideology has thought it possible to identify the present-day bourgeoisie with the *curiales* and has taken up their cause against the 'despotism' of a 'totalitarian' imperial state; this is a singularly anachronistic projection of contemporary realities. Thus the idea, now widely held, was forged that municipal institutions and municipal society entered a crisis in the second half of the third century. This catastrophic view of events has been largely rejected by recent research, which has found many indications, well beyond Constantine's reign, of continuity and vitality in municipal institutions,[107] linked to a context of economic prosperity.

For a long time it was claimed that the municipal senates suffered irremediable decline, decimated by economic crisis, deserted by their members, victims of fiscal despotism. Thus, Oertel, while admitting that at the dawn of the fourth century the 'bourgeoisie' was not 'wholly destroyed', described

[104] *SB* v.7696; see also below p. 300.

[105] Jones (1971) 69; Cracco Ruggini (1982–3) and (1989) 214–23.

[106] Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents' 541.

[107] In most cases the bibliography perpetuates this dark view of the period. The legal historians, particularly, regard it as established that the period marks the decline of the old city-state civilization: Ganghoffer (1963), Langhammer (1973); *contra*, Chastagnol (1978), Lepelley (1979) and (1981a), Liebeschuetz (1972), etc.

it as 'broken; spiritually and materially it had received a mortal blow . . . A rich "bourgeois" was thereafter the exception and no longer the rule'. It needs to be mentioned that, as he saw it, the institution of 'liturgisation' and the 'obligatory decurionate' went back to Trajan and Hadrian. With the crisis, the condition of local aristocracies had become more and more critical: 'Arrests, confiscation and executions were a sword of Damocles hanging over their heads.' The re-establishment of the empire in the fourth century, he considered, was achieved at the price of 'the establishment of the absolute state' and 'the realisation of an integral state socialism'.[108] This model consistently guided the way the sources were interpreted: in a classic instance of circularity, the sources seemed thenceforth to confirm the death-throes of municipal institutions, which were then said to have left the field clear for state despotism.[109] Still today, as noted earlier, many legal historians are not far from accepting this view when they describe Severan policy as the search for a model of an egalitarian society governed by a supra-national bureaucratic organism.

Do the sources allow us to conclude, in line with a classic formulation, that the municipal magistracies were no longer any more than a deceptive façade in a state wherein bureaucratic 'statism' was triumphant? That, deprived of authority, they had been transformed purely and simply into costly liturgies, into *munera* that were less and less attractive to candidates, who therefore had to be forced to take them up by virtue of heredity or through authoritarian nomination?[110] Almost alone in his time, Jones emphasized the permanence of municipal life. He even thought he could observe some progress, in the later period, of the principle of 'self-government.' 'In most of the bureaucratically-administered provinces the principle of local responsibility had sooner or later to be recognised by the institution of city government.'[111] He took as proof the two great reforms which, at the beginning and at the end of the third century, affected Egypt: the granting of city councils by Septimius Severus, then that of full city government by Diocletian. This interpretation of successive imperial policies is flawed by excessive optimism: in particular, it overestimates the impact of the 'municipalisation' of Egypt by the Severi to the same extent that it underestimates, for the two preceding centuries, the degree of similarity between the system of self-government in the Egyptian cities and the municipal system already developed elsewhere.[112] Nevertheless, Jones'

[108] F. Oertel (1939) in the previous edition of *CAH* XII[1] (quotations taken from pp. 267, etc., directly reflecting Rostovtzeff's model).

[109] A significant example is the formula *si lex cessat* in Ulpian, *De officio proconsulis* (*D* I.3.1), which was for a long time interpreted in the sense of an irreversible decline of local institutions (Seston (1962) 323) and of their being placed under the governor's tutelage (Liebenam (1900): 231): see, *contra*, Jacques (1984) 326–7.

[110] Petit (1955) 71–6; most jurists have made this view of the period theirs.

[111] Jones (1971) introd. xvi.

[112] Bowman and Rathbone (1992), and Bowman (1996a) in *CAH* X[2].

dissociation from the theory of crisis that had prevailed before he wrote remains of value. Indeed, if the situation of the cities and their decurions had been as it was described by Rostovtzeff and Oertel, how could we understand why the village of Tymandus, in Pisidia, sought to obtain (under the tetrarchy?) advancement to the rank of city?[113] Or why, under Constantine, the inhabitants of Orcistus, in Phrygia, a city which had been reduced to village status some time between 237 and 324, wished to recover their previous status?[114] They wanted *legum atque appellationis splendor*, 'the lustre of the title of city and of the possession of its own laws'. In response to their request, Constantine granted them, in an *epistula* found in that place, the right *ius vobis civitatis tributum non honore modo, verum libertatis etiam privilegium custodire*, 'to have not only the honorific status of city but also the enjoyment of the privilege of liberty'.[115] We should not regard these expressions as hollow rhetoric, for their juridical weight remained intact. An essential condition for a grant of the status of *civitas* was that there had to be, on the spot, a sufficiently large ruling class, capable of managing local affairs: at Tymandus the first group of these persons to be nominated, fifty in number, were chosen by the governor. The mere fact that *kōmai* acquired, or reacquired, this rank is enough to prove that the curial milieu was not becoming depleted at that time.

More recently, on the basis of the African documents, there has been a vigorous reaction to the traditional view; it is now claimed not only that the traditional hierarchy persisted but that the *curiae* continued to play their part, to exercise their powers and to give real content to the term city autonomy.[116] One institution lies at the heart of the debate, that of *curator civitatis* (*logistēs* in the hellenic provinces of the east). In the previous period it was temporary and, to be sure, exceptional. When the finances of a city needed to be set to rights, the central government despatched a representative chosen from among senators who did not belong to the city in question.[117] This official began to change in character under Diocletian, to become, from Constantine's time onward, a permanent protagonist in municipal life. In fact, he became the city's supreme magistrate, chosen from within it by the local council, subject to acceptance by the emperor.[118] The *curator*, as we can study him in Africa, saw, between the end of the third

[113] *CIL* III.6866 = *ILS* 6090 = *FIRA* I no. 92, rev. edn. *MAMA* IV.236; also Jacques (1990b) 20–1 (date: late third / early fourth century, or Julian's reign).

[114] *CIL* III.352 and III.7000 = *FIRA* I no. 95 = *LoisRom* 502–5; rev. in *MAMA* VII.305 (plus Feissel (1999)); cf. Chastagnol (1981a) and (1981b) (date: 324/6, and 331).

[115] Respectively, col. II, ll. 8–9 and col. III, ll. 10–14; the Tymandus text speaks (ll. 11–12) of *civitatis nomen honestatemque* ('the title and honourable character of city') on Orcistus: Feissel (1999).

[116] Chastagnol (1978); Lepelley (1981b) and (1996).

[117] See *CAH* XI², index *s.v. curatores* (*rei publicae*).

[118] Rees (1953–4); Lallemand (1964) 113; Jones (1971) 338 and 491 n. 53; *LRE* 726. For the preceding period, Jacques (1984) likewise declines to see in the curatorship proof of a premature decay of municipal autonomy hastened by direct intervention on the part of the central power.

century and beginning of the fourth, an expansion of his competence at the expense of the traditional magistracies, starting with the quinquennial duumvirs, in the fields of law and order, finance, public works and general administration. For a long time he was seen as the instrument of a takeover of the cities by the central power, not without some exaggeration of the extent of his prerogatives and the weight of his authority. This 'centralizing' conception of the curatorship, developed by historians who were convinced by the idea of a 'totalitarian' later empire and a premature decline of municipal society, is now rejected. If it prevailed for a time, that was because the *curator* stood at the intersection of two Roman administrative structures: as an imperial post the curatorship was neither an *honor* nor a *munus* and by virtue of that, it was subject to nomination by the emperor[119] – but this was, in fact, a mere formality, the actual nomination being made by the *curia*. Moreover, recruitment from within the *curia*, which from Constantine's reign onward was substituted for recruitment from among senators, resulted in a de facto municipalizing of the office. This was appreciated by the *curiales* to the extent that the curatorship came to be the crowning stage of the local cursus, reached after one had achieved the traditional honours (duumvirate, perpetual flaminate). While being responsible to the emperor and his provincial representatives, the *curator* was above all subject to supervision by the council. This arose from the fact that he held office for one year and was required to co-operate with the other municipal officials, especially in the fiscal field, which was the heaviest part of the administrative task devolved upon the cities.[120] Despite the importance that the *curator* soon assumed, which correspondingly diminished that of the old-established magistracies (especially the *duumviri*), the municipal cursus remained intact, as can be seen in the case of Africa throughout the fourth century.

The transformation of the office of *curator* formed part of the administrative reorganization of the province of Africa which is documented by a series of laws of 313 scattered through various chapters of the Theodosian Code.[121] Events in Egypt in 302–9 beg comparison. Recent studies of that subject, however, have led to different conclusions.

The leading members of the *boulē*, including the president, will have filled positions with an important administrative responsibility in the metropolis and in the nome. Their positions will thus have been linked to the *boulē*, but they were answerable for their conduct to the central government. A new or increased power in the nome for such officials as the *logistēs* will not have implied an increase in power

[119] *CTh* XII.1.20.

[120] Lepelley (1979) 193–5 compares the *defensor plebis*, an office that was imperial at its birth in 368, but quickly became municipalized: is this another illustration of the 'defeat' suffered by the imperial power in its attempts to impose upon the cities an authority coming from outside?

[121] *CTh.* I.12.1, 3; VIII.10.1; X.15.1; XI.1.2; XI.7.1.

and competence for the *boulēs* as an administrative unit, even if the *logistēs* was frequently or always a member of the *boulē*.[122]

Another Egyptian innovation is similarly ambiguous. Generally speaking, the rural territory around a city was administered by urban magistrates (decurions or *bouleutai*), but the case of Egypt was different, Rome having retained there the Ptolemies' institution of the *strategos*. The powers of this official, transformed into a *strategos-exactor* responsible for recovering arrears of tax, were then transferred, so far as the city's rural territory was concerned, to a newly created official, the *praepositus pagi*.[123] This might be thought a local peculiarity, were it not that the function is now revealed, by an inscription of Valentinian's time, to have existed in Italy.[124] These officials were certainly selected from a list compiled by the *curiales* from men belonging to their group, and nominated by the prefect, to whom they were responsible. Their temporary exemption from any other liturgy as a result of their appointment by the prefect shows plainly that the imperial service enjoyed priority over the municipal service. So the *praepositi pagorum* would not constitute evidence of a final stage in the municipalizing of Egypt, with the *territorium* of each city passing from direct administration by a representative of the state (the *strategos*) to curial administration,[125] but rather of a restriction of local powers. How are we to explain this divergence? It is no longer good enough to take refuge behind an alleged 'Egyptian peculiarity', since this province reflected in a significant way the general tendencies of the empire's administrative evolution during our period and constitutes, furthermore, the most precise observation-post for Roman administration at the local level. On the other hand, this difference in interpretation might be explicable to a large extent in terms of different approaches adopted by historians, depending on whether they set up their telescope in the western or the eastern part of the empire. Nevertheless there remains a general consensus regarding the survival of municipal institutions, at least throughout the fourth century.

The fact that the cities were heavily taxed in order to keep the imperial machinery working does not therefore entitle us to see in them mere administrative cells of the imperial state, nor to see the *curiales* of the third (and even the fourth) century as unpaid functionaries appointed arbitrarily by the governors, nothing more than executive agents of the central government.[126] We can even find evidence of the *populus* continuing to participate in local life. This is true in the first place of Africa, where the

[122] Bowman, *Town Councils* 125. [123] J. D. Thomas (1985); Whitehorne (1988).

[124] Giardina and Grelle (1983) esp. 295–300 assume that the *pagus* was introduced into Italy under Valentinian I, but point out that already in 323 the territory of the Volcei (Bruttii) was divided into *pagi*: might not this function have been introduced into Italy by Constantine, or even by Diocletian?

[125] Lallemand (1964) 39–40 and 96.

[126] According to Mommsen's description, repeated by Liebenam (1900), Langhammer (1973), etc.

division of the *populus* into electoral *curiae* seems to have affected the local *plebs* as a whole, and not just an élite.[127] This applies also however to Egypt, where it appears indeed that the records of a civic assembly held at Oxyrhynchus in the period 270/275 include popular acclamations aimed at nominating, there and then, the chairman of the *boulē* as *curator* of the city.[128]

Naturally, even when we put aside these alleged interferences by the provincial and central authorities in the life of the cities, the spheres and forms of intervention by the imperial administration remain many and various. Let us leave aside the matter of law and order, which we have dealt with earlier. An administrative title which has particularly stirred the imagination of modern writers is that of *kollētiōn*. From terrifying inquisitor thirsting for blood ('blood-sucker'), a typical invention of the alleged severity of the Severi, a less venturesome etymology has reduced him to the prosaic rank of *glutinator*, his Latin equivalent, a mere 'filing clerk'.[129] On a more serious level, the degree of supervision and interference wielded by the governors over the cities is, for any epoch of the empire's history, extremely difficult to establish. For the earlier epochs, indeed, modern historians have formed highly varying notions of this. It has for example been maintained that the decisions of local councils and assemblies were submitted for approval by the governor.[130] This opinion has recently been challenged through the demonstration that the powers theoretically possessed by the representative of the central government, which authorized him to look into the cities' financial and administrative affairs, were in practice restricted for technical reasons, in addition to the factors of geographical dispersion and the insufficient frequency of his supervisory activities.[131] The gaps in our sources, which foster the tendency to minimize the level of performance in ancient societies, have thus pointed us to a fresh target, the provincial archives, which, in the view of some commentators, were kept in a very unsatisfactory way. Proofs of this have been offered in the shape of a letter from Pliny to Trajan and, for our period, the reply sent in 201 by Septimius Severus and Caracalla to the request for exemption from taxes made by the inhabitants of Tyras (Moesia Inferior). In the later case, we may surmise that the emperors had to be content with the supporting documents offered by the interested parties themselves, since the administration, provincial or central, was unable to find any trace of earlier decisions. However, this case can be interpreted differently, and a comprehensive study

[127] Lepelley (1979) 140–9; on the *curiae*, Jacques (1990b) 310–401; *contra*, Duncan-Jones, *ERE* 227–83; Kotula (1965) 55; Gascou (1976).

[128] *P. Oxy.* XII.1413 = *W.Chr.* 1.45: cf. Jones, *LRE* 722–3 and n. 22.

[129] *P. Berol. Inv.* 7347. Cf. Rea (1983): κολλητίων, from κολλάω, 'to stick'. The term surfaces in the evidence at the beginning of the third century, but goes back to at least the middle of the second.

[130] Magie (1950) 641. [131] Burton (1975) 103–5; *contra*, Haensch (1992).

has rejected the idea that the provincial archives were disorganized and ineffectual.[132]

The authorization given to a city to create a new institution and engage in fresh expenditure took the form of imperial decrees (*epistulae, sacrae litterae*) which became municipal laws. Official terminology applied to them the terms *dōrea, megalodōria* and their Latin equivalents (*indulgentia*, etc.), even though no personal generosity by the emperor or any other form of public financing was involved. This was the case with the free distributions of food in certain Egyptian cities, the best known of which are those at Oxyrhynchus.[133] It appears that, when an important decision was needed, it was the city which, through an embassy, took the initiative by presenting for the sovereign's approval a draft decree which imperial sanction would turn into a decree that definitively possessed the force of law. This procedure was traditional in the east, where it actually went back to the hellenistic epoch. Though partly diverted to serve very particular ends, this is what we see being used by Maximinus in 311–12 in order to get round the policy of tolerance newly established by Galerius.[134] Intervention by the governors affected the most everyday matters of administration. For example, a prefect in Egypt under Aurelian compelled the members and former members of the *boulē* of Alexandria to pay a talent for restoring baths, and threatened those who fled from the city with deprivation of their civic rights.[135] Perhaps he was acting at the request of the rulers of Alexandria, as in other, better documented cases. The governors continued not to intervene in the choice of magistrates, despite a series of opinions by Ulpian which have been wrongly interpreted as signifying a suppression of municipal autonomy. At most (but there was nothing new in this) the governors gave their consent to the list of candidates compiled by the local *curia* or *boulē*, and in some cases they attended the meeting at which the election took place, though only as spectators who honoured a solemn ceremony by their presence.[136] They could, of course, compel a *curialis* who had been chosen by his peers to carry out his functions. But, besides the fact that they did this at the request of a local senate which was thereby having recourse to an authority more effectual than its own, these practices cannot be said to have become more frequent as time went by. On the other hand, the *pollicitatio* (a 'supplementary' euergetistic promise) was never binding, any more than its performance was declared obligatory by

[132] *CIL* III.781; III.12509 = *ILS* 423 = *IGRR* I.598 = *FIRA* I no. 86 = *LoisRom* 475–7; Haensch (1992).

[133] *P. Oxy.* XL (J. R. Rea, London, 1972): σιτηρεσίον ἐκ τῆς μεγαλοδωρίας τῶν κυρίων ἡμῶν; Carrié (1975) and (1998).

[134] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.2 and IX.7.1–15; Mitchell, 'Maximinus' (cf. *AE* 1988.1046, Colbasa); also *CIL* III.12132 = *OGIS* II.569, now *I. Aryk.* 12 (Arykanda); Carrié (1992).

[135] *P. Oxy.* LI.3613 (279).

[136] Ulpian, *De Appell.* I, in *D* XLIX.4.1.2–4; Jacques (1981), (1984) 337ff., 438f.; (1990b) 113–15.

third-century jurists. Similarly, imperial legislation guaranteed only the legal contributions required of a magistrate when he took up office (the *summa honoraria*), because these payments were often delayed. It gave no ruling about euergetism in the strict sense, which was subject to very strong social pressure at certain stages in the *cursus*.[137] As in the past, the governor thus intervened, essentially as arbitrator and mainly on request, to protect the cities from their own excesses and internal divisions, or in disputes between the various communities. Often it was a matter of problems of territorial demarcation (*limitatio* or *terminatio*), as with the conflict between two villages in Phrygia–Caria (in 253/260?) to settle which the governor sent a municipal notable of equestrian rank as his representative.[138]

A more serious threat to the autonomy of the cities was constituted by the first attempts made to confiscate their revenues for the benefit of the imperial treasury. In order to grasp the implications of this we need, first of all, to remind ourselves of how the municipal administration was financed. We know that the Egyptian cities of the third century had both a municipal fund (*politikos logos*) and a council fund (*bouleutika chrēmata*). The former was managed by treasurers who were appointed from among the members of the *boulē*, as were the auditors to whom they submitted their accounts.[139] This fund's resources consisted of the taxes paid by the rich (dues payable on entry into office, or *eisitērion*, equivalent to the western *summa honoraria*, along with payment for wearing the crown, or *steptikon*, and voluntary euergetistic contributions); rents (sometimes the proceeds of sales) of municipal properties; local taxes (on private houses and on markets); and interest on loans granted to individuals (*CPR* v. 23). The latter, the council fund, also gave credit, but exclusively to *boulē* members so as to facilitate by loans at moderate interest the financing of their liturgical obligations, especially the collecting of taxes.[140] On the revenues of the cities and the way these were used the African documents are our other source of information. The cities' *vectigalia* did not come solely from public lands and places (markets, commercial premises) that were let to private persons. They also included payments received for public services (distribution of water, entrance charges for the public baths) or for access to temples and sanctuaries, which, moreover, provided revenue from taxes on offerings and victims for sacrifice. All of these were farmed out by tender to *publicani*.[141]

[137] Jacques (1981), which Sirks (1989) missed, an omission corrected in Sirks (1993).

[138] Christol and Drew-Bear (1983), with other references.

[139] M. Drew-Bear (1988) 65–93 and 129–86 (143–55 for the commentary on *Stud. Pal.* v.199 *recto*); Bowman, *Town Councils* 41–2; Bagnall, *Egypt* 75–7.

[140] *P Oxy.* xxxiii.2666 (308/9) and xliv.3175 (233).

[141] Lepelley (1990) 412–14, quoting Tertull. *Ad Nationes* 1.10, 22–24 (CCSL 1, p. 26); see also Liebenam (1900).

The later period was marked by confiscation for the benefit of the imperial finances of the cities' revenues drawn from their landed property. Actually, texts which are explicit on this subject are of a later date – for example, the inscription at Ephesus, datable to 371 or 372, which nevertheless enables us to come close to the origins of annexation of the communal lands (*fundi iuris rei publicae*) to the domain of the *res privata*, one-third of the revenue (*reditus*) being paid back to the cities in order that they might finance their municipal undertakings.[142] In a law of 358 relating to Africa the same arrangement (at that time one quarter of the revenue was reassigned) is clearly ascribed to Constantine.[143] On the other hand, in 356 Julian praises Constantius II for 'the restitutions you made to the towns, rescuing them from protracted distress . . . after they had suffered, under your predecessors, deprivation of the necessities of life'.[144] This allusion, which can refer only to Licinius, is consistent with the fact that public works in Africa, which had been in full swing under Diocletian, stopped completely in 305–12, to restart only feebly between 312 and the accession of Julian.[145] Confiscation might, therefore, have come in under the second tetrarchy. Was it unprecedented? We may doubt that, when we read in Herodian that Maximinus confiscated funds that were set aside for the distributions of *annona civica* or for entertainments and contests (and even for statues in the cities and temples).[146] We can add that in 253/257(?), under Valerian and Gallienus, the *hieronikai* (winners in athletic contests) of Antinoe asked that the treasury pay them their due, as had been done for the Alexandrines after the two 'so-called' *aphaireseis* (deprivations). Was it not perhaps the case that there were periods when the cities' revenues had been confiscated by the treasury, which then released funds on an *ad hoc* basis, foreshadowing the system that would prevail in the fourth century?[147] Going back in this way we observe that the point of departure of this evolution was, in the Severan epoch, the de facto tutelage exercised by the imperial administration over the municipal revenues, which the cities already could no longer use just as they pleased.[148] Confiscation, though, was an incomparably more serious measure, which condemned a city to depending even more than previously on the wealth of its richest families. This has often been seen as connected with the establishment of a practice of attaching decurions

[142] *AE* 1906.30 = *FIRA* I no. 108 = *I. Eph.* I.42; according to Chastagnol (1986) 85–8, annexation to the *res privata* goes back to Constantius II rather than to Constantine; to the same effect Jones, *LRE* III.231 n. 44; Liebeschuetz (1972) 347 and n. 22, re *CTh* IV.13.5 (358); *contra*, Lepelley (1979) I: 69 and n. 41.

[143] *CTh* IV.13.5: '*divalibus iussis*'; cf. Camodeca (1969) 580–1.

[144] Julian, *Or.* I (*Panegyric in Honour of Constantius*) 42D–43A.

[145] Lepelley (1979) I: 70.

[146] Herod. VII.3.5–6.

[147] *P. Oxy.* LI.3611, ll. 7–8: δυοῖν ἀφαιρέσεων τῶν καλουμένων; in normal times these payments to athletes were funded from the city's finances: cf. Rigsby (1977), and M. Drew-Bear (1988) 280–326.

[148] Hermogenian, *Iuris Epitome* V, in *D* XXXIX.4.10.

to their city, accompanied by sequestration of their property – since Constantine the cities could claim the property of *curiales* who died intestate and without legitimate heirs[149] – but, as we shall soon see, the way this legislation of Constantine's should be understood has undergone profound revision. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the financial burden of the cities, of their management and their services, must have weighed more and more heavily on the outgoings of the liturgists, and so on private wealth, worsening the imbalances we have already pointed to for the previous epoch.[150]

The symptom most often invoked to show that the situation of the city worsened is, however, the alleged crisis in recruitment to the *curiae*. Current theory holds that membership of a *curia*, which was originally voluntary though subject to conditions of wealth and social level (*idoneitas*), became, in fact, an obligation (a *munus*) from the second century, while still being regarded as an *honor*, until this distinction itself vanished in Severan jurisprudence. Proof of this has been seen in the constant sharpening of the rules under which an *obnoxius* individual, when his *idoneitas* had been checked, was summoned to the *curia*. If there was a vacancy (through a curial having died without issue or qualified heir), the *curia* could nominate persons who fulfilled the conditions (*obnoxii*) but were not yet *curiales* (*vacui, vacantes*), and these were unable to escape unless they enjoyed a privilege of exemption.[151] Confirmation of the crisis is said to be supplied by the introduction, in order to deal with it, of hereditary attachment to the *curia*, which is still today presented by most historians as being characteristic of fourth-century imperial policy. However, despite the impressive number of laws directed against evasion by *curiales* preserved in the *Codes*, several recent studies have shown that imperial law never made the obligation to belong to a *curia* hereditary.

One condition for a person's ascription to curial rank was *idoneitas*: the capacity to hold this rank and perform its functions, defined both by moral and socio-cultural attributes and by a certain level of wealth. The latter could, of course, change in the course of the life-cycle, but, when this happened, the decurion was not expelled on that account; he merely became unqualified to sustain the most expensive *honores* and *munera*. It is likely that when he died, his son, if he had one, would see himself passed over by the *curia* in favour of someone wealthier, even if the person concerned had no curial antecedents in his family. The idea of curial heredity, from father to son (daughters being exempted anyway),[152] needs therefore to be

[149] *CTh* v.2.1 (MSS 319, but date much disputed); cf. Gaudemet (1951) 735; Nuyens (1964) 75f.; Goffart (1974) 28 n. 22. Camodeca (1969) 583.

[150] Garnsey (1974). [151] On this evolution: Nuyens (1964); Langhammer (1973); Sirks (1989).

[152] Naturally, the description of curial status given here applies to the period under consideration.

revised; for while continuity within the same families is proved in many cases (sons of *curiales* figured in the front rank of the *obnoxii vacationi*, persons from whom new appointments were made), we do not find that this was automatic, nor can the slightest juridical basis for it be found: the principle of *idoneitas* stayed distinct from that of heredity. We consequently cannot rule out a certain degree of mobility at the lowest levels of the category. Confirmation of the non-hereditary, non-automatic nature of the decurionate, and at the same time of the attraction exercised by local office, comes from the persistence of electoral battles, which is clearly shown in the African sources. When Tertullian denounces in the conduct of candidates the frivolity of their worldly occupations, even if we allow for exaggerations in his description, we do find here proof that there was genuine competition between candidates who were equally motivated, to the extent of their resorting to intrigues that are also documented by the juridical regulations of the time which aimed at putting a stop to them.[153] Again, in Italy, a study of the municipal album of Canusium (223) concluded that curial status kept its attraction for persons who did not belong to the order.[154]

Our understanding of the changes that took place depends, once again, on how we evaluate the power-relations between the central government and the cities and the degree of autonomy possessed by the latter. Following Mommsen, and through the construction of an anachronistic image of the ancient 'state', this autonomy has been seen as non-existent – in the early empire – by almost all commentators. Recent analyses reacting against this conception have demonstrated that we should distinguish between imperial law and the laws of the cities. The latter, in a way that had hardly altered since the beginnings of the hellenic *polis*, treated every citizen as being at the disposal of his city. Consequently, *obnoxietas* never needed to be defined by imperial law, since it was pre-existent. The emperor had, at most, two motives for intervening in this matter: to give aid to the cities, and to define the privileges granted to a well-defined series of exempted categories (the imperial staff, the army, the *corporati* in state service, and, from Constantine onward, the clergy). In principle, our period introduced nothing new – it is enough to refer to the Antonine legislation on the *corporati* in state service – but, rather, the increase in the numbers of *officiales* and of the military, and then the official recognition of the church, multiplied the occasions for the state to legislate in this sphere: the change consists, at most, of the way that the logic of the obligation of the *curialis* to the city was carried to its ultimate consequences, with use of the fierce prose which was typical of the fourth-century chancelleries. We need not see these new arrangements as a serious menace to the cities' autonomy. It was in the

[153] Tert. *De Pœnitentia* XI.4–5 (= CCSL I, p. 338); Lepelley (1990) 407–9.
[154] Garnsey (1974) 243–50.

interests of the *curiae* to keep their numbers up. Now the state possessed an authority infinitely greater than theirs for compelling newly co-opted persons to agree to join the council and thereby incur duties in the future. For their part, the interest of emperors in the municipalities was not in dictating law to them but in keeping in good working order what they saw as institutions of public interest; they proceeded in the same way with occupational groups that performed an indispensable public service.[155]

In theory there was no legal prescription for laying claim to an *obnoxius* curial who had gone into the imperial *officia*, and the city's rights over his descendants remained intact. However, law is one thing, practice another. The cities enforced very irregularly their de facto rights over their inhabitants – in cases of serious shortage of personnel, or within the context of rivalry between ruling families? – and there are many examples of a city's refraining from pursuing *curiales* who entered the imperial administration. For, let us not forget, claiming its *curiales* was exclusively the city's responsibility: the central government acted only if the city proved incapable of securing by its own means the reintegration of a 'fugitive' curial, and in such a case it gave absolute priority to the demand made by the local *curia*, even when this was contrary to the state's own interests (for example, in the case of a decurion, already in or likely to be in office, who joined the army, the city's rights over him were sacrosanct). This means, conversely, that the state did more than accommodate itself to the contrary situation, since, were it not for the passivity frequently shown by the *curiae* in relation to their deserter *obnoxii*, the state would have lacked any possibility of recruiting or renewing the personnel of its administration. This accounts for the contradictions that persist in the laws: on the one hand, the state never accepted that the situation should be frozen; on the other, it never found juridical solutions that would have allowed it to reconcile real (and indispensable) social mobility with the static schemas obtaining for the demarcation of categories within the population.[156]

Some commentators, while holding onto the idea that there was such a juridical recourse to coercion, have set limits to its significance: for them the law did no more than confirm a solidly established reality. Both the municipal album of Canusium in Italy (223) and the papyri from Egyptian cities like Oxyrhynchus and Hermopolis, when studied from a prosopographical point of view,[157] clearly show that the *curiales* were already a hereditary group under the Severi, in fact if not in law. What, in this connection, do

[155] A comparison already made by Matthiass (1891), long forgotten thereafter and repeated recently by Sirks (1989) 109–10 and Sirks (1993).

[156] The shrewdest analysis is that by Jacques (1985), largely followed by Sirks (1993). See also Jacques (1981).

[157] Canusium: *CIL* IX.338, dated 223, and commentary by Garnsey (1974) 229–52; Egypt: *P. Stras.* VI.555–7 (of 289–91) and IV.296 (of 326), commented on by M. Drew-Bear (1984a).

we learn from the sociology of the curial milieu? In the third century those *boulē* members who belonged to the richest families followed, from father to son, a dual career in the locality, holding both the municipal *honores* (in the east, up to the gymnasiarchy) and imperial offices (*basilikogrammateus*, *strategos* of the *nome*, irenarch, etc.). It is hard, in this epoch, to know whether they actually sought public service, or whether their eminent position in the city marked them out in advance for these employments, which, in some cases, were of necessity located in a city other than the one where their inherited wealth was located.

For a long time the general assumption was that the council was originally made up exclusively of former magistrates; that, in the second century, it tended to become a permanent body whose members had not all been magistrates already; and that, under the Severi, magistrates were always nominated from among the decurions, with *pedani* (non-magistrates) excluded. Some held that the Severi had introduced another departure from time-honoured usage: more and more magistracies, at first minor ones but later ones of some importance, were imposed by the council on individuals who were not council members, so that in reality the distinctions were no longer respected between 'bouleutic' and 'demotic' liturgies, on the one hand, and between magistracies (*honores*) and liturgies (*munera*) on the other.[158] On this point, too, however, our ideas concerning the composition of the municipal *curiae* have been revised (in the light of the Spanish texts of the Flavian epoch recently enriched by the Irni inscription), with the result that the Severan age did not witness the evolution that was ascribed to it. Scholars have been able to show that already under Domitian, at latest, most new magistrates were drawn from decurions yet to hold magistracies. That a significant proportion, a quarter, of the decurions of Canusium were *pedani* is not, therefore, an indication of a crisis of the curial class in that town, if from the beginning it was customary in the local councils for decurions to become magistrates rather than magistrates decurions. The contrary would be surprising, since simple demographic logic indicates that, out of the hundred individuals composing a typical *curia*, many could never achieve a local magistracy. To use F. Jacques' expression, the third-century documents thus tell us 'more about permanencies than about evolution'.[159]

In the documents it is naturally the highest strata of the curial class who appear most often: those for whom 'dynastic' continuity within the family offered the best chance, barring accidents, of staying in office. But this should not blind us to the existence of a certain degree of mobility

[158] These distinctions, which were doubtless very precise juridically, yet varied from one city to another, still, in the main, elude us: cf. Jones (1940) 175–6.

[159] Jacques (1984) 458f., 477–93 and 583–96; (1990a) 389.

at the various levels of this group. The door did, indeed, remain open for new men chosen from among townsmen who, though rich, were not yet included among the 'curial' families and, consequently, had not been called upon (*vacantes*). It is wrong to claim that, owing to a general crisis, the *curiae* were obliged to recruit increasingly from still humbler sections of society, or that Severan legislation lowered the standards for admission. Commentators have recently re-evaluated the social rank of the example which is invariably quoted in support of this alleged pauperization – the 'reaper of Mactar', who in an epigraph expressed his satisfaction at having been 'chosen by the *ordo* to sit in the *curia*'.[160] The text shows that these 'new rich' often aspired to a dignity from which they were excluded solely by the conservatism of the local notables. The contradictions within the curial class, torn between its desire to achieve closure of access, in line with the hereditary principle, and the realities of social mobility, are perceptible in the Egyptian text of the mid-third century already cited, in which a *prytanis* of Arsinoe states that the *nome*'s population includes no less than 300 persons – some townsmen, others villagers – who are rich enough to be nominated to the offices of *cosmētēs* and *agoranomos*, without, for all that, being members of the council.[161] Situations of this sort found their solution both in a reorganization of the territorial structure, the *pagus*, and in the enlargement of the councils to the sizes that are attested in the fourth century. Another shifting or extension of local administrative tasks took place in relation to the professional associations, objects of a special tax regime within the *capitatio urbana* and also called upon to perform liturgies. These obligations continued to be apportioned according to the traditional lines of division of the *dēmos*: the tribes had to perform in rotation the various liturgies of the year. In this sphere too, Diocletian must have introduced some innovations, since in Egypt a new title for the 'presidents' of the tribes, *systatēs*, is evidenced for the first time in 286.[162] The example of Timgad, where the municipal album for 363 has been preserved, is another piece of evidence that the *curiae* were not depopulated. If we deduct from the 168 names of curials listed the young men who attended without voting rights, along with the exempt members (*excusati*), about 130 effective *curiales* are still left, to be compared with the 100 *curiales* of Canusium 140 years earlier. Here, therefore, there would seem to be confirmation of the numerical reinforcement of the municipal communities which was necessitated by the increased burden of the *munera*.[163] This enlargement by itself contradicts the alleged concentration of effective municipal authority in the hands of a more and more limited number of persons. Following Seeck, indeed,

[160] *CIL* VIII.11824 = *ILS* 7457 (datable around 270): *ordinis in templo delectus ab ordine sedi*. Desideri (1987).

[161] *SB* V.7696. [162] *P. Oxy.* L.3571: on the function, see *P. Oxy.* LI.3622 introd.

[163] Lepelley (1981a) 467–9; the presence of the *honorati* at the end of the list has been reinterpreted by Jacques (1985) 326–8, who explains it by their *obnoxietas*.

some had seen final proof of the death-agony of the municipal senates in the break-up of the curial milieu into a majority of councillors made up increasingly of men of humble status and an élite in whom wealth and power were concentrated, the western *principales* and their equivalents in the east (*propoliteuomenoi*).[164] Recent research has shown that heterogeneity in the curial milieu was just as obvious under the high empire, with *viri principales, primarii, primates, proceres*, etc. prefiguring in all respects the *principales* of the fourth century.[165] The composition of an embassy from Zamia Regia to Hadrumetum (Sousse) on 31 March 322, for the purpose of joining the clientele of the powerful senator Q. Aradius Rufinus Valerius Proculus, shows how the hierarchy within the council was not determined by the previous careers or the ages of the decurions, but gave preeminence among the *honorati* to those whom the title of *egregius vir* equated with equestrian procurators.[166]

Similarly, the problem has been badly posed in the case of the magistracies. As has been shown for Africa, electoral competition and authoritarian nomination due to lack of candidates never ceased to co-exist, without there being the slightest sign of an evolution, juridical or institutional, towards a system based on obligatory service. There had always been the possibility of this, whenever necessary, from the beginning of municipal organization.[167] The Egyptian documents clearly show that the problem for the *curia* was often to secure from the persons nominated agreement to accept their nomination, as in the case of a *curialis* who stated that he lived with his father, thus making it plain that he had no wealth of his own – a gambit so classic that it was not even taken into account.[168] It appears, moreover, that during the third century the possibility of nomination from above served as a threat to recalcitrants who had been chosen; this is not to be taken as standard current practice.

In Africa, by virtue of local *consuetudo*, the role of the electoral *curiae* survived, at least in the form of acclamations by the people assembled in the arenas, even if the decisive choice was exercised by the order of decurions.[169] Although the *populus* did not formally elect the municipal magistrates, it was nevertheless present when the council nominated them, either using its power to reject a particular candidate or showing its approval (*suffragium*) by acclamations – attested in the minutes of council meetings in Egypt.[170] The need for this popular assent, particularly for nomination to

[164] Seeck (1901) 145–90; more recently, Liebeschuetz (1972) 101, but in the perspective of a continued role played by the municipal *curiae*.

[165] Kotula (1974). [166] *CIL* VI.1686 = *ILS* 6111c; see Jacques (1990b) 161–3.

[167] Even before its explicit appearance in the Iberian municipal law (end of the first century), we can deduce this from an edict of Octavius, *FIRA* I no. 56, mentioned by Jacques (1981) 269.

[168] *P. Oxy.* XII.1415 (end of the third century): cf. Drew-Bear (1989) 41.

[169] *CTh* XII.5.1 (325, Seeck); Lepelley (1979) 140–9, who thus opposes the conclusions drawn by Kotula (1965) 137–40: cf. also Lepelley (1990) 405.

[170] *P. Oxy.* I.41 (= *W.Chr.* I.45, in 300), commented on by Jones, *LRE* II.722–3.

the functions of tax collector (*exactor*), accounts for the survival of euergetistic practices (financing of entertainments and public-games or *munera*, municipal building work) by means of which the local aristocrats secured for themselves the popularity that was most needed for their municipal career to develop smoothly. This system, mainly unchanged from the time of the high empire, even though the detailed organization had been appreciably reformed, thus maintained its dual function of ensuring that the administration was run by a local élite backed by wealth, and a mitigation of the contrasts in wealth and status between the different strata of the city's population, who were united in adherence to urban values. Competition for local magistracies (*honores*) was still active, and the heavy euergetistic expenses that it entailed were still undertaken without hesitation by the 'good families', who in this way nourished a local patriotism that cemented the *concordia* between the *populus*, the civic body and the *ordo* of notables.[171] These individuals were undoubtedly subjected to a social pressure which Tertullian sums up in two expressions, *nativitas* and *substantia*, which also define the more juridical concept of *idoneitas*.[172] If they were approached it was hard for them to refuse the nominations that were put to them. Moreover, if they did refuse, they risked becoming the object of legal proceedings that could result in the confiscation of their property.

Actually, the signs of malaise appear not so much in the appointment of magistrates as in that of liturgists, to reintroduce a distinction that still has validity. It cannot be denied that, from the middle of the third century, the Egyptian documents show the difficulties that were more and more frequently encountered by the *boulai* in nominating liturgists responsible at local level for the functioning of the imperial services. They could no longer guarantee to their members the right to *anapausis*, i.e. a gap between two successive appointments. The stepping up of the demands made by the central government on the cities for 'furnishing administrative services' weighed, moreover, not only on the *curiales* but also on an entire section of the population who might find themselves burdened with *munera* of one sort or another. A situation like this, which became extremely problematic from the 260s onward, cannot be explained in terms of economic difficulties, if we consider how prodigal many cities were showing themselves, at this time, in their promotion of building work and euergetistic endowments.

Even more so, the multiplication, from Diocletian's reign, of the fiscal liturgies imposed on the *curiae* for the benefit of the imperial administration made it necessary to keep up their numbers and to protect the integrity of the private fortunes in land which ensured the performance of those

[171] Liebeschuetz (1972) 102–3; Lepelley (1979) 232–5, and (1981b).
[172] Tert. *De Idolatria* XVIII.9 (= CCSL II.1120); Lepelley (1990) 410–11.

functions. In fact (and there has been confusion on this point among commentators), the duties which the *curiales* tried to escape by illicitly entering exempt groups were not the municipal responsibilities themselves but the *munera* which were imposed from without on *curiales* as such, whether or not they were magistrates.[173] Legislation reflects this evolution. Whereas in the third century it emphasized protection of curials from improper nominations to liturgies, in the fourth it mainly served the interest of the imperial state, whose administrative effectiveness depended to a large extent on a group of municipal personnel that was numerically stable.

V. CONCLUSION

Historians have attributed the success of the principate in large part to the social consensus which for centuries was rooted in the structure of urban society. The basic elements of that structure were still in place at the beginning of the fourth century. Redistribution of the private wealth of individuals for the benefit of the community was still seen as the just price that the local élite had to pay if they were to accede to local 'honours'.[174] At the same time, there is reason to believe that the inhabitants of the cities put aside their internal divisions in order to defend their welfare, individual and collective, when this was threatened by the imperial state's demands, through intensifying their exploitation of the countryside. The capacity to do this lay with the *curiales* in their dual role as landowners and collectors of public taxes. It is significant that the great rebellions of the period (the Egyptian *boukoloi*, the Bagaudae in Gaul, etc.) involved the countryside but not the towns. No doubt it was to remedy this situation that the tax arrangements devised by the tetrarchy established a clear distinction between taxes payable by towns and by villages; this is clearly documented in the case of Egypt.

The town thus remained a far from negligible centre of power, wherein the local potentates confronted each other. If they abused their social, economic and moral ascendancy the imperial authority would set against them its own agents, its *officiales*, themselves of municipal origin and whose impartiality would be none the more guaranteed for that. As for those whom imperial legislation, starting with Constantine, called *potentes*, whether or not they came from the curial milieu, they represented a power alternative to and concurrent with that of the cities.[175] The question of patronage, a form of traffic in influence operating at the local level, which runs

[173] *CTh* XII.1, passim.

[174] Cf. *AE* 1967.549, datable to shortly before the middle of the third century, and Lepelley (1979) 148.

[175] Among the first pieces of evidence: *CTh* XII.1.6, for which 319 is preferable to the corrected date (318 suggested by Seeck): Camodeca (1969) 585 and n. 28.

through the entire second half of the fourth century, put to the test a curial power that was threatened more by its own internal rivalries than by state totalitarianism.[176] This was the situation in the hellenized east, where the civic tradition had firm foundations. For the *Constitutio Antoniniana* had not eradicated the politico-cultural difference which existed, since the very beginning of Roman domination, between the Latinized *civitates* of the west and the *poleis* of the hellenized east. In the west the *civitas* was linked only in a subsidiary way with a regional capital which was both a focal point and a shop-window of the higher forms of civilization, as was the case with the eastern *polis*. So, faced with the modest traces of town-planning and architecture that archaeology has revealed in many towns of the Roman west, should we cease to conclude, automatically, that, there, the *civitas* began to decline in the third century?[177] It would appear, on the contrary, that in many provinces of the west – Africa being the exception – local life was earlier and more thoroughly monopolized by oligarchies whose attitudes linked them with landowners' values more than with urban ideals. The fact that these areas were the first to detach themselves from Rome's authority, in the fifth century, confirms that the empire's fate was caught up with that of its cities. A principal failure of the empire was the inability of the central government to broaden its political and social base, in the way that the *Constitutio Antoniniana* seemed to presage; to keep up the vitality of a more diversified curial class; and to break out of its alliance with the local aristocracies, which turned to its detriment when and where local self-interest took priority over the collective interests of the empire.

We have earlier had occasion to reject the myth of militarization of the imperial administration from the time of the Severi. Study of military careers shows that already in earlier epochs soldiers had been employed as administrators since they joined the army, so that at the end of the third century, at latest, a completely bureaucratic cadre had come into being in the army, made up of military men who had never seen camp or combat.[178] We know, too, that, already under the high empire, governors tended to recruit some *officiales* for themselves, bringing into their offices in this way civilians in place of soldiers detached from the local garrison.[179] The necessity of using all available combatants in the wars of the third century could only strengthen this tendency and reduce the army's presence in the administration. It is easy therefore to understand that it was a straightforward matter

[176] The danger was not new, and recalls Plutarch's *Praecepta gerendae rei publicae*, in *Moralia* 814F–815D, on the treason of the 'leading men' (*prōtoi*) and 'magnates' (*dynatoi*) in relation to their cities.

[177] See, in this sense, the analyses by Reece (1992) and Dixon (1992).

[178] Thus, *ILS* 2173, and the other examples quoted by Jones (1949); cf. also Jones, *LRE* II.564; Gilliam (1940) 22; Rea (1980).

[179] Ulpian in *D* 1.16.4.1: see Jones (1949) 45.

for Diocletian to separate civilian from military appointments and then for Constantine formally to unify soldiers and bureaucrats in a single *militia*, while taking care never to mix them up.[180] Two epitaphs from Salona datable to the beginning of the fourth century provide the last evidence of military *beneficiarii* detached to serve in the governor's *officium*, one of them for the *inermis* province of Dalmatia.[181] A superficial interpretation is to be avoided here. Constantine's measure had the effect of completing the demilitarization of the provincial *officia*, to the point that those of the *duces* themselves, which were by definition made up of soldiers, were in fact filled with genuine bureaucrats, as emerges from study of the following period.

The traditional schema deduced from the political and economic aspects of the 'third-century crisis' a crisis of curial institutions, which in its turn explained a change, in the sense of greater coerciveness in legislation on the *curiae* and the *munera*. We can now contrast with this picture an analysis of municipal evolution in terms of continuity. This is all the more justified in that even at the end of the fourth century, neither the situation of the cities nor legislation reflects the transformations which used to be attributed to the Severi. The legislation of the tetrarchy concerning attachment to the *curia* (*obnoxietas*) is no different from that of the Severi, which itself only continued an earlier tradition. The curial groups presented the same mixture of fixity and renewal as in the past, contradicting the 'caste system' theory. The imperial government continued to draw benefits from the essential administrative role played by the cities, thus setting limits to the size of its own bureaucracy, and the measures which it did not cease to take to ensure the survival of municipal government and the personnel who manned it constitute the best proof of its interested concern for urban institutions.

Once we have eliminated talk of both 'statization' of local organisms and economic crisis, it remains for us to find new explanations for the marked insistence characterizing Severan legislation on recruitment to the *curiae* and performance of the *munera*. Commentators' attention was long distracted from the real object of this normative work, namely, the exemptions.[182] If there is anything new here, it lies in the opportunities offered to individuals to distinguish themselves elsewhere than in local urban life, while escaping from its constraints. The central and provincial *officia*, and

[180] A careful distinction continued to be made between the *militia armata* and the *cohortalis militia* (*CTh* VII.4.1, in 315).

[181] Egger (1926) no. 75 = *CIL* III.8727 and add. 1510: *beneficiarius legionis XI Claudiae* (legion of Durostorum, in Moesia); n. 80 = *CIL* III.8754 and Suppl. 1, p. 1510: *beneficiarius consularis Pannoniae superioris*.

[182] This is still the case with Langhammer (1973) and Neesen (1980), who assume a stricter regulation of the *munera* and their multiplication.

later the Christian clergy, offered many alternatives to a municipal career, and motives for getting out of the latter, which could not be regarded as dishonourable either by the community or by the individuals concerned.[183]

Even better, these alternatives carried with them new forms of social prestige. Here we find ourselves really at the heart of the essential contradiction of the Roman empire, a 'twofold city' wherein it was hard to favour the one without weakening the other.

[183] Millar (1983), followed by Sirks (1989) 107–9.

CHAPTER 10

EGYPT FROM SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS TO THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINE

ALAN K. BOWMAN

I. PROLOGUE

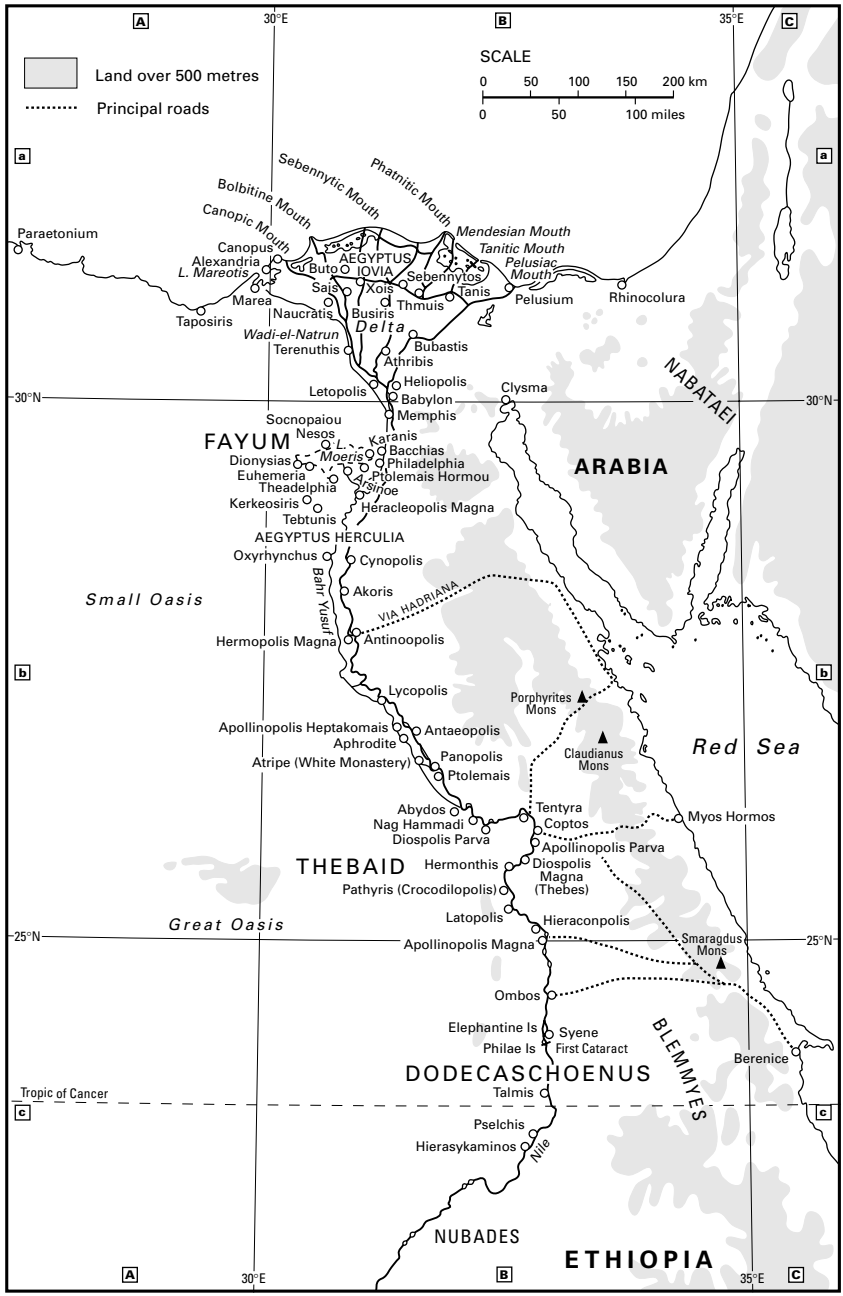
The history of the Roman province of Egypt in the 'high' imperial period is treated in an earlier volume, an account which was intended to be generally valid for the first two centuries A.D.[1] The present chapter continues and complements that account and is in turn complemented by a new treatment of Byzantine Egypt.[2] One obvious anomaly requires explanation and justification: this chapter is not matched by corresponding chapters on the other provinces, as was the case in the earlier imperial volumes of the new edition.[3] There are three main (and connected) reasons for privileging Egypt in this way. First, there is an exceptional amount of detailed documentary evidence for the province in the third and early fourth centuries, quite unmatched elsewhere. Second, important items of that evidence have often been generally taken, whether rightly or wrongly, as more broadly relevant to the 'third century crisis' of the empire in general and some have been central to interpretation of key aspects of that phenomenon.[4] Third, there can be no doubt that the plentiful evidence for the period A.D. 284–337 is relevant and applicable to the empire at large in significant respects. Whatever might be thought of the 'Sonderstellung' of Egypt in the earlier period, it became more closely knitted into the structures of the eastern empire after 284 and lost some of its unique characteristics (such as the Alexandrian currency). Allowing for much idiosyncratic detail inherited from an earlier period, it is clear that the evidence for administration,

[1] Bowman (1996a); cf. *CAH* X², p. xxi. In the period from Vespasian to the death of Commodus, significant events deserving attention include: the proclamation of Vespasian and his visit to Alexandria; the Jewish revolt of 115–17; the visit of Hadrian and the foundation of Antinoopolis; the incidence and effects of the Antonine plague; the revolt of the Boukoloi; and the proclamation of Avidius Cassius.

[2] By J. G. Keenan in *CAH* XIV ch. 21*c*; see also *CAH* XIII ch. 23*b* (Smith (1998)). Modern works offering general discussion of Egypt and the evidence of the papyri (particularly plentiful for the third and fourth centuries) include Bowman (1976) and (1996b); Keenan (1982–3); Lewis, *Life in Egypt*; Lallemand (1964), the standard work on administration; Bagnall, *Egypt*. Editions of papyri are cited according to the conventions in J. F. Oates *et al.* (2001) or Turner (1980).

[3] It is interesting that the only province separately discussed in the first edition of *CAH* XII is Britain.

[4] E.g. *P. Oxy.* XII.1411, on which see Rathbone (1996).



Map 5 Egypt in the early fourth century

taxation and the economy in Egypt after 284 significantly reflects or bears upon the character of changes which took place in the empire as a whole.[5]

II. EGYPT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EMPIRE

Egypt continued to occupy an important place in the imperial consciousness, as it had done since the time of Augustus. The attempted usurpation of Avidius Cassius in 175 underlined its sensitivity, recalling the events surrounding the proclamatioin of Vespasian.[6] Imperial visits in the third and early fourth centuries highlight a number of significant events and issues. The visit of Septimius Severus in A.D. 199/200 produced important administrative and legal measures (see below) and there is an extract from court proceeedings at Alexandria before the emperor and his *consilium* which shows him hearing embassies of Egyptians from the *chora*.[7] It may be no coincidence that the first Roman senator from Egypt is attested in this reign. The visit of Caracalla, who is alleged to be the last emperor to set eyes on the corpse of Alexander the Great, offers a stark contrast. This was remembered for his vicious massacre of the Alexandrian populace in A.D. 215.[8] Severus Alexander may have planned a visit which did not materialize.[9] Apart from at least one coherent attempt at reform under Philip the Arabian which must have been generated at the highest level and focused on land, liturgies and taxation,[10] and the well-known evidence of the Decian *libelli* for the persecution of Christians, little of value can be drawn from the confused evidence for the period of the 'military anarchy' in which short-lived or bogus emperors and usurpers appear and disappear with bewildering rapidity. The province of Egypt played a central role in the military and political struggles in the east during the 260s and 270s. The effectiveness of Palmyrene resistance to the Sassanids enabled Zenobia and Vaballathus, the widow and son of Odenathus, to proclaim themselves as holders of imperial power in Egyptian documents dated between 270 and 272, but by the summer of 272 Aurelian had defeated them and regained control of Egypt.[11] The evidence for the 'revolt of Firmus' (an Alexandrian merchant) in the aftermath of these events is unsound and the whole episode may be a fiction. The existence of a *corrector* named Claudius Firmus in 274 is not in doubt, however, and may suggest the need to re-establish stability after a period of difficulty.[12]

[5] This is reflected *inter alia* in chs. 3 on Diocletian and the tetrarchy (Bowman) and 9 on Local Administration (Carrié). Christianity is not dealt with in detail here, but in ch. 18*b* (Clarke); cf. Smith (1998).

[6] See Bowman (1970); Henrichs (1968). [7] Westerman and Schiller, *Apokrimata*; *P. Oxy*. XLII.3019.

[8] Dio, LXXVII.22–3. [9] Thomas and Clarysse (1977). [10] Parsons (1967); Bianchi (1983).

[11] For the chronology, see *P. Oxy*. XL.15; cf. *P. Oxy*. XII.1413. [12] Bowman (1976) 158.

Serious revolt in Egypt is certainly attested on two occasions in the reign of Diocletian. A revolt in the Thebaid necessitated the presence of Galerius with detachments of troops at the end of 293 or in 294.[13] More serious was the outbreak of the revolt of the usurper Lucius Domitius Domitianus, the chronology of which has been hotly disputed.[14] It now seems certain that it took place in 297/8 rather than 296/7. Diocletian appeared in Alexandria in person at the conclusion of the revolt in spring 298. After the revolt, Diocletian travelled up the Nile to the frontier region; there is detailed evidence for the arrangements made for his visit to Panopolis in the autumn of 298. It may have been at this time that the frontier arrangements were adjusted. Procopius is explicit that Diocletian was present when this was done, that the Dodekaschoinos was abandoned and that the Nobatai were resettled. The island of Philae, garrisoned by the legion I Maximiana was now the southernmost point of occupation.[15] There may have been another visit to Egypt by Diocletian later in his reign. The evidence of one papyrus supports this and can perhaps be linked with the statement of a chronographer that he was in Alexandria when Peter the Bishop was martyred and that of Procopius that the emperor organized a distribution of free corn. This is likely to have been the occasion on which the Epistle against the Manichees was promulgated.[16] This was the last securely attested visit by a Roman emperor to Egypt: there is clear evidence that a visit by Constantine was planned in 325 after the defeat of Licinius, but none that it actually took place.[17]

III. THE PROVINCE AND ITS ADMINISTRATION

There is little evidence for significant change in the internal configuration of the province and its major subdivisions until the latter part of the period under discussion here. Until the time of Diocletian, Egypt was divided into three (or possibly four) *epistrategiae*: the Delta (one or two), the Heptanomia with the Arsinoite, and the Thebaid. Under Diocletian the Thebaid was enlarged to include the Hermopolite Nome and became a separate unit governed by its own *praeses*, while the remainder of Egypt remained in the hands of the *praefectus Aegypti*. The Thebaid was further subdivided into

[13] Barnes (1976) and 'Emperors'; Rea *et al.* (1985); cf. Bowman (1976) 159 and, for the places involved, Bowman (1984).

[14] Thomas (1977); Metcalf (1987); Barnes 'Emperors'.

[15] *P. Panop. Beatty* 1; cf. Bowman (1976) 159 and (1978). Procop. *Hist. Arc.* 1.19.29; *Not. Dig.*; *Or.* 31.37. The well-known inscription copied by Pococke should not be taken as evidence for this retrocession of the frontier, see Brennan (1989).

[16] Bowman (1976) 160; El-Saghir *et al.* (1986); Barnes, *NE* 55; *Coll.* XV.3. For the possible presence of Maximinus in the Thebaid in 305 see *CJ* III.12.1 with Barnes, *NE* 66, but there is no other evidence for this.

[17] *P. Oxy.* X.1261; XIV.1626; Barnes, *NE* 76 n. 124.

two parts – Upper and Lower – each with its own procurator. The change was completed by 298 and it may have been initiated at least as early as 295. Both the Egyptian provinces belonged to the diocese of the Orient and it is probable that the introduction of the dioceses should be placed in 293.[18] These changes have implications for the internal organization of the military garrison. The military establishment may have significantly increased in overall numbers, although it is impossible to be sure. Certainly, there were more legionary units, of a smaller size, with fragmentation designed to achieve a more balanced arrangement than previously obtained. The auxiliary units, too, were reorganized, apparently with the same end in view; the renaming of the towns of Diocletianopolis and Maximianopolis (even if not new foundations), the construction of a fort at Hieracon and the conversion of part of the temple of Amon at Thebes (Luxor) around the turn of the century all point to very considerable activity. It is important, moreover, that after the division of the province Egypt and the Thebaid continued to be regarded as one military unit, with troops and supplies being regularly transferred across the border.[19] The earliest evidence for the *dux* (an inscription of 308)[20] brings out the same point: the command covered Egypt, the Thebaid and the two Libyas.

Later the province of Aegyptus, comprising Middle and Lower Egypt but excluding the Thebaid, was itself divided into two separate provinces, each with its own *praeses*, called Aegyptus Herculia and Aegyptus Iovia, names which evidently evoked the senior members of the first tetrarchy. Iovia included Alexandria and the western Delta, Herculia the eastern Delta and the Heptanomia with the Arsinoite. The inception of this arrangement is traditionally dated to 314/15 and it is clear that it was short-lived, lasting only about ten years, during which time (in 322) the Heptanomia was in turn perhaps split off to form a province called Mercuriana; the three units were reunited under a prefect at some point between September 324 and February 326.[21]

The internal administration of the province underwent important changes between 193 and 337. In an earlier volume (*CAH* X) an account was offered which was intended to be valid for the first two centuries A.D., but concentrated largely on the Augustan and Julio-Claudian periods. There were significant alterations and innovations in the second century, within the framework established by Augustus: in particular, changes in taxation and crucial developments in the liturgical system under Trajan and the introduction of new officials, notably the ἀρχιερεύς and the διοικητής, at

[18] *P. Panop. Beatty*, pp. xv–xxi. For the creation of the dioceses, see Hendy (1972).

[19] Bowman (1978) 31; Duncan-Jones, *Structure* ch. 7. [20] *AE* 1934.7–8.

[21] For the dates see Bowman (1976) 162–3; Thomas (1984); for the areas *P. Oxy.* LI.3619 introd. The idea that there was third province called Arabia Nova is to be rejected; see *P. Oxy.* L.3547; Mayerson (1983), (1986); and Cotton (1997).

procuratorial level by Hadrian.[22] Under Septimius Severus – indeed, during his visit to Egypt – a major change was introduced which granted to Alexandria the right, which it had long sought, to have a βουλή. At the same time, however, the same privilege was extended to the metropoleis of the *nomes*, which must have somewhat diluted the pleasure of the Alexandrians.[23] This was an attempt to introduce organs of local government and administration, run by the metropolitan élite bouleutic class, which was a familiar feature of the eastern provinces (and already existing in Egypt in the 'Greek cities' of Ptolemais and Antinoopolis). The move may have been less radical than has been supposed if it is true that some responsibility for local government had been vested in the magisterial (or gymnasial) class from the Augustan period and had continued to increase through the first and second centuries,[24] but it will nevertheless represent an attempt to take some of the weight of administration away from the local representatives of the central bureaucracy and to give the metropoleis an illusion of 'autonomy'. At the same time, the new councils appear to have been made responsible for the collection of imperial taxes in the whole of their *nome* and this might connect with important evidence for changes in the concept of *origo* (ἴδια) at this period as a result of which the ἴδια will have been redefined as the *nome* and all permanent absence from it will have become illegal.[25] The evidence for the legal decisions of Septimius Severus in Egypt reveals responses to problems of detail concerning property, taxation, status and inheritance in the country as a whole, not just Alexandria.[26] The increasing growth and oppressiveness of the liturgical system is evident and a document from the middle of the third century refers to a ruling of Septimius Severus that villagers were not to be impressed into metropolitan liturgies as having been made during a period of prosperity.[27] These developments are important and should occupy the attention formerly devoted to two supposed changes or developments which can now be shown not to belong in the context of the Severan period at all – the introduction of the *annona militaris* and the replacement of the *idios logos* by the *ratio privata*.[28]

Examples of isolated individual measures, such as the remission of crown-tax by Severus Alexander, do not need lengthy comment.[29] The next period of major change comes in the reign of the Philippi in the 240s, when the accumulation of evidence suggests a coherent attempt at reform,

[22] Bowman (1976) 167–8; Hagedorn (1985).

[23] Bowman, *Town Councils*. For the emphasis on Alexandria, see *P. Oxy.* LI.3613.

[24] Bowman and Rathbone (1992). [25] Thomas (1975a), 217–18; cf. Braunert (1955–6) 291.

[26] Westerman and Schiller, *Apokrimata*; *P. Oxy.* XLII.3019; cf. Rea (1977). For a judgement given in Latin, see *P. Oxy.* LI.3614 l. 3.

[27] *P. Lond.* 2565 = *SB* V.7696. The fundamental distinction between liturgies (λειτουργίαι) and magistracies (ἀρχαί) was by this time obscured by the fact that magistracies were now so burdensome that they felt like liturgies and provoked similar efforts to avoid them (see e.g. *P. Ryl.* II.77).

[28] Bowman (1976) 164–5, 168–9. [29] Bowman (1967).

orchestrated by Marcellus and Salutaris, a *rationalis* (*katholikos*) and a procurator respectively, the former post probably a special innovation and ranking with the prefect.[30] This attempt at radical overhaul certainly focused on two of the most important and problematical areas, landholding and liturgies, and there is circumstantial evidence which suggests overhaul of the taxation system and the *annona*, which may also have fallen within the purview of Marcellus and Salutaris. There is good reason to suppose that it was at this time that the office of δεκάπρωτος was introduced.[31] This perhaps supplies a good contextual background for the increasing amount of evidence after 250 for the *annona militaris* and the oppressiveness of the liturgical system. The reforms presumably aimed at increasing efficiency and revenue; there is no evidence that they succeeded and a good deal that suggests failure. A symptomatic phenomenon may be the disappearance of census returns after 257–8, although it is probable that records of population and property were maintained in some form.[32] More explicit is the evidence for major reforms in Egypt in the reign of Diocletian.

The reforms under Diocletian and his immediate successors (i.e. between *c.* 287 and 312) amount to a radical overhaul of the Egyptian administration, brought about by stages over more than two decades.[33] It is perhaps unlikely that this series of reforms was planned and introduced with any overall vision of the end in view. More probably they were the product of a pragmatic approach to individual problems which became more acute in the latter half of the third century: malfunction in local government, difficulties in the liturgical system, the need to supply the armies, problems with the currency and the collection of taxes. A chronological sketch of the major elements is a necessary preliminary to an appreciation of their general significance.

Changes in the structure of the higher levels of the bureaucracy began fairly early in the reign but it is impossible precisely to date all of them. The earliest dated attestation of the καθολικός (*rationalis*) as overall head of finance in the whole of Egypt, displacing the *dioiketes*, is dated to 286. The activities of the *magister privatae* and the *procuratores privatae* are amply attested in papyri of 298 and 300 and it is to be presumed that these officials subsumed the earlier functions of those in charge of the *idios logos* and the usiac account.[34] The three or four *epistrategoi* had all disappeared by 302, but perhaps not all at the same time.[35]

[30] Parsons (1967); *P. Oxy.* XLII.3046–50; cf. Bianchi (1983). This view of the *rationalis* removes another of the supposed Severan reforms.

[31] Thomas (1975b). [32] Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 9–11. [33] Bowman (1974).

[34] *P. Oxy.* X.1260; *P. Panop. Beatty* 1 and 2.

[35] Thomas (1982) 64–8: in the Heptanomia the office seems to have lasted until 297, whereas in the Thebaid it had probably disappeared at least two years before this, presumably in connection with the division of Egypt (above). But it should be noted that, if there was a short-lived quadripartite division in place by 322, it may have followed the lines of the old *epistrategiae*.

Another early significant measure may have been the introduction in 287/8 of a five-year cycle of ἐπιγραφαί for tax assessment and collection. A more complex series of changes took place in the last five years of the century, which need to be elucidated in the context of the revolt of L. Domitius Domitianus in 297/8.[36] The idiosyncratic currency denomination employed in Egypt in the Roman period, the so-called Alexandrian tetradrachm, was discontinued in 296, after the first Diocletianic coinage reform, and the mint of Alexandria henceforth issued the same denominations as the rest of the empire. Other changes appear to have included the introduction of a new poll tax in cash, the ἐπικεφάλαιον, and perhaps the disappearance (although in the event only temporarily) of the most important of the local administrative posts, that of the *nome strategos.*[37] Of much greater general importance was the promulgation by edict of the prefect Aristius Optatus on 1 March 297, of a new taxation system employing a new method of identifying the units according to which the levying of taxes was to be calculated – clearly the Egyptian version of *capitatio* (personal liability) and *iugatio* (liability on land)

> Our most provident emperors . . . having learned that it has come about that the levies of the public taxes are being made haphazardly, so that some persons are let off lightly and others overburdened, have decided to root out this most evil and baneful practice for the benefit of their provincials and to issue a deliverance-bringing rule to which the taxes shall conform. Accordingly, the levy on each aroura according to the classification of the land, and the levy on each head of the peasantry, and from which age to which, may be accurately (?) known to all from the (recently) issued divine edict and the schedule annexed thereto, copies of which are prefixed for promulgation to this edict of mine.[38]

Not long after this there begins to appear evidence for the activity of *censitores*, no doubt attempting to carry out a new and comprehensive land survey on which the new tax system would be based. This summary account perhaps makes the innovations of this quinquennium seem more coherent than they in fact were; the revolt of Domitianus will have caused some interruption and delay at the very least, if not the abandonment, of some measures. To what extent that revolt was actually caused or inflamed by opposition to the new tax system remains a matter of speculation.

The early years of the fourth century saw very significant changes in local government which complemented those at the higher levels of the administration. The councils of the metropoleis had been headed by an executive

[36] Thomas (1977); Barnes, 'Emperors'.

[37] Bowman (1974), denied by Whitehorne (1988).

[38] *P. Cair. Isid.* 1 (for the restoration and translation of lines 8–10 see Crawford and Reynolds (1975) 161–2).

president (*prytanis*) and this continued to be the case; but a number of other officers were introduced, who together with the president formed a sort of executive board of the council: principally the *logistes* (finance officer, the *curator civitatis*), the *syndikos* (legal officer), *exactor* or *strategos/exactor* (tax officer). It seems clear, too, that their area of competence was explicitly defined as the *nome* as a whole, not just the metropolis, although there were important respects (principally relevant to taxation) in which this had been true since the Severan period. By 307/8 the geographical subdivisions of the *nome*, formerly called toparchies, had been superseded by *pagi*, with new regional officials called *praepositi*, who were responsible to the *logistes* and the *exactor*. The *dekaprotoi*, introduced half a century earlier, now disappeared and the process of change highlights the decline in importance of the *strategos* of the *nome* who by 307 was certainly a much less significant figure than he had earlier been.[39] It is very significant that these new officials were drawn from the ranks of the local councillors and, to outward appearance, continued to function within the framework of the traditional magistracies and liturgies undertaken by the curial class. But there are differences which are perhaps more important than the similarities. One is that they had an increased degree of direct responsibility to the officials of the central bureaucracy and were thus more carefully monitored. Another is that they took over some of the responsibilities of officials, such as the *strategos* of the nome, who had formerly been outsiders, appointed to hold office in nomes other than their own and hence intended to be more impartial. The vesting of more power in the local élite propertied classes was of major importance and was probably an important factor in creating a privileged and powerful small group among the *curiales*.[40] Finally, among this roster of changes, we should note the replacement, in 313 or 314 but with retrospective effect from 312, of the five-year tax cycles by a new calendaric mode of reckoning, fifteen-year cycles called indictions, an innovation which was to be very long-lived indeed.[41]

Something may be said about the broader character and significance of these changes in administration. At the centre of the imperial consciousness of Egypt was the matter of revenue. Land, liturgies and taxes are recurring preoccupations. At the higher levels, changes in the organization of regions and officers might be thought to be largely cosmetic – the responsibilities for civil, military and judicial administration divided or reconfigured

[39] For details see Bowman, *Town Councils* and (1974); Bagnall, *Egypt* 54–62; *P. Oxy.* LIV.222–9; Lallemand (1964); Thomas (1985); Sijpesteijn (1992). The final disappearance of the key office of *strategos* of the *nome* and the evolution, in its place, of the *exactor* or *strategos/exactor* is particularly difficult to elucidate.

[40] That is the equivalent of those known elsewhere in the empire as *principales*, to which the term προπολιτευομένοι may correspond.

[41] Bagnall, *Egypt* 328.

(not necessarily in accordance with distinctions implied by those labels) as between prefects, *praesides*, procurators and *duces*. Collection of taxes and organization of the military are two central features of the responsibilities of such officers which are perennial and the evidence for the Diocletianic period, particularly the papyri from Panopolis, suggest changes in the organization of the military supply system which complement the changes in the taxation system.[42]

The evidence for changes in local administration in the Severan and Diocletianic periods is also suggestive. The grant of councils to Alexandria and the metropoleis of Egypt carried with it the creation or recognition of a broader urban élite than the boards of *archontes* had constituted. The symbolic value of creating the political institutions of the 'autonomous' poleis in the metropoleis of Egypt was no doubt important (see below) but so too was the creation of a larger 'curial class' upon which some of the burdens of administration formerly borne by local salaried bureaucrats could be devolved. The Diocletianic reforms mark, in some sense, recognition that this devolution had failed. The administration by the local councils was unsatisfactory and responsibility was vested in a smaller executive body, of local *principales* working closely with central bureaucracy. The consequence was an effective diminution in the role of the ordinary councillors (βουλευταί), as the gap between the real élite and the ordinary *curiales* (who should perhaps be recognized in the term πολιτευόμενοι which begins to appear in papyri of the late third century) grew.[43] The change has sometimes been described as 'municipalization' and has been seen as marking a greater integration of Egypt into the empire-wide patterns of administration. Whether or not this is justifiable, we must recognize the crucial role of the local landholding élite across the whole period and resist the temptation to draw a firm line of demarcation between 'Roman' and 'Byzantine' Egypt at the accession of Diocletian in 284 (or indeed at any other point). The administrative reforms introduced in the reign of Diocletian are important, both individually and in aggregate. The evidence for reform and overhaul earlier in the third century, particularly in the reign of Philip the Arabian, offers precedents which somewhat undermine the notion of a completely radical and innovative reconstruction of the system under Diocletian.

IV. SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

The changes and developments in Egypt between Septimius Severus and Constantine are exceptionally important, not least because of the implications for the history of the empire in the third and early fourth centuries as a whole. In this section I attempt to sketch the social and economic features

[42] *P. Panop. Beatty* 1 and 2; Bowman (1978). [43] Geremek (1981).

of the province which have a bearing upon some of the key issues in the history of the later empire.

The changes in local administration – at the core of which lay the creation of the councils and a bouleutic class – self-evidently have important social implications in their recognition of a new city élite. Evidence for various other features of 'urban' history in the third century complement this. The privileged status of the gymnasial class is reinforced by the existence of a *gerousia* at Oxyrhynchus and its members receive maintenance at the public expense.[44] Oxyrhynchus has ephebic contests, for which a euergetistic endowment is attested in 202. In 273/4 the same city stages the prestigious international Capitoline games. There is comparable evidence from Panopolis, which was evidently an important Greek cultural centre at least from the early fourth century onwards.[45] It is at about this time that the city's titles λαμπρά and λαμπρὰ καὶ λαμπρότατη are first attested. Pancratiasts and athletes at Hermopolis are awarded pensions in recognition of their achievements. Oxyrhynchus boasts a public *grammatikos* in the reign of Gallienus, paid from the public exchequer (in theory if not in practice); no doubt he was the purveyor of Greek culture.[46] 4,000 male citizens of Oxyrhynchus receive grain rations through the public 'corn-dole' in the 260s and 270s.[47] There is plenty of evidence for the construction and repair of grand civic buildings and other public constructions.[48] These particular metropoleis are perhaps atypical only in that they afford us more evidence than others and, on one reading, they evoke for us, in some respects, the world of the Greek poleis of Asia Minor a century earlier. It looks, then, very much as if in the third century the Egyptian towns are being encouraged to develop more overtly the self-consciousness of the Greek polis, with many of the attendant cultural and social features, which are so clearly marked elsewhere in the empire in the second century.[49] And, after the *constitutio Antoniniana* of A.D. 212, virtually all were Roman citizens, as elsewhere.

On this reading, we would be pressed to justify the theory of civic decline and urban decay in the 'third-century' crisis. There is evidence on the negative side; the difficulty is to know what weight to give it. The distinction between prestigious magistracies and burdensome liturgies was already much eroded and continued in the direction of the 'oppression of the (enforcedly hereditary) curial class'. By the middle of the third century it was difficult to fill metropolitan liturgies, *cessio bonorum* and flight is

[44] *P. Oxy.* LIII.3099–102. [45] Van Rengen (1971).
[46] Summarized by Parsons in *P. Coll. Youtie* II.66. [47] *P. Oxy.* XL.2892–2942.
[48] Lukaszewicz (1986); Bailey (1990); Bowman (1992).
[49] Bowman and Rathbone (1992) where it is argued that clear antecedents are to be found in the metropoleis from Augustus onwards and in the 'Greek' cities of Alexandria, Naucratis and (eventually) Antinoopolis.

known, the onerous duties of supplying the military with food and clothing become more burdensome and difficult to fill as the demands for *annona militaris* become greater and more persistent, to the point at which serious reform of the system is needed.[50] Similarly, it is not easy to keep up the civic amenities. The supply of oil for the gymnasium can be problematic, as can the city's food supply.[51] The expense of maintaining and repairing buildings is considerable. A major operation in this department is attested at Hermopolis by a famous papyrus listing extensive and expensive repairs to public buildings and streets, but in that same metropolis there is a severe financial crisis in the reign of Gallienus which provoked the intervention of a *procurator* to help sort things out.[52] A survey of domestic property in Oxyrhynchus in 235 reveals many vacant houses. The problems may be isolated or temporary and the complaints about them exaggerated both by the individuals concerned and by the tendency of our evidence to be archival.[53] Nevertheless, it would be paradoxical to conclude that the burdens placed on the élite, whose wealth was naturally vested in the land, were not severe to a perilous degree; whether that justifies the idea of crisis and urban decay is another matter.

These issues cannot be isolated from the economic factors at work, several of which are broadly relevant to the empire as a whole.

First, population. That there was some decline in the immediate aftermath of the Antonine plague cannot be doubted. Its effects can be seen in tax documents but the scale is difficult to assess, and there is no agreement about the size of the 'baseline'.[54] Nor is it clear whether the population eventually recovered and, if so, how long it took. The issue is, of course, intimately connected with the question of *agri deserti*. Large-scale depopulation of the land is not now thought likely. Some villages (e.g. Socnopaiou Nesos after 212) disappeared for good, others were severely diminished in size but the current tendency is to see this phenomenon as marginal and localized, showing up particularly in the Fayum, which is heavily overrepresented in the extant documentation and particularly vulnerable because dependent on artificial irrigation systems which were more readily neglected and allowed to fall into disrepair.[55]

Second, the level of taxation and the methods of raising it. A consistently high tax yield was important to the Roman government and it is clear that there were shortfalls in the late second century, as well as a consistent tendency to compensate for ἀναχώρησις.[56] It is unclear exactly what the overall yield was, or how it was affected by the redirection of the grain surplus from Rome to Constantinople after 330. But over the long-term, it

[50] Lewis (1997). [51] Bowman, *Town Councils* 107–13.
[52] *Stud. Pal.* v (*C.P. Herm.* 1) 22–3, 25–6, 127 *verso*; Drew-Bear (1984b). [53] *P. Oslo* III.111.
[54] Duncan-Jones (1996); Rathbone (1990); Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 53–7.
[55] Bagnall (1982) and *Egypt* 138–42. [56] *P. Thmouis*; Bowman (1976) 168.

has been argued, the revenues drawn from Egypt were remarkably stable.[57] It is nevertheless possible that within a framework of long-term stability, there might have been periods of marked fluctuation and change and the third century would be a major candidate for such instability. Thus, according to the traditional view, the number of producers might have declined, the tax demands (particularly in the form of *annona militaris*) will have increased, and there was a marked move away from the collection of taxes in cash and towards the collection in kind as the stability of the currency declined. The radical overhaul of the system under Diocletian, allied to other changes, saw a more rational calculation of the state's military needs tied more directly to the tax system, and, amongst other things, a new departure in the collection of revenues in gold bullion.[58]

Individual points in the first part of this picture can be and have been supported by reference to individual papyri but it now seems likely that they have been too readily generalized. It cannot be shown that there was a linked population decrease and tax increase. The *annona militaris* is more frequently demanded after 250 but the supposed reversion to collection in kind remains very dubious. It depends on the belief that there was serious and continuous debasement of the coinage, which is certainly correct, and that there was serious price inflation linked to it, which is not certainly correct (and leans too heavily on a single text);[59] indeed, it now seems likely that serious price rises are not evident until the last quarter of the century and that these are a consequence of remonetization (as they now appear largely to be in the fourth century) rather than genuine inflation.[60] Military pay, in coin, had of course not kept up with debasement even after the Severan increase and the loss in value was continually offset by donatives and supplies in kind. Seen in this light, the evidence of the papyri and the state of the Egyptian economy will hardly bear the weight of the 'third century economic crisis'; they rather point the way forward in reassessing the reasons for and the character of the more general economic reforms of Diocletian – the two coinage reforms of 294 and 300 and the Maximum Price Edict of 301 – as a means of reintroducing monetary stability by remonetization and the introduction of the *solidus* under Constantine, a device which proved largely successful, despite the superficial and immediate failure of the attempt at price control.[61]

The social and economic history of third-century Egypt can thus be seen as more complex and difficult to interpret than the simplistic 'crisis' model which has been fashionable until comparatively recently. Recent studies of fundamental aspects of the agricultural economy in the Fayum and the

[57] Rathbone (1989). [58] Bowman (1978); Rea (1974); Bagnall (1977).
[59] *P. Oxy.* XII.1411 (260), attesting the unwillingness of bankers to accept the imperial coinage.
[60] Rathbone (1996). [61] Bowman (1980); Bagnall, *Currency*.

Oxyrhynchite Nome reveal management strategies which are both sophisticated in the case of day-to-day organization and relatively stable in the case of landholding and tenancy.[62] It may be significant for our picture of the development of Egypt over the third and fourth centuries that there are hints of two very important factors which point forward. One is the privatization of the vast majority of land – and thus the withdrawal of the state from direct supervision via tenancy and administration.[63] The other is the embryonic existence of collective responsibility for tax payments on the mid-third century estate of Appianus in the Fayum.[64] By the middle of the fourth century, most land will have been privately owned and let to private tenants, paying tax rather than rent at rates lower than the earlier rentals on state land. Nevertheless, there is little sign of the growth of the colonate, feudalism, or the Byzantine 'large estate' which characterized the picture of Egypt sketched by scholars in the earlier part of this century.[65] The summary offered here is based on revisionist work which makes the long-term trends more stable and the underlying structures more secure than was previously believed. Some features of the administration and social economic organization proved unsuccessful and it was the Diocletianic achievement to modify and overhaul the system in a way which worked. This was achieved, of course, against the backdrop of an immensely important development which has found no place in this chapter – the growth and establishment of Christianity. That is another part of the story.[66]

[62] Rathbone (1991); Rowlandson (1996).
[63] Bowman (1986); Bagnall (1992); Rowlandson (1996).
[64] Rathbone (1991) 120–5.
[65] Bowman (1985); Bagnall (1992).
[66] Below, ch. 18.

CHAPTER 11

COINAGE AND TAXATION: THE STATE'S POINT OF VIEW, A.D. 193–337

MIREILLE CORBIER

Even if, with the notable exception of Pliny the Elder, the ancient authors say little on the subject and show no real concern to provide accurate figures, the coinage appears to have played a key role in the actual operation of the Roman imperial system. Protected from the ravages of time by its very nature, it fills the coin rooms of museums all over the world. As collectors' items, coins are nowadays quoted as valuable commodities on the market. They are along with pottery the most common Roman artefacts to survive to the present. Yet the modern interest in coinage should not make us forget the place that coins occupied in both the Roman economy and culture.

Regularly struck and restruck with the portraits of the new principes (whose image was sacred),[1] often referring to those events of their reigns deemed to be the most glorious and laden with complex religious and political meanings or messages, coins are during the whole imperial period the most widespread daily signs of the emperors' power.

Gradually standardized by marginalization and then elimination of the local coinages which were still struck in some of the eastern provinces at least until the mid-third century, the coinage expresses and translates into reality, despite the considerable disparities in development among the provinces, the economic and political unity of the empire. However, at the end of the third century and at the beginning of the fourth, the division of the empire among two or four co-emperors leads to a proliferation of coinages which, even in the same denomination, will not automatically have the same fineness and weight. As a means of exchange, it is accepted everywhere within the imperial frontiers as well as quite widely beyond them. To adopt the analogy used by R. S. Lopez in discussing the very different context of the Middle Ages, where he contrasted the 'good and strong gold coins' of Florence, Venice and Genoa which were stable in fineness and weight and hence enjoyed international prestige, with the often devalued and debased coins issued by the different sovereign states, the Roman coinage performs in a sense the role of the 'dollar' of the first centuries A.D.

[1] Alföldi (1978) 166.

Finally, coinage serves as a point of reference in the political, social and military life of the empire. Through the census, it defines the social status of the upper classes. It is used to fix the sums paid in regular salaries, exceptional donatives and retirement bonuses to the army – payments that feed the flow from the centre to the frontiers – as well as the largesses granted to the citizens of Rome. It also serves to indicate very clearly (by distinguishing 'public' from 'private') the authority responsible for buildings, urban infrastructure and other public benefactions. Thus it occupies a novel position on the border between what could be classed as the 'public expenditure' and a gift economy.

In comparison both with the last centuries of the Roman republic and the hellenistic monarchies, the empire finds itself in a radically new situation. The end of the conquest deprives the empire, with the exception of Dacia, of the resources coming from the booty taken from the conquered, a booty for which the pillaging and confiscations during the wars of succession act as a kind of substitute. At the same time, the expenditures on defence, administration and political activities of the empire are at best fixed, and in fact tend to rise not just in times of civil or foreign wars, but also on the accession of a new ruler who has to reward those who have brought him to power, as well as propagate his name and image. In the absence of any system of organized public borrowing, the emperors therefore have – even though they are in other respects the wealthiest property-owners in the empire – to rely on permanent taxation (and exceptionally on confiscations) to raise the sums required to meet their expenditures. However, they seem unable to raise the level of the tax income without causing hostile reactions. In times of disaster, the princeps even has to be willing to remit taxes or arrears, and, as part of the political and social development of the empire, he is obliged to accept a standardization of status among the different categories of people and provinces: everyone acquires access to Roman citizenship, but gradually everyone is also made liable to pay taxes.

Coinage and taxation are therefore closely linked: the princeps can redistribute in the form of coin only as much precious metal as he has levied or collected himself and that in a context where the mining production appears at best to have offset both the outflow of coin beyond the frontiers and a precautionary or ostentatious habit of saving that amounts to hoarding. Ultimately, the ideal would have been for successive emperors to have been content to levy a constant amount of tax on production and trade, collected from a money supply in circulation which would also be constant, in order to meet permanent expenses which would have been essentially stable. However, this model of (almost) perfect equilibrium, which corresponds to the three-way diagram peasants/princeps/army of the circulation of money proposed twenty-eight years ago by Michael Crawford, starts to break down from the last decades of the second century onwards, as a result

first of the invasions, then of the political instability, but also of the plague, which makes its first appearance under Marcus Aurelius: all of these factors define clearly dated periods of high tension.

The repeated devaluations and the other monetary, economic and fiscal changes that mark the period from the last Antonines until the reign of Constantine should therefore be put back into this context. Historiography, influenced by the experiences of the twentieth century, has too often read and interpreted them in isolation from this context or failed to take sufficient account of it. Aware of the image of the empire's stability and equilibrium that the ruling classes of the second century wished to project, historians have extended it to coinage: wars and devaluations naturally went hand in hand.

The most generally accepted chronology is therefore punctuated by alternating phases of crisis and stability, and by the close relationship, as strong in periods of stability as of crisis, between politics, coinage and economy, commingled in the same overall view. The principal nuances brought to this view are inspired by the 'Keynesian' approach[2] that has led certain authors to suggest that some of these devaluations, by releasing into circulation a vast amount of fresh coins (even if their silver content had been reduced by a third or even more), could on the contrary have had the effect of reviving the economy. In the case of the Severan reform, this revival appears to be confirmed by unquestionably positive signs, such as urban constructions (new buildings and restorations) and economic development, stimulated by the boom in trade in certain provinces, particularly in Africa.

This overall chronology, in which periods of economic collapse alternate with periods of recovery or at least relative stabilization, provides the framework for two major changes. The first which is real, well attested and dated, although both the causes and the consequences remain hard to explain, corresponds to the shift from silver to gold as the basis for coinage and to the corresponding substitution of the *solidus* for the *denarius* as the coin of reference, without it being possible to speak of a demonetization of the silver bullion. The second change, which is more hypothetical, since the clues are indirect, difficult to interpret and even harder to generalize, but which would anticipate later changes, might correspond to the shift from a more 'monetized' economy to a more 'natural' one, with the increase of deductions in kind, the growth of the colonate system and so on, and from a unified economy covering the whole empire to an economy divided into regional subsets, in which the local dimension would be more important than trade with distant places.

[2] See my own interpretation (close to that of J. Guey) of the Severan devaluation in Corbier (1976–7) and (1978).

All of these conclusions, based on comparisons with the Middle Ages or the twentieth century, are ultimately derived from the same postulate. Monetary manipulations would have had effects on the Roman economy comparable to those that they are supposed to have had in more recent times: in particular, the disappearance of the 'good' coinage, driven out by the 'bad', and the general social and economic upheaval caused by the accelerated debasement of the coins in circulation. Although they cannot be ruled out *a priori*, such consequences and even more the direct cause and effect relationship that they suggest between what happened to coinage and what happened in the economy have still to be proved. It would therefore be better to start from the facts which are now more solidly supported by numerous detailed studies of the much more abundant material, and investigate each piece of evidence in turn. In this way we can re-examine the problems of coinage and tax system in the specific context of the Roman economy, an economy that is neither 'modern' nor 'archaic', but more simply different from subsequent ones. We shall then review the problems of interpreting the evidence.

1. COIN ISSUES AND DEVALUATIONS

Coins are among the best preserved and the most thoroughly studied artefacts of the period. We have now at our disposal a larger number than previously of series of well-catalogued coins from all the periods and provinces of the empire, for which specialists have been able, in many if not all cases, to determine the date and place of issue, to identify the types and variants, and to analyse the metal content and the weight. However, from the third century and the introduction of the *antoninianus* under Caracalla, we are more often than not unaware of the denominations and values of both newly minted coins and those already in circulation.[3] As a matter of fact we have to wait until the beginning of the fourth century to have at our disposal, through fragments of a precise administrative document (Diocletian's Currency Edict of 301), some firm data on the official value in terms of the contemporary accounting unit (henceforth the *denarius*) of two denominations: the *argenteus*,[4] and the large coin with laureate portrait, made of bronze with a tiny silver content, which a thorough examination of the literary, legal and papyrological texts has led scholars in the last thirty years to call a *nummus* rather than a *follis*.

It is thus essential to start from the numismatic data concerning all the struck coins that made up the monetary system in each period. Some coins may have circulated longer than others, if need be acquiring a different value

[3] *Antoninianus* and *aurelianus* (or *aurelianianus*) are conventional terms derived from the *Historia Augusta*.

[4] Whether this is the name of its proper denomination or simply a generic term.

in the currency of the later period. Others on the contrary disappeared in reminting, which could have been for different reasons depending on the metals concerned. These numismatic data, to which figures are attached with ever increasing accuracy, relate mainly to the metallurgical composition of the coins, their weights (in terms of the number of coins struck from a pound of metal, as calculated by numismatists since nothing is mentioned in contemporary texts) and sizes (their modules), their types (notably the form of the imperial portrait on the obverse, whether laureate or radiate, but above all the reverse types, for instance the *Genius* on the first *nummi*), and so on. The weight standards are still approximations, since, in order to calculate the 'theoretical weight', numismatists have to choose between various possible values for the Roman pound.[5] As for the observed weights of the coins, they always vary appreciably: to the original small variations arising because the flans[6] were made by hand, and to the possibility that the *monetarii* could always try to strike more coins to the pound than the official authorized rate, must be added subsequent losses due to the wear in circulation, the corrosion and the modern cleaning of the coin. Lastly, as to the value of the coins themselves in terms of accounting units, all we can do is give the main values proposed by numismatists. The comprehensibility of many recent works on the subject is hindered by the reference to 'tariffs' that are not supported by the evidence but are merely hypotheses on the part of modern scholars;[7] there is no consensus and they often differ substantially, even if some authors take the trouble to justify their choices.[8]

It will be better to concentrate on what has been clearly proved by experts, especially thanks to new methods of analysis and the discovery of new documents, in particular inscriptions and papyri.[9] These researches enable us now to have a better understanding of the various monetary

[5] King (1993a) 3–4 n. 1 suggests calculations based on a Roman pound of 325 g, the average between the 322.56 g proposed by Naville (1920–2) and the 327.45 g adopted by Hultsch (1882). Carcassonne *et al.* (1974) make the pound 324.72 g.

[6] The disks of metal before minting.

[7] For instance the 'tariffs' indicated by Depeyrot (1991) and Hollard (1995b).

[8] E.g. Lo Cascio (1993b).

[9] Papyri from Panopolis, published in 1964 (*P. Panop. Beatty*), have revealed the official price of the pound of gold in 300. In 1970, a copy of an edict of the tetrarchs was found in the agora of Aphrodisias in Caria, Diocletian's Currency Edict (as modern scholars call it), which decreed that from 1 September 301 the purchasing power (*potentia*) of certain coins in circulation would be doubled (Erim *et al.* (1971)). A fragment of the Edict on Maximum Prices, discovered at Aezani in 1971, provides us with the whole of the chapter *de auro* (see Crawford and Reynolds (1979) 176; cf. Reynolds (1995b) 22), at last revealing the official maximum price of the pound of gold in 301 (72,000 *denarii*), which generations of modern historians had tried (in vain) to calculate; it also gives the official ratio of gold to silver (1:12, since a pound of silver is tariffed at 6,000 *denarii*) and confirms that the gold coin (struck at 60 to the pound) already bore the name of *solidus* (which later gave the French word 'sou') under Diocletian, whereas before this name had been reserved for the smaller coin (struck at 72 to the pound) of Constantine. Other fragments of the Edict on Maximum Prices found subsequently at Aphrodisias have provided fresh information about the maximum prices set for a range of commodities.

reforms and the different manipulations affecting particular categories of coins that accompanied them. Even here, however, it is not easy to draw the line between the figures and their interpretation. By making it possible to measure the precious metal content of coins and to identify the various metallic components, the nondestructive methods of analysis have shed new light on monetary debasement and have allowed us to observe the process of reminting. For example, the analysis of gold coins has shown that the fineness, which had remained 'pure' until the mid-third century, was adulterated under Valerian and Gallienus (253–68), and that this adulteration was not due to an addition of silver (which would be detected by the increase in lead content) but to the non-purification of the bullion, that is to the recasting of metallic objects other than coins.[10] The analysis of the *antoniniani* dating from the 260s has underlined the progressive reminting of the *sestertii*.[11] As for the *aurelianus* – the billon coin with radiate portrait issued by Aurelian – the metallurgical analysis has persuaded most, but not all, numismatists to interpret the numbers (XX.I or X.I, with their Greek equivalents K.A and I.A) found on the unit (the only one to be struck under Aurelian) and its double[12] not as an indication of their face value but as an expression of a fraction – one-twentieth or one-tenth of a theoretical coin of pure silver[13] – which would therefore specify the legal fineness of these coins (the approximately 5 per cent or 10 per cent detected by the analyses). However, this interpretation is not universally accepted.

1. The modifications to the currency

Throughout the period, the Roman coinage combines, in varying proportions and according to a changing hierarchy, three categories of coins corresponding to three categories of metals: gold, silver and *aes* – pure copper, or copper mixed with other metals such as zinc (to produce orichalcum, our brass) or tin (to produce bronze, usually called *aes* in Latin, whatever the composition of the alloy). These three categories of coins are in keeping with the scale of values of the accounting unit. In the first and second centuries this accounting unit is based on the *sestertius*, with, on the one hand, its divisions (the *dupondius* and the *as*) and the fractions of the *as* (the *semis* and the *quadrans*, which are no longer struck after the middle of the second century) in common use but struck in copper or copper alloys, and, on the other hand, its multiples, the main one being the *denarius* (= 4

[10] Callu *et al.* (1985) = *L'or monnayé* 1.80–111. [11] Barrandon *et al.* (1981) 381–90.

[12] The double *aureliani* were struck under Tacitus (275–6) and Carus (282–3); the average fineness of the double *aureliani* of Tacitus is 9.21 per cent and 8.77 per cent for those of Carus, see Callu *et al.* (1979) 243–51.

[13] Or, according to another formulation that leads to a close result, one part of silver to twenty (or ten) parts of bronze.

sestertii). The *denarius* is the main silver denomination actually struck but starts under the Severans to be used as an accounting unit as much as the *sestertius*.[14] Moreover, the gold coinage stands in an official relationship to the silver whereby the *aureus* is worth 25 *denarii*, that is 100 *sestertii*.

This situation is not fundamentally altered by the devaluations of Septimius Severus, which follow a classic pattern: the *denarius* is officially restored to its earlier weight (struck at 96 to the pound, i.e. approximately 3.4 g), but its silver content is strongly reduced by about one third. Above the *denarius* at this period is the almost 100 per cent pure gold coin, the *aureus* (struck at 45 to the pound, i.e. approximately 7.3 g); its face value fixed in terms of *denarii* or *sestertii* allows us to establish that the relationship between the two precious metals is around 1:11.25 at that time. *Quinarii* in gold (half-*aureus*) and silver (half-*denarius*) are also struck. In this sense, put at its simplest, although the currency of the first two centuries is trimetallic, it is in fact based on silver, with the *denarius* tending to act as the coin of reference (a day's wages in Italy in the first century) and with the value of the other coins defined in practice in relation to it, whereas the copper alloys (*aes*) are largely fiduciary.

Compared with this initial outline, established by Augustus and Nero (by the reform of 64, the weights of both the *aureus* and *denarius* were reduced – the *aureus* from 41/2 to 45 to the pound, the *denarius* from 84 to 96 to the pound), the third century and the first decades of the fourth century are marked by a certain number of major changes, but they are often difficult to interpret because they are not mentioned by any contemporary texts (or only by allusion); the standards on which the coins were struck have had to be reconstructed by numismatists. Four main phases are identified with the reigns of Caracalla, Aurelian, Diocletian and Constantine.

The first reform, under Caracalla in 215, introduces a new silver coin, the *antoninianus*, characterized by the radiate crown of the emperor and with the same silver content as the *denarius* (about 50 per cent), but of distinctly larger module and 50 per cent heavier (struck at 64 to the pound, roughly 5.11 g, and 22 to 24 mm in diameter). At the same time, the weight of the *aureus* is slightly reduced (now struck at 50 to the pound, i.e. 6.5 g, instead of 45, Septimius Severus having left it unchanged) and a new gold coin starts to be produced as its multiple: the double *aureus* or *binio*, struck at 25 to the pound, with radiate portrait. However, the specialists are unsure of the face value and the publicly accepted value of the *antoninianus*: most of the specialists, numismatists in particular, reckon 2 *denarii*, while some argue for $1^1/_2$ and others for $1^1/_4$ (i.e. 5 *sestertii*). There are also doubts about the value of the *aureus*: if it continued to be worth 25 *denarii* down to 215/225, as is generally argued on the basis of a passage in Cassius Dio,[15]

[14] Mrozek (1978). [15] Buttrey (1961).

this would prove that the Severan reform of 194/5, which had endorsed the reduction of the silver content of the *denarius* by about one third, had managed to maintain its fiduciary value so that its relationship to gold was not called into question. Conversely, this would mean that the fall in weight of the *aureus* (by about 9 per cent) and the reduction of the silver content of both the *denarius* and the *antoninianus* (by about 8 per cent) under Caracalla would have been of the same order. But this would make the most generally accepted hypothesis seem the most plausible, even if it is somewhat surprising that these two silver coins should have circulated at a ratio of 1:2 even though the ratio of their weight and fineness was only 1:1$^{1}/_{2}$.

Minting of the *antoninianus*, which was stopped under Elagabalus in 219, began again under Balbinus and Pupienus in 238, with a reduction in weight by one sixth (the coin weighs between 4.5 g and 4.75 g, and contains between 43 and 47 per cent of silver). The weight and silver content of the *antoninianus*, which becomes the commonest denomination, falls by very little before 250, but the decline then accelerates. These reductions also affect the *aureus*: its weight keeps falling[16] and, besides, its metal content is reduced in the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus, while its weight becomes totally erratic. In other respects multiples continue to be issued. The weight of the *aes* coinage also falls (the average weight of the *sestertius* falling from 23 to 20 g); the use of orichalcum is abandoned, and the alloy contains less and less tin and more and more lead. Under Trajan Decius a double *sestertius* with radiate portrait is briefly introduced (weighing 41 g). The minting of the *denarius* finally stops around 250, followed by that of the *sestertius* around 260, apart from a few exceptional issues of bronze at Rome, made for distribution of *congiaria* to the *populus*. The melting down of *sestertii*[17] and *denarii* (and the occasional overstrike of the latter) provides the metal for ever larger issues of *antoniniani*.

When the coinage produced in the centre of the empire was at its lowest ebb, the Gallic emperor Postumus (260–9) managed to strike better quality coins than those of Gallienus, at least for a while. He even tried to revive the *sestertius* – and also the radiate double *sestertius* (originally issued by Trajan Decius) – notably by overstriking the *sestertii* of Trajan and Hadrian which were still in circulation.

Starting in the reign of Aurelian (270–5), two major efforts to 'restore' the situation try, apparently with some success, to reverse this process of declining weights and metal content. The reforms of Aurelian and Diocletian, twenty years apart (274 and 294/296), set out to restore the imperial coinage

[16] Between Septimius Severus (193–211) and Trebonianus Gallus (251–3) the weight of the *aureus* falls by a half: from 1/45 of a pound to 1/90 of a pound, i.e. from 7.25 g to 3.6 g.

[17] Identifiable from the increasing proportions of lead and tin in the metal content of *antoniniani* from 260/263 onwards; see Barrandon *et al.* (1981) 381–90.

in the three same metals according to the standards of Caracalla (for Aurelian) and of Nero (for Diocletian).

Aurelian's reform thus marks a return to the system established by Caracalla in 215. The *aureus* is again struck at 50 to the pound (the coins sometimes have I L in the exergue), i.e. about 6.45 g. The *'aurelianus'* (with radiate portrait on the obverse) and the *'denarius'* (according to the calculations of numismatists, now struck respectively at 80 and 124 to the pound, therefore weighing about 4 g and 2.6 g), although lighter than the *antoninianus* and *denarius* of Caracalla, return roughly to the relationship of 1.5:1 between *antoninianus* and *denarius* established under Caracalla. Lastly, some *aes* fractions – *sestertii*, *dupondii* and *asses* – are struck again in the west for several years. However, we are none the wiser as to the actual face value and the accepted value of these coins, any more than that of their predecessors. The figures XXI or XX.I (at Siscia) or XX (at Ticinum)[18] sometimes occur in the exergue of the radiate *aureliani*, and the mark VSV in the exergue of the *'denarius'*, which most scholars[19] read as *usu(alis)*. The typology is standardized to the benefit of the solar cult with legends such as ORIENS AVG, SOL INVICTVS.

On the contrary, Diocletian is inspired by the monetary system of Nero. His reform seems to have tried to satisfy three concerns:

(1) to re-establish the original structure of the coinage; thus, with the return to the ratio of 1:4, attested on 1 September 301, this means that the large laureate bronze (identified with the *nummus*) becomes the key denomination, a *'sestertius'* relative to the new *argenteus*;
(2) to strike at one end of the range 'good' gold and silver coins. Already from 286, the gold coin – which the new version of the chapter *de auro* of the Prices Edict (discovered at Aezani) invites us to call *solidus*, *holocottinos* in Greek (with reference to its purity), although modern scholars had previously applied this term to the smaller 'sou' of Constantine – is struck at 60 to the pound (approximately 5.3 g); a few rare *semisses* and higher denominations are also produced. Around 295 a new 'pure' silver coin,[20] the *argenteus* (the name given to it in Diocletian's Currency Edict) is struck at 96 to the pound, like the *denarius* of Nero;
(3) at the other end of the range, to revive the bronze coinage, with a face value that would place it in a fixed relationship to the higher denominations of the range, so that the whole range would recover its unity:
    (a) the *nummus*, a large laureate coin in bronze (struck at 32 to the pound, approximately 10 g, with the same module as the old *as*, i.e.

[18] See further below, pp. 338–9. [19] But not all of them.
[20] Pure, according to D. Walker's unpublished metallurgical analyses, mentioned in King (1993b).

24–5 mm) mixed with a little silver (about 4 per cent); on some of the examples struck at Siscia and at Alexandria *c.* 300–1 the figures XXI or XX.I occur, which it is tempting to think may have the same meaning[21] (whatever that may be) as the similar figures appearing on the *aureliani* and on the radiate coins issued by Diocletian before his reform;

(b) a smaller radiate coin, the 'neo-*antoninianus*', recalling the *aurelianus* in its appearance, but lighter than it (approximately 3 g) and without the mark XX.I;

(c) finally, an even smaller laureate bronze coin (1.3 g), the *'denarius'*, struck in small quantities in the west but hardly at all in the east.

However, the fragility of the system established by Diocletian is revealed by the Currency Edict of 301 (contemporary with the Prices Edict according to some scholars,[22] or dating from three months earlier according to others).[23] According to the most widely held interpretation,[24] this edict doubles the face value of the *argenteus* and the *nummus*, which therefore rise from 50 to 100 *denarii* and from 12.5 to 25 *denarii* respectively, while keeping the relationship between the two denominations unchanged at 1:4.

This coinage, which for the first time is uniform throughout the empire (since the uniqueness of Egypt was brought to an end in 296),[25] is also remarkable for the uniformity of its reverse types. The types on the gold often show the tutelary deities of the tetrarchs: Jupiter for Diocletian, Hercules for Maximianus (with the legends *Iovi Cons Caes*, *Herculi Victori* and *Herculi Cons Caes*). On the *argentei*, the themes are political (such as *Providentia* and *Quies*, with the legend *Providentia Deorum Quies Augg* after the abdication of the *Augusti* on 1 May 305) or military (like the camp gate with the legend *Virtus Militum*). The usual type on the *nummus* is the ecumenical image of the *Genius* of the Roman people,[26] standing holding the *patera* and the *cornucopia*, with the legend *Genio Populi Romani*. The mints of Rome, Trier, Ticinum and Siscia, however, produced a new reverse type, *Sacra Moneta* or *Moneta Sacra*, while at Lyon an altar is added in the field of the *Genius* type.

In the reign of Constantine, a new monetary system is finally put in place, which settles down in 324 after the reunification of the empire following the defeat and death of Licinius. The key denomination is now the

[21] Certain scholars think that the meaning may be different.

[22] For example Crawford (1975) and Hendy (1985). See also Reynolds (1989).

[23] According to Lafaurie (1975a) 109 who dates it on the basis of Diocletian's titles to between 20 November and 9 December 301.

[24] Note, however, that some writers are doubtful about the doubling in value of the *argenteus*.

[25] Metcalf (1987).

[26] Who is supposed to be responsible for the safety and unity of the empire.

solidus – the 'sou' – created around 310, struck at 72 to the pound (and sometimes labelled LXXII), which will maintain its weight (about 4.5 g) for centuries, leading the Arab rulers to borrow this model from the Byzantines, in the form of the dinar. Parallel with this is the revival of a good-quality coinage in silver, especially after 324, with the minting of large pieces – the heavy *miliarensis* struck at 60 to the pound, then the light *miliarensis* struck at 72 to the pound (like the *solidus*) – and the resumption of the minting of the Diocletianic coin struck at 96 to the pound (the Neronian *denarius*), which numismatists call the *siliqua*.

The *nummus*, meanwhile, suffers several reductions in weight and silver content[27] until the end of Constantine's reign: it falls from about 10 g (32 to the pound) to 6.8 g (48 to the pound) in 307, then in 310/11 to 4.5 g (72 to the pound) and in 313 to 3.4 g (96 to the pound). At the same time its silver content falls from about 3.5 or 4 per cent (and in theory 5 per cent if that is what the mark XXI means) to about 1 per cent, a decrease at such a low level that we cannot even be sure that it was perceived by the public.[28] From the changes observed in the composition of hoards at this time, the year 318 would have been marked in the west by the decry of the *antoniniani*, *aureliani* and *nummi* struck prior to that date, and by the minting of new *nummi* weighing only 3 g but with the silver content restored to 5 per cent. However, the silver content of these new 3 g *nummi* declines again in 320 and 324; their weight is in its turn reduced to 2.5 g in 330, then to 1.7 g in 335/6 for the issues with the legend *Gloria Exercitus* on which are represented at first two soldiers with two military standards, then one single standard after the reduction in weight (and therefore of their module).

The coins spread the image of tutelary deities, Sol, Mars, then dynastic and military themes. Christian images are introduced discreetly: first the chi-rho monogram sometimes found on the helmet on the obverse; in 327 the reverse of coins struck in Constantinople shows a *labarum*, the shaft of which piercing a serpent, with the legend *Spes public(a)*; after the emperor's death, the *consecratio* issues show the apotheosis chariot drawn by the hand of God.

Coinage in three metals was maintained throughout the period, but the silver coins – the most exposed – suffered most in the successive manipulations, whence the impression of a 'shift' from silver to gold. Their fineness, which never ceased to decrease, dwindles to a mere symbolic level in the 250s and 260s, so that silver loses its central position in a monetary system that polarized around its two extremes, *aes* and gold. In fact, however, when attempts are made to restore the situation (under Diocletian and

[27] These have been particularly well studied by Callu and Barrandon (1986).
[28] See Brenot (1993) 95–6.

Constantine, though not under Aurelian, who may have had the intention to do so), they set out to create both 'good' gold and 'good' silver coins.

Despite these changes, the *denarius* continues throughout to be the accounting unit, the role that it had held since the end of the second century when it started to replace the *sestertius*, of which it was the multiple. This is clear in 301 both from the Prices Edict, which expresses all prices in *denarii*, and from the Currency Edict, which states the value of certain coins in terms of *denarii*, as well as in 323 from an euergetic inscription from Feltre (Feltria) in Italy.[29] In Egypt, where the accounting units were still the talent and the *drachma* (1 talent = 6,000 *drachmae*; 1 *denarius* = 4 *drachmae*), talent and *denarius* often occur together (1 talent = 1,500 *denarii*); at the beginning of the fourth century it happens that the actual coin, the *nummus*, takes the place of the *denarius*. However, a new accounting unit begins to be used: the *follis* (purse), worth 12,500 *denarii*, attested in 300 in the military accounting practice recorded in a papyrus from Panopolis, when it was the equivalent of 250 *argentei* or 1,000 *nummi*.[30] In the east, the use of the myriad (10,000 *denarii*), which will become common in the fourth century because of the considerable increase in prices, begins to spread. The *sestertius* is found extremely rarely as an accounting unit, for example in the Latin Panegyric of 298, in which the author, the rhetor Eumenius of Autun, congratulates himself on having received a double *salarium* of 600,000 *sestertii* as *a memoria*.[31] The abbreviation for the *sestertius* (HS) also occurs on *nummi* of Constantine struck at Lyon and dated to 308/9;[32] they read CI:HS, which would seem to indicate the value of the coin: 100 *sestertii*, i.e. 25 *denarii*.

2. *Devaluations and inflation*

The assessment of these different processes reveals a double long-term trend, more rapid at certain periods (253–70) and hindered at others by contrary trends: the devaluation of the accounting unit in relation to the precious metals because of the increase in the number of coins with ever lower silver content. This devaluation, which in practice takes the form of a decline in the silver content of the accounting unit, occurred in stages, but its impact on prices (inflation) should not be thought of as either automatic or direct (this is true even for the prices of precious metals in monetized form, if Septimius Severus and Caracalla indeed managed to make the devalued silver coins fiduciary).

[29] *ILS* 9420.

[30] *P. Panop. Beatty* 2, ll. 302–4. Purses of this kind are in particular shown in a mosaic from the villa at Piazza Armerina in Sicily in the form of two purses next to two prize crowns, each labelled with the corresponding figures; see Carandini *et al.* (1982) 289.

[31] *Pan. Lat.* IX(V).11. [32] *RIC* VI, p. 263.

Three distinct trends can be observed, operating either separately or together:

(1) a decline in the fineness of the silver coins, then (in the case of the *nummi*) of the silver-washed bronze in circulation;
(2) a decline in the weight of the coins themselves, i.e. an increase in the numbers of coins struck to the pound. This is true of the *aurei* and, under Constantine, the *nummi*. The 'restorers' give priority to improving the weight, not the fineness; this assumes that they were able to recall to the mints silver and bronze coins in sufficient quantities to carry out their intentions;
(3) a fiduciary pricing of certain coins by overvaluing them relative to their intrinsic worth without fear of disparities: if the *antoninianus* of Caracalla was tariffed at 2 *denarii*, it contained 25 per cent less silver per *denarius* than a *denarius*; the *nummus* of Diocletian was doubled in value (from 12.5 to 25 *denarii*) on 1 September 301 without being countermarked; at the same time, the *argenteus* was distinctly overvalued at 100 *denarii*, given that its bullion value was only 62.5 *denarii* at the price of pure silver (metal, not coined silver) set in the Prices Edict at 6,000 *denarii* per pound.

Therefore, one could record for the silver or silvered *aes* coins (the *denarius*, then its multiples like the *antoninianus* and *aurelianus*, and, finally, for the *nummus*):

in the second century, from Trajan to Commodus, a steady decline in the silver content, from 90 to 75 per cent, and an actual fall in the weight of the coin;
under Septimius Severus, the weight is restored (about 3.4 g), but the silver content is reduced by about one third relative to its previous official rate;
under Caracalla and then Elagabalus, a *de facto* devaluation of the *denarius* by 25 per cent (on the assumption that the *antoninianus* was worth 2 *denarii*): a truly fiduciary change;
in 238, the revival of the *antoninianus* with a weight reduced by one sixth;
between 253 and 270, a decline in the silver content (which had fallen only slightly since Septimius Severus) from 40/45 per cent to 5 per cent and even less (i.e. a decline by eight or nine times, combined with a fall in weight): the *denarius* and *antoninianus* become billon coins, and the *denarius* is no longer struck;
in the reign of Aurelian, a restoration of the weight (80 to the pound, about 4 g), but not of the silver content (which does not exceed 5 per cent);

in the reign of Diocletian, a complex operation combining a return to the Neronian standard (96 to the pound) for the weight of a good silver coin, the *argenteus*, with the striking of a large silvered (only at 4 per cent) billon coin, the *nummus* (32 to the pound, about 10 g), and of neo-*antoniniani* and neo-*denarii*, both devoid of silver;

in the reign of Constantine, a reduction in the weight and fineness of the *nummus*, although it is uncertain whether the face value was changed or at what date (a face value which, at the beginning of the reign, was 25 *denarii*).

In addition, there are qualitative changes. For example, the *aurelianus* is a coin with a higher weight (*c.* 4 g) and fineness (*c.* 5 per cent silver) than the *antoniniani* of Gallienus and Claudius II, and its appearance is also better: the coin is well struck on a punched out flan and dipped to add a thin silver plating; as for the mark XX.I, it is a guarantee (though the significance is debated) provided by the issuing authority. Diocletian's *nummus* is a large handsome coin (of the same diameter as the earlier *as*: 24–5 mm), weighing *c.* 10 g, which, at least initially, was thought to be worth hoarding.

Debasement was not always carried out on the initiative of the state, or the state alone. In the reigns of Gallienus and Claudius II, the degradation of the coinage is aggravated by fraud on the part of the *monetarii* of the Rome mint, culminating in the issue with legend *Divo Claudio*. In 271, when Aurelian tries to stop fraud, he provokes a revolt by the same *monetarii*; he deals with the revolt by closing the Rome mint for two years and exiling the workforce to provincial mints.

The significance of the reforms varies for modern scholars depending on the value they attribute to the new coins.

As for the *antoninianus* of Caracalla a rate of 2 *denarii* represents a devaluation (the arguments always offered to support this view are the radiate crown of the imperial effigy,[33] and a passage of Cassius Dio[34] alleging that Caracalla issued *kibdelon argyrion* – adulterated silver). On the contrary, a rate of $1^1/_2$ *denarii* represents the status quo, and one of $1^1/_4$ a revaluation.

As for the *aurelianus* introduced in 274, the significance will vary considerably, depending on whether the value is thought to be 2 (S. Estiot), 4 (D. Hollard) or 5 *denarii* (K. Harl), or even 25 *denarii* (E. Lo Cascio). Even those numismatists who understand the marks XXI, XX.I or XX to indicate the proportion of silver in the coins do not agree about their value. For Estiot, the *aurelianus* would have been worth 2 *denarii* (like the

[33] In the early empire, the emperor's effigy is laureate on the *as* and radiate on the *dupondius* (= 2 *asses*).

[34] Dio, LXXVII.14.4.

antoninianus that, according to her, it replaced), while the decried *antoninianus* would have been exchanged for 1 *denarius*. This hypothesis is based on the decry mentioned by Zosimus: according to this historian, 'then [Aurelian] officially distributed a new silver coin, having had the public hand in the coins of poor alloy; in this way he avoided any confusion in financial dealings'.[35] Other interpretations of the reform offer alternatives. For K. Harl, for example, the mark XX.I (or just XX on issues of Ticinum) would indicate that the coin was worth 20 *sestertii* (= 5 *denarii*). E. Lo Cascio reads the mark as the exchange rate between the old radiate coin, the *antoninianus*, and the new one, the *aurelianus*, so that one new one would have been exchanged for twenty old ones (in plain language, 1 *aurelianus* = 20 *antoniniani*, which for Lo Cascio means 25 *denarii*, since he thinks that the *antoninianus* was worth $1^1/_4$ *denarii*); this hypothesis also purports to explain the price rise observed in Egypt after 274 by a repricing of the tetradrachm aligned with that of the *aurelianus*.

The Currency Edict of 301 reveals that there was a devaluation without any reminting, taking effect from 1 September, which at that time was the start of the fiscal year. Despite some lacunae in the inscription,[36] the doubling is now allowed for the *nummus*: from $12^1/_2$ to 25 *denarii*. This change at least sheds light on the inverse decision of Licinius in his eastern part of the empire some twenty years later (between 321 – the year of his break with Constantine – and 324 – the year of his defeat) to reduce the value of his debased *nummus* to $12^1/_2$ *denarii* (as is shown by the value mark X/IIS on the reverse of his coins), a value which may not have changed in Constantine's part of the empire. In any case, the references to sums of $12^1/_2$ and 25 *denarii* in three undated papyri that are difficult to interpret are usually adduced in support of one or other of these measures.[37] The rapid price rise, especially of precious metals, recorded in Egypt in the first decades of the fourth century had led some papyrologists to suggest that the reason for this fall in both the weight and silver content of the *nummus* was to prevent the coin's intrinsic value from rising above its nominal value. However, did what happened in Egypt apply to the rest of the empire?

In order to assess the impact of these repeated devaluations, historians and numismatists have concentrated on the decline in the silver fineness of the coin that tended to be used as the accounting unit and that was originally connected with that metal: the *denarius*. However, the same calculations

[35] Zos. 1.61.3.

[36] New, as yet unpublished, fragments were presented at a colloquium at the British Museum in 1991, but they do not supply the missing part of the line.

[37] See Bowman (1980) 24 with n. 13 on *P. Ryl.* IV.607; *P. Oslo* III.83; *PSI* VIII.965. Bagnall, *Currency* 13–15, 23 and 33 links *P. Ryl.* IV.607 and *PSI* VIII.965 with the reform of Diocletian and *P. Oslo* III.83 with that of Licinius.

have been made by some scholars for gold, which appears to have replaced silver as the metal of reference around 300. The advantage of this method is that it produces virtually unbroken trend lines, even if they are based on disparate sources of information: some from official pronouncements (imperial decisions), others derived directly from the coins themselves.

This invaluable approach is not the only way of looking at the devaluations. It actually focuses on the variations of the accounting unit relative to precious metals, which are commodities like any other – and as such included in the Prices Edict – with prices that vary with their relative scarcity or abundance, which in turn affects the activity of the mines. This approach should therefore be complemented by a comparison – much harder to make in the absence of continuous time series data – with the prices of as wide a range of other commodities as possible, in the first place with basic consumption items. The practice adopted on several occasions by the Roman emperors, of giving some of the coins in circulation a fiduciary value, sometimes with considerable differences between coins made of the same metal, caused the existence of more or less lasting discrepancies between the price of precious metals and the prices of other commodities. Clearly, the Roman state tried to meet its commitments, especially military ones, by minting an equal or increasing number of coins with less silver and gold, but also less bronze. But the actual rise in the prices of precious metals in turn would have had two kinds of result: either the prices of goods would have come into line with the prices of silver and gold, or, on the contrary, the mines would have increased their output, also stimulated by the greater use of copper, lead and tin for the *aes* coinage.

The decline in silver content of the accounting unit – henceforth the *denarius*, in a fixed relationship of 1:4 with the *sestertius* that it increasingly replaced – can be estimated only for the very beginning and end of the third century, under Septimius Severus and then in 301 (though also perhaps extrapolated back to 294/296), when we know both what the coins were worth and roughly the weight of pure silver that they contained. However, such a calculation ceases to make much sense when the coins contain less than 5 per cent of silver, as is the case for the *nummus*. Should it still be thought of as a 'silver coin'? The calculation is appropriate for the *denarius* of Septimius Severus and for the *argenteus* of Diocletian, which have the same weight (96 to the pound) but different silver contents (around 50 per cent for the former, on average 96 per cent for the latter). Under Septimius Severus the silver content of the accounting unit (*denarius*) is of 1.6 g. On 1 September 301, when the *argenteus* is tariffed at 100 *denarii*, it contains just under 3.4 g of silver: on this basis, the accounting unit (*denarius*) would correspond to 0.034 g of silver. In one century, the denarius as accounting unit has declined to $^{1}/_{47}$ of its value – little by the standards of monetary devaluations in Europe in the twentieth century, but enough to have caused

serious political and social tensions at various times, and to have thoroughly upset the Roman monetary system.

For the whole of the third century, between the two extremes when the official rates are known, the only indicator remains the fall in the silver content of the *denarius* and the *antoninianus*. For the silver coinage and down to 253, the analyses made by D. R. Walker make it possible to establish meaningful curves by highlighting the successive stages of decline.[38] The curves established by S. Estiot carry forward the series for the period 253 to 282.[39] Studies of the silver content of the *nummus* were also made by J.-P. Callu and J.-N. Barrandon.[40] All of these curves reveal periods of (quasi) stability after a devaluation or official restoration, and, by contrast, periods of rapid decline – basically the 250s and 260s for the *antoninianus*, then again between the 310s and 320s for the *nummus*.

The curves for the weight of pure metal – for silver and for gold – worked out by A. Burnett,[41] which noticeably diverge until the middle of the century, allow a comparison between the fall in weight of the *aureus* and the decline in both weight and fineness of the *denarius* and the *antoninianus*. By reducing the weight of the *aureus* – and that from the reign of Caracalla onwards – the state tried to maintain the official rate of exchange of 1 *aureus* for 25 *denarii* for as long as possible, but this relationship inevitably broke down at an unknown date. Numismatists reckon that the gold coinage must then have circulated at a floating rate, and offer as proof the fact that in the Edict of 301 the maximum price for a pound of gold is the same (72,000 *denarii*) whether the gold is in the form of bars (*in regulis*) or coins (*in solidis*). At that date the gold coins are circulating at their intrinsic value. The debasement of most other coins tends to make the gold coin henceforth the means of storing value.

When Aurelian stabilized the weight and fineness of the *aureus* (at 50 to the pound) and the *aurelianus*, he must have established a new parity between the two coins that we do not now know. In 300, when the official price of a pound of gold was 60,000 *denarii*,[42] Diocletian's gold coin (at 60 to the pound) must have been worth 1,000 *denarii* if it circulated at its face value, i.e. 20 *argentei* worth 50 *denarii* each or 80 *nummi* worth $12^1/_2$ *denarii*. In 301, by tariffing the pound of pure gold in bars (*in regulis*) or coins (*in solidis*) at 72,000 *denarii*, the Prices Edict gave the *solidus* (at 60 to the pound) a value of 1,200 *denarii*, whereas the *argenteus* (at 96 to the pound) was overvalued at 100 *denarii*; this gives a ratio of only 1:12

[38] Walker (1978) 141. The actual detailed figures should be treated with caution, partly because of the small number of examples analysed, partly because of the method used: the X-ray fluorescence method reflects the composition of the surface of the object; phenomena of alteration and superficial enrichment of cupro-silver alloys bias its results; see notably Duncan-Jones, *Money* 224 n. 46.

[39] Estiot (1996). [40] Callu and Barrandon (1986).

[41] Burnett (1987) 113. [42] *P. Panop. Beatty* 2.

between the two coins and 1:48 between the *solidus* and the *nummus* of 25 *denarii*.[43]

3. *The proliferation of coins*

The proliferation of coins suggested by series of mintings, remintings, overstrikes of coins of a lower weight and fineness or, on the contrary, of coins countermarked with a higher value even though their weight and metal content had not changed (as happened for the civic bronze issues in the eastern part of the empire) could give rise to several interpretations. The proliferation may be merely apparent, and simply offset the loss of coinage from circulation through wear, hoarding and outflow from the empire. It could also have been intended above all to deal with the crises in the imperial finances, as expenditures rose dramatically while revenues stagnated or collapsed as a result of invasions and the divisions of the empire. And the situations could have varied from one period to another.

In contrast to the major reforms accompanied by efforts to remint all the coinage in circulation, there were sometimes simpler modifications that did not involve new minting but merely changing the value of coins already in circulation – such as the doubling of 301 – as well as more limited strikings of coins at lower weights or metal fineness and without any official devaluation intended to circulate alongside the existing coinage.

The reform of Septimius Severus is normally placed in the first of these categories: a complete reminting, with addition of copper, on a standard that gave official sanction to the *de facto* devaluations of the previous two or three decades by exaggerating them; the result was to make the new coinage acceptable everywhere for the next twenty years: it was struck in sufficient quantities to meet all needs and did not disappear into hoards.[44] But was this also true of the reforms of his successors – Caracalla, Aurelian, Diocletian and Constantine – each of whom tried to impose new monetary standards?

It is hard to say what actually happened. Numismatists have three ways of estimating the size of issues: the number of mints and *officinae*, the number of known dies (though the number of coins struck per die is quite uncertain), and the number of surviving coins.

In order to finance his eastern policy (war against Pescennius Niger, conquest of Mesopotamia), Septimius Severus opened branches of the Rome mint in the east to strike *denarii*. In order to pay for his Parthian campaign, Caracalla emulated this policy in 215, but this time to strike Syrian

[43] Unless it is argued, as some numismatists do on the basis of the mark XXI found on a few examples, that the *nummus* was reduced in value to 20 *denarii*.

[44] Corbier (1976–7) and (1978).

tetradrachms, which are thought to have been produced in large quantities, given the number of identified Syro-Palestinian mints (twenty-six).[45]

The estimates relate mainly to the middle years of our period: from 238 to 282, the time of the *de facto* devaluation of the mid-third century, the issues of the 'usurpers', then the reform of Aurelian and the issues of his immediate successors, as well as the minting of Gallic imitations.

Even if this indicator is not wholly reliable, it is usually agreed that the growth in the number of mints and *officinae* in the middle of the third century must have led to an increase in the volume of output. In any case, in 238, the imperial coinage is produced at two mints, Rome and Antioch, comprising nine *officinae*. By the beginning of Aurelian's reign in 270, seven mints with thirty-three *officinae* are operating: two in the Gallic empire, one (Antioch) controlled by Zenobia, and four in the central part of the empire.

Numismatists try to estimate the frequency of issues by counting the numbers of surviving coins, utilizing as monetary 'documents' either hoards or coins discovered on sites. One of the factors that make the method uncertain is that most of these coins are found in hoards, yet the contents of hoards are not necessarily a representative sample of the coinage in circulation as coins which were in circulation were melted down.

An illustration of this is provided by the histograms drawn by S. Estiot[46] to show the changes in output of *antoniniani* and *aureliani* (in terms of coins struck per year) for twelve periods between 238 and 282, on the one hand combining for each period the issues of the central empire and Gaul, on the other taking into account the length of the period. The first histogram is based on a total of 358,214 coins from sixty-five hoards, mostly from Gaul, Belgium and Britain, plus the large Italian hoard from La Venera. The second histogram is based on a survey of excavation finds (30,410 coins) from sites all over the Roman world.[47] Although the site finds tend to exaggerate the amplitude of the evolution, the two histograms share certain features that Estiot summarizes as follows:

> Until 260, the imperial mints produce relatively stable quantities of *antoniniani*.
>
> In 260, the hoards suggest that output was tripled, but hoarding encourages the over-representation of the first issues of Postumus, taken off the market because of their good quality (weight and fineness).
>
> In 266, a rapid increase in coins (three times as many in hoards, five times as many from excavations) is concomitant with the diminution

[45] Callu, *Politique monétaire* 171–4. [46] Estiot (1996) 53.
[47] Data from Hollard (1995a) 23–31 with the table on pp. 24–5.

of their metal content; the bulk of the output is produced by the Rome mint.

Aurelian closed the Rome mint at the beginning of his reign to punish the fraudulent practices of the *monetarii*. Output is tightly controlled after the reform of 274, which, according to Estiot, is accompanied by a strongly deflationary policy.

However, none of these estimates based on surviving coins found in hoards or elsewhere provide certain answers to the key questions involved in interpreting the history of these issues. Did the increase in output equally affect all categories of coinage, both the 'good' gold and silver coins and the bronze with low silver content? Or did it apply only to the latter, used for current expenditures by the state (for the army, administration and provisioning of Rome) and by private individuals? And even when large amounts of 'good' coins were minted, did they always or sometimes circulate as widely as the bronze? Or did the existence of the two sorts of coinage encourage a division of functions: the former used to store value and the latter, more widely used, in actual transactions? The increase in the minting of bronze with ever lower silver content (*nummi*) goes along with the rise in prices, and replaces the previously separate minting of silver and *aes*.

The problem is to know whether, at the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, gold and silver were minted in massive quantities and actually circulated. According to J.-P. Callu,[48] the *argentei*, minted in relatively large quantities by Diocletian but immediately hoarded, were struck in much smaller quantities after 300; moderate-sized issues of good silver coins (and multiples) would have begun again after 324 and continued until 337, to judge from the small numbers found in hoards; it is true that this might also have been caused by reminting in the years after Constantine's death. Gold coins of the late third and early fourth century are also scarce. Prior to the 340s, and apart from the issues resulting from Constantine's recoinage of Licinius' treasuries, issues of *solidi* are fairly rare. By contrast, the end of Constantine's reign seems to have been marked by vast issues of *nummi*.

4. Location of mints and minting institutions

(a) The unification of the currency

At the beginning of the third century, at the period when Cassius Dio was writing, the unification of the currency had not yet been achieved, even if it was already well advanced. Among the advice that the historian attributed to 'Maecenas' was the following: 'None of the cities should be allowed to

[48] Callu (1980) 175–6; see also King (1980) 152 and (1993a) 10–13.

have its own separate coinage, or system of weights and measures; they should all be required to use ours.'[49] At the end of the century, the coinage is made fully uniform when, in 296, issues of the Alexandrian tetradrachm ceases and Egypt joins the world of the *nummus*.

For almost three centuries Egypt has indeed enjoyed a novel status: from the reign of Tiberius it uses its own coinage, minted in Alexandria, in which the principal denomination was a silver tetradrachm, a large coin that weighed around 12 g until the mid-third century. Perhaps from the time of Nero this tetradrachm is equated with the *denarius* – and hence the accounting unit, the drachma, is the equivalent of the *sestertius* – in spite of having a lower intrinsic value. The *denarius* does not circulate in Egypt and the troops there are paid in local currency; all coins have to be exchanged on entering and leaving the country. Several major changes affected this coinage: a decline in the silver content under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus,[50] concomitant with large issues under Commodus; a deterioration by reduction in both weights and fineness from the middle of the third century; a 'reform' in the fifth year of Aurelian's reign (273/4) characterized by a reduction in weight of the tetradrachm (from 9.3 g to 8 g, struck at 40 to the pound instead of 34, according to Lafaurie (1975a)) and the appending of a different mark to indicate the regnal year; the hypothesis of a repriced rate of the tetradrachm in relation to that of the *aurelianus* is suggested by several historians.

Let there be no mistake, the imperial monopoly over minting coinage throughout the empire is total; although the Greek-speaking provinces still strike provincial or civic issues, mainly in bronze but also in silver, at the beginning of the third century they do so with the authorization of the emperor. Local issues in the west have come to an end long before, under the reigns of Caligula and Claudius.[51] On the contrary, in Asia Minor, Syria and the Balkans, the right to mint local issues peaked in the Severan period: specialists have identified around 300 cities striking coins *c.* 200 (only about a hundred were still doing so *c.* 250). The issues are, however, sporadic and vary considerably in size.

Among the silver coinages, *cistophori* are still struck (in small quantities) in the province of Asia under Septimius Severus. The mint of Caesarea in Cappadocia still issues tridrachms under Gordian III (238–44) in connection with the war against the Persians. In Syria, output of Greek denominations continues at the imperial mint at Antioch with the striking of tetradrachms until the reign of Trebonianus Gallus (251–3): from the reign of Valerian onwards, the mint produces only *antoniniani*, which it has perhaps first struck under Gordian III.

[49] Dio, LII.30.9. [50] Christiansen (1987) II.87.
[51] See *RPC* I.144–5: civic issue at Ebusus (Ibiza) under Claudius.

As to the civic bronze coinages, recent researches on Anatolia have tried to correct the traditional view of an anarchic situation by highlighting instead the links between the cities and the efforts to insist on the use of the same denominations. During the third century local bronzes in the east decline in weight and contain more and more lead (less expensive) and less and less zinc; some coins are countermarked with figures (in Greek letters) that raise their face value and make it possible to trace their revaluation in terms of *assaria* (the *assarion* is the bronze accounting unit in the east).[52]

Issues of bronze stopped virtually simultaneously throughout the empire in the reign of Gallienus: in Rome for the central part of the empire around 260, in the Gallic empire around 262 with the last *sestertii* of Postumus, at the imperial mint of Antioch (for issues of 'Roman' and not civic coins) in 264, and at the provincial mint of Alexandria at about the same time. Most of the civic issues in the east also stop by the 260s, although Perge in Pamphylia still strikes coins for Tacitus (275–6). The reasons normally offered for this are the following: the purchasing power of the low denominations of bronze would have become negligible (because of the alleged rise of prices) and the intrinsic value of the 'silver' coins would have dropped below that of their bronze fractions; hence the end of local coinages would have been connected with more abundant supplies of debased *antoniniani* to the eastern provinces (apart from Egypt).

(b) Decentralization of minting

From the mid-third century, minting becomes increasingly decentralized. In the west, from the Flavian period onwards, the mint of Rome provides all coinage, in gold, silver and *aes*. This is not without its problems, when one remembers that a major part of the empire's expenditures were incurred, to pay for the army, in the frontier provinces. This monopoly comes to an end in the middle of the third century with the opening of a mint at Viminacium on the Danube in 239. Then in their turn, in response to their needs for coinage, Valerian and Gallienus open new mints, usually close to the armies: at Trier (rather than Cologne, according to recent research), Milan, Viminacium, Siscia and Cyzicus. Under Gallienus, the number of *officinae* at the Rome mint doubles from six to twelve. In 259 the mint in Gaul fell into the hands of Postumus (who died around 269), and his successors opened a second mint. The Gallic empire (260–74) therefore has its own mints at Trier and Cologne, as does the British empire of Carausius and Allectus (287–96), with its main mint at London.

After having put an end to the breakaway Gallic and Palmyrene regimes, Aurelian reduces the number of mints in Gaul to just one (at Lyon), moves the mint from Milan to Ticinum (Pavia), adds a mint at Serdica, another

[52] Howgego (1985).

in Syria (perhaps at Tripolis) and for a short while another in the Balkans. The reformed coinage is therefore produced at eight mints – Lyon, Rome, Ticinum, Siscia, Serdica, Cyzicus, Antioch and Tripolis – comprising thirty-nine *officinae*.

When the monetary, fiscal and administrative reforms of the tetrarchs have been completed – and whatever their relative chronology – in 305, the map of the new districts, the dioceses, corresponds well with the distribution of the mints, with a few exceptions (for example, the Spanish provinces and the *Viennensis* have no mint, whereas Gauls have two). After Britain has been reconquered and independent coinage has ended in Egypt, fourteen mints supply the empire: London, Trier, Lyon, Ticinum, Aquileia, Rome, Carthage, Siscia, Thessalonica, Heraclea, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch and Alexandria.

From the last thirty years of the third century, the decentralization of minting leads to the inclusion in the exergue of the mint's marks, as well as the number of the *officina* (so that PTR means first (*prima*) *officina* at Trier). Each coin is therefore 'signed', reflecting a contemporary concern to keep track of production but also allowing modern specialists to make more detailed calculations.

At the end of Constantine's reign, with the opening of the mint at Constantinople in 326, the centre of gravity of coin production shifts to the east; Carthage, London and Ticinum were closed, while the mint at Ostia, which had been created by Maxentius, was moved to Arles; and a new mint was opened on the Danube at Sirmium.

5. Monetary circulation

Does the coinage struck at these mints circulate throughout the empire or does it, on the contrary, circulate mainly locally? Or, in other words, do the requirements of taxation and long-distance trade override the needs of the local economies? Or is it a case of provincial or regional circulation areas midway between these two extremes?

The distribution of coinage does not always reflect where it was produced: a good example of this is the circulation of *sestertii* struck at the Rome mint in the first half of the third century. They are widespread all over Italy, in Spain, in Africa and even sometimes present in the eastern provinces, but they are not found in Gaul or Britain,[53] although bronze circulated there in large quantities in the second century: Gaul lives off old stocks, which explains why Postumus chooses to overstrike the still available *sestertii* of the first Antonines. The circulation areas of the *denarius* and *antoninianus*

[53] Buttrey (1972); Walker (1988) 300–1; and the publications of Richard Reece, e.g. (1973), (1981), and (1991).

develop in relation to the supplying of the armies, whereas the provinces 'in the rear' still use bronze. Around 257, the *sestertius* is still being used as a fraction of the *antoninianus* to judge from the deposit lost in a shipwreck off the Balearics.[54]

Particular attention has been paid to the silver coinage – the coinage that replaced bronze as army pay in the early empire. For the first two centuries of the empire, a model of the circulation of the *denarius*, proposed by K. Hopkins in 1978 and 1980, combines two complementary observations. The first is the identification of three circles within the empire: (1) Rome and Italy (where the emperor, Rome and the central administration spent money) – though in fact little in Italy; (2) an inner ring of rich and peaceful provinces that contribute more (in taxes) than is spent locally (few or no troops); (3) an outer ring of military provinces where the presence of troops and officials leads to far larger expenditures than the tax revenues collected locally. The second observation is based on a suggestive graph showing the fluctuations in silver coinage from province to province.[55] For the period from A.D. 50 to 180 this graph shows identical fluctuations, suggesting to Hopkins that circulation is uniform, mainly emanating from Rome, which plays the role of the core and sends out its coins throughout the empire, i.e. into the three circles just described. Coins enter circulation mainly via military expenditures (in the third circle), then spread through trade: thus coins flow into the second circle from the third circle and from the first, which they feed back in turn through taxation. In reply to this model of mixing and homogenization of silver coinage, R. Duncan-Jones[56] has proposed a view, based on an examination of a range of *denarius* hoards, that suggests a more fragmented circulation, with coins tending to stay in the provinces to which they were sent. The controversy has had the positive effect of stimulating more detailed specific research. For our purposes, what is most striking in Hopkins' graph is the way the curves break up around the turn of the second and third centuries.

With the creation in the first decades of the third century of a military coin, the *antoninianus*, and the increase in the number of mints from the middle of the century, the Rome mint ceases to play the role of the 'heart' supplying the rest of the empire. The majority of the new mints are located just behind the areas where troops are concentrated or else along the routes that they use (such as on either side of the Bosphorus).

For the third century, C. J. Howgego has looked at the degree of homogeneity achieved by the silver coinage after several decades in circulation:[57] the *denarii* struck in the east under Septimius Severus make up about 50 per cent of British hoards around 263, but never achieve the 80 per cent

[54] Bost *et al.* (1992). [55] Hopkins (1978) and (1980).
[56] Duncan-Jones, *Structure* ch. 2. [57] Howgego (1994) and (1996).

observed in the east (in a hoard from Dura buried in around 217). On the other hand, the *antoniniani* issued in the east by Gallienus never reached Britain in significant numbers.

In western Europe, which has been studied especially thoroughly, the regionalization of circulation, accentuated when the Gallic empire (which had included Britain) and the British empire break away, is very typical of the end of the third century.[58] After the reform of Aurelian, the recall of *antoniniani* mentioned by Zosimus does not seem to have applied everywhere. It was carried out in Italy and the Balkans, which the hoards indicate were quickly purged of their 'bad' coins, but not in the former Gallic empire. According to one hypothesis,[59] the state would have dumped in these politically unstable regions the coins that were decried elsewhere and, since they could not be exchanged for *aureliani*, they would have been enforced there as legal tender.

6. The phenomena of monetary shortage

Official issues were not always adequate to meet the need for coinage. Attested by the cast coins themselves as well as by the discovery of ancient moulds, the phenomenon of imitations was re-examined by C. E. King (1996). It was especially common in the peripheral regions of the empire, in particular Britain, Gaul and the provinces along the Danube, i.e. the frontier provinces, and at specific times when an area was undersupplied with coins following political or military upheavals or after a monetary reform. They are 'emergency issues' that are no longer used once the area has received sufficient quantities of imperial coins. Thus, in order to remedy the lack of bronze, the Danube regions produced *limesfalsa* from the 230s onwards; the inadequate supply of *antoniniani* also led to the production of cast *denarii*, which was concentrated near the legionary camps in Britain and the Rhineland, as well as certain large towns that later had their own mints (Cologne, Trier, Lyon, Arles). Imitations of *antoniniani* were manufactured in large numbers in Britain and Gaul between 260 and 285.

Shortages of small change were common in the eastern provinces. One such, around 209/10, caused a monetary crisis in Mylasa in Caria, about which a decree of the city (engraved on a stele set up in the agora) mentions some details.[60] The text is interesting because it deals with two matters: first, it reveals a monopoly on currency exchange that has been leased to a banker and breached by a series of infringers; second, it states that there is a shortage of 'coinage and small change', harming local commerce and hindering the payment of taxes. This shortage of small change in bronze appears to have been recurrent. C. Augé has drawn attention to the use of

[58] King (1981). [59] Estiot *et al.* (1994). [60] *OGIS* 515.

obsolete, worn old or foreign bronze coins that are still in circulation or brought back into use in southern Syria and Palestine until around 250–60, if need be at a lower value (indicated by countermarks).[61] Between 311 and 313, in order to remedy the lack of very small denominations in the east, Antioch, Nicomedia and Alexandria strike small civic bronzes that Augé argues are probably intended to be *'denarii'*.

7. The shift from silver to gold

The changes in the coinage during the third century alter the respective roles of gold and silver.

There is no lasting modification to the gold/silver ratio, which goes up from 1:11.25 in 200 to 1:12 in 301. It is still at 1:12 in Egypt around 325–30 according to papyri that record both the official prices for a pound of gold and a pound of silver. However, silver becomes identified with the billon coinage, in which the silver content has fallen to very low levels and which is used for daily transactions. This development is irreversible: the standardization of the coinages of the empire has been made around a *nummus* which, at its best, has never contained more than 5 per cent silver. The minting of new silver coins with a high silver content by Diocletian and Constantine is not enough to reverse the trend that causes gold to be used as the store of value, as well as for certain payments and trade. These 'good' silver coins, struck as prestige pieces and apparently in quite small quantities, were hoarded alongside gold coins (as in the Beaurains hoard).[62]

At the beginning of the third century, as in the second, the silver *denarius* is the coin used by the state for its large-scale expenditures (pay for the army and officials). Gold is the 'gift' coinage used for 'gracious' payments: a part of the donatives given to soldiers and of the *congiaria* offered to the Roman *populus* which, for this reason, tend to be in multiples of 25 *denarii*; bonuses to individuals whom one wants to honour in this way. It is in this sense that we must interpret the *salarium in auro* paid around 220 to a notable, T. Sennius Sollemnis, by the legate of Britain, his *patronus*, for a tribunate that he anyway never held.[63] The emperor sometimes tries to save gold by making his gifts in silver: according to Cassius Dio,[64] when the Roman people demanded that Marcus Aurelius distribute 8 *aurei*, he had 200 *drachmae*, i.e. 200 *denarii*, paid out to each beneficiary.

By contrast, at the beginning of the fourth century, the donatives made by the emperor for services to the state would be the main means whereby gold coins (the *solidi* and their multiples) were put into circulation, in the view of scholars such as P. Bastien.[65] The owner (an officer?) of the Beaurains

[61] Augé (1987) 232–3. [62] Bastien and Metzger (1977). [63] *CIL* XIII.3162.
[64] Dio, LXXI.32. [65] Bastien (1988).

(Pas-de-Calais) hoard buried around 315 saved various gold medallions which he had perhaps received for this reason, in particular a piece struck at Trier in 297 to commemorate the entry (*adventus*) of Constantine Chlorus into London, shown welcomed by a personification of Britain.[66]

Compared with the major transformation of the third century – the increase in issues of low-grade billon – the anonymous author of the *De Rebus Bellicis* must be credited with presenting the spread of gold in a new light: 'It was in the time of Constantine that wasteful spending caused gold to be used in place of bronze – hitherto highly thought of – for *commercia vilia*.'[67] A critic of Constantine, he considers this 'prodigality' to be unnecessary: bronze served the needs of *commercia vilia* perfectly well. But he seems to have forgotten the very existence, just over a hundred years earlier, of a coin that still contained 50 per cent silver, which was sufficiently common for it to have bronze fractions and to act as a coin of reference. Even the date that he offers for the use of gold in daily transactions – which remains limited by the gap between its value and the price of the main consumption items – seems to anticipate the reality. A. Chastagnol argues that gold would not actually have penetrated to the lower strata of the population, especially soldiers, until later in the fourth century.[68] In this regard, the anonymous author may be reflecting the realities of his own time (the reigns of Valentinian and Valens?) in attributing the original responsibility to Constantine. In Egypt in 320, according to the will of a retired centurion – which is always quoted because there is regrettably little evidence on this topic – the dead man's savings amount to just 8 *aurei* and 199 1/2 bronze talents (A. Burnett calculates that this would represent 80 per cent in *aes* and 20 per cent in gold):[69] was this imbalance peculiar to Egypt or would it have applied throughout the Empire?

II. THE METAL STOCK

The currency is made up of a certain quantity of metals minted as coins and put into circulation. The potential for minting varies, depending on whether the metal stock is constant, increasing or declining. Historians have always included declining stocks among the range of explanations for the coinage debasement. Recently, some scholars have even suggested that a shortage of silver might have been the main cause of what they call the monetary 'crisis' of the third century. But it is not enough merely to multiply the number of coins found in hoards by the amount of silver that those coins might be expected to contain given the rates of debasement in order

[66] Bastien and Metzger (1977).
[67] *De Reb. Bell.* II. Cameron (1979) proposes to date the work to around 368–9.
[68] Chastagnol (1980).
[69] *P. Oxy.* XLVI.3307; Lewis (1974); Bowman (1980) 32–4; Burnett (1987) 120.

to calculate the stock of silver available and its alleged drastic decline: the method adopted by G. Depeyrot and D. Hollard (1987) has been criticized on the basic grounds that the content of third-century hoards does not reflect the coinage struck, and this holds for gold as well as silver. Nor does the stability of the gold/silver ratio (1:12) displayed by the state suggest a major imbalance between the quantities available of the two metals. It could be argued that the stable ratio resulted from the demonetization of silver, which would mean that silver was used only for private purposes, whereas gold would have increased in value because of its greater use as coinage. But this was not in fact what happened: the silver in circulation was mixed in far lower proportions (declining from 50 to 5 per cent) in far more coins, and the minting of 'good' silver coins was not abandoned.

The metal stock is actually subject to three types of outflows: hoarding, the export of currency and the wear of coins. At the same time, in periods when the Roman empire no longer acquires booty through conquests or reconquests, except on rare occasions, additions to the metal stock occur mainly through mining and dishoarding.[70]

1. Costs and benefits of military conquests or reconquests?

Booty from wars of conquest – or reconquest – played its part in the monetary experiments of Septimius Severus (capture of Ctesiphon), Aurelian (reconquest of Palmyra), Diocletian (conquest of Armenia) and Constantine (seizure of the treasuries of Maxentius in 312 and of Licinius in 324, after their defeats). For example, after the sacking of Palmyra in early 273, while the troops were heading for Egypt, a mint was opened at Tripolis to strike a large donative.[71] The Gallic emperors did not lag behind: pillage, proscriptions and confiscations followed the surrender in 270 of Autun (which had supported Claudius II) to Victorinus after a siege lasting seven months.[72]

2. Output from mines

Whatever its absolute level, the inflow linked to the mining output varied according to several factors: the number of 'mining' provinces effectively under imperial control; the effort invested in fully exploiting these mines; the quality of the workable seams and their level of exhaustion. In any case, the production of gold and silver, as of most monetary metals (copper; natural ore of zinc, calamine; lead), directly benefited the state. In the course of the first century, most of the mines that did not already

[70] See in general Corbier (1989). [71] Estiot (1995).

[72] On this episode, the classic article is Le Gentilhomme (1943), though the date should be revised from 269 to 270; see Demougeot (1985).

belong to the state gradually became the property of the emperor through bequests and confiscations. The state exploits its mines sometimes directly, or indirectly through a lease paid for in the form of a share of ore (at least this was the arrangement at Vipasca in the second century A.D.).[73]

How far mining output offset the decline in the metal stock cannot be measured. A. H. M. Jones thought it 'probable that the Empire's stock of the precious metals would remain fairly constant, new production being balanced by wastage and export'.[74] But, for the third century, several observations are at variance with the assumption that the stock was stable.

According to Statius' very allegorical account of the activities of the *a rationibus*, the official in charge of minting,[75] gold was brought from Spain and Dalmatia in the Flavian period. Then, from Trajan onwards, from Dacia. The fact that the gold mines of northwest Spain ceased to be worked at the beginning of the third century, according to Domergue,[76] suggests that, at least as far as gold was concerned, the empire had large enough reserves to be able to make decisions that took account of the quality of the seams and the availability of labour: gold is not produced regardless of the cost, rather the contrary.

In the third century, the loss of mines had an adverse effect. The Gallic empire (260–74) and the British empire of Carausius and Allectus (287–96) cut the supply from certain mining areas to the central authorities, and this was, on the contrary, to the benefit of the 'usurpers': Postumus defied the central empire through the quality of his coinage. It is true that in the territory ruled by Gallienus after 260, and in particular for the Rome mint, the break in the supply of silver from Britain and perhaps also Spain[77] resulting from Postumus' usurpation helped to accelerate the trend towards devaluation. Carausius, now in control of the rich seams of Britain, struck *argentei* on the Augustan standard of 84 to the pound; this was copied by Diocletian (though on the Neronian standard of 96 to the pound). Diocletian, on the other hand, was able to take advantage of new metallic resources thanks to the conquest of Armenia.[78]

Moreover, historians may be tempted to think that the first seams to be worked would have begun to be exhausted and that their quality would have tended to become poorer. But no reliance should be placed on the moralizing treatise addressed by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, to Demetrian in 252/3: 'The gold and silver mines are running out, the land is less fertile, the soil is producing less', which is simply a marvellous *topos*. Domergue, for his part, does not believe that the reduction in mining activity that he observes in Spain should be explained in terms of the ore deposits being exhausted.

[73] Domergue (1994). [74] Jones, *Roman Economy* 191. [75] Statius, *Silv.* III.3.86–90.
[76] Domergue (1990) 215–23. [77] Christol (1981). [78] Callu, *Politique monétaire* 420 n. 1.

There may also have been periods when production slowed or when certain mines were reopened, depending on whether the general context made them seem more or less profitable. According to G. D. B. Jones,[79] the archaeological study of certain sites could make such conclusions attractive. It would then remain to check whether the output of the mines did indeed rise and fall in line with the prices of precious metals.

Around 345, the eastern empire gained access to a new, as yet unidentified source of gold, characterized by traces of platinum,[80] and this stimulated the minting of *solidi*.

3. Coin wear and loss of metal

Whatever its actual rate, coin wear is a factor that cannot be minimized for the periods and the regions where the coinage remains in circulation for a long time – as is the case in the first two centuries of the empire. The hoards buried in the mid- and late second century include *sestertii* and *denarii* that date back to the Flavians, and even *aurei* of Nero struck after the reform of 64. As for the *denarii* dating to the early empire, saved for their intrinsic value in the Beaurains hoard, they were extremely worn. If relatively few surviving coins are worn, it is because worn pieces were the first to be melted down. Indeed, Cassius Dio[81] presents the currency reform of Trajan in 107 as a reminting of worn coin.

If the Roman state reminted precisely the same number of coins as it had called in, it necessarily had either to add more precious metal or debase the coinage. In the third century, on the other hand, the *antoniniani* were hardly affected by wear, since they were quickly restruck after a short time in circulation. But if they were not worn, they were lost. In the third century, judging by the finds alone, the loss of metal into hoards appears to have been considerable.[82] A suggestive diagram in an article by R. Reece shows this phenomenon very clearly: the curve of the average number of coins found in Italy and in the Mediterranean area between 27 B.C. and A.D. 400 oscillates about the straight line representing a steady loss across time, slightly below it in the first and second centuries, slightly above it in the third and early fourth centuries.[83] From the moment when the coinage in circulation became, on the one hand, gold rather than silver, and on the other (and above all) coins with a tiny silver content, the losses of silver related to circulation (wear and non-recovery of hoards) would have started to decline. Thus, from the mid-third century, the transformation of the currency in circulation – reduced from three metals to two – could have had the (obviously unintentional) effect of making for a more economical

[79] G. D. B. Jones (1980) 162.
[80] This has been identified thanks to modern methods of metallurgical analysis: see *L'or monnayé* 1.
[81] Dio, LXVIII.3[1]. [82] Callu (1970). [83] Reece (1984) 199.

use of the available stock of precious metals. The metal that was the most susceptible to wear – silver – had partly been taken out of circulation. Henceforth, if coins were worn or lost, the metal concerned was mainly copper.

4. Roman coinage outside the empire: a trade deficit?

Among the factors traditionally mentioned as reasons for the devaluation of the currency are also the foreign trade deficit and the 'tributes' paid to the barbarians from the end of the second century onwards.

The Roman empire was an 'exporter' of gold and silver coins, which are found in southern India and as far as Ceylon, but above all in Germany and up into Scandinavia. However, the exports to the east fell markedly after the Severan period. They rise again in the fourth century: *nummi* of Constantine have been found in Ceylon.[84] It should be noted that the coins 'exported' to the eastern frontier of the empire rarely left any trace since they either returned in trade or were melted down and reminted by states (notably the Parthians and their successors, the Sassanians) which had their own coinage. Even though this foreign trade deficit was paid off in precious metals, nobody today talks in terms of precious metals 'haemorrhaging' away.[85] From the emperor Tiberius to Pliny the Elder and then Dio Chrysostom, the 'export' of coinage was above all the subject of a moralizing *topos*. Carried away by his own rhetoric, Dio Chrysostom[86] did not hesitate to compare handing over gold and silver in exchange for amber and ivory with paying tribute to the barbarians.

The negative reaction of modern authors, copying that of their ancient predecessors, to the 'tributes' paid to the barbarians from the late second century to buy peace is sometimes inspired more by moral than economic considerations, since the barbarians too were purchasers. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate an episode as telling as that of the 'ransom' paid by Philip the Arabian in 244 in order to free prisoners, vaunted by Shapur[87] (since the Roman sources obviously do not mention it): the 500,000 (golden) *denarii* involved represented at that time 10,000 pounds of gold.

5. Hoarding and enforced or spontaneous dishoarding

The amount of metal in circulation was very likely more sensitive to internal factors peculiar to the empire, which are normally combined under the

[84] Bopearachchi (1992).

[85] See Veyne (1979); Corbier (1989); Harl (1996) 290–314.

[86] Dio Chrysostom, LXXIX.5–6.

[87] Mentioned in an inscription traditionally called by analogy *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (*ŠKZ*), l. 9 (a name challenged by the most recent editor, Huyse *ŠKZ*). Text translated by Millar, *Near East* 154. See also Guey (1961) and Pekáry (1961).

rubric 'hoarding'. The term in fact covers a range of quite different things. First, the putting aside by individuals – but also emperors, who did not hesitate to freeze part of the monetary stock in this way – of certain kinds of coins, normally the 'best', in order to have available reserves of savings held in a medium that would keep its value: the 'hoards' found today show that this practice was adopted by a wide range of social categories. Second, the demonetization of precious metals and their transformation into prestige objects or for decoration: a practice well attested already in the first and second centuries, especially in the form of temple offerings.

In the third century, the demonetization of part of the gold and silver in circulation is quite obvious. The clearest signs are the production of heavy gold medallions, multiples of the *aureus*; coins (gold, but also high-grade silver *denarii* of the second century) mounted so that they could be worn as jewellery (necklaces, bracelets and rings);[88] and the virtual disappearance of silver from the currency. Indeed, from the middle of the century, the commonest coins (*antoninianus* and *aurelianus*, then *nummus*) contain almost no silver. The few 'pure' silver coins struck at the end of the century, the *argentei*, are rapidly hoarded after having circulated for a very short time (the Sisak hoard from Yugoslavia, buried around 295/6, contained at least 1,415 coins).[89] What happened to those of Constantine?

Along with gold, whether coined or not, silver bullion was then used as a store of value: in hoards, such as the Eauze hoard, buried in 261,[90] silver ingots are sometimes found with savings in coin form; the use of silver bullion as a fixed asset in the shape of finely worked objects is increased by the taste for silverware which becomes a safe investment. Henceforth, silver bullion and silverware are included in imperial largesses: in the late third and early fourth centuries, silver dishes with commemorative inscriptions and sometimes decorated with a coin portrait are made for distribution on the occasion of the anniversaries of the accession of the *Augusti* and Caesars (*quinquennalia*, *decennalia*, *vicennalia*).[91] But the distribution of commemorative silver disks (weighing just under a pound: hence in effect a small ingot that has been given a shape and a stamp) for the *vicennalia* of Diocletian and Maximian in 303/4 is a novelty, to be associated with both the almost complete disappearance of silver from the coins in circulation and the minting of heavy gold medallions. At the beginning of the year 300, a high-ranking army officer in Egypt received for an unknown reason 50 pounds of uncoined silver and 4 *folles* (i.e. 50,000 *denarii*, as the text states), making a total value of 290,000 *denarii*.[92] The precious-metal liturgical objects given by Constantine to the churches of Rome are similarly listed in the *Liber Pontificalis* with their weight in gold and silver.[93]

[88] Holed gold coins, however, seem to have been found outside the empire: Callu (1991).
[89] Jelocnik (1961). [90] Schaad (1992). [91] Delmaire (1988); Baratte (1993) 212–15.
[92] *P. Panop. Beatty* 2. [93] *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Life of St Sylvester).

This increased presence of silver bullion instead of coined silver may also be the consequence of earlier devaluations, which led to the hoarding of precious metals and coins of better quality. The exceptionally large number of coin hoards datable to the third and early fourth centuries has traditionally been linked to the wars and barbarian raids. Numismatists now give greater weight to monetary factors: the devaluation of the coinage and the currency reforms gave rise to periods of intense hoarding; as for their decry, such as the one of the Gallic currency that some argue was carried out by Probus (276–82), it would also have led to the creation of stocks of 'scrap' metal.[94]

Hoarding gives rise to forms of dishoarding, both spontaneous or enforced. Unlike Louis XIV, Marcus Aurelius did not have his precious plate melted down, but he is supposed to have sold it along with his wardrobe – a measure of genuine value, according to the author of the *Historia Augusta*,[95] in order to pay for the war without levying a new tax. But we are better informed about the enforced forms of dishoarding, which affect both temples and individuals. Maximinus is already accused by Herodian of having grabbed the temple treasuries.[96] For Constantine, the confiscation of the treasuries of the pagan temples was a matter of deliberate policy[97] – which benefited both the church and the state. With the ardour of the recent convert, Firmicus Maternus advises the emperors to melt down the idols in the mints or foundries.[98] In the same way, confiscating the property of the rich who have not chosen the side of the victor but that of the 'usurper' is the corollary of any civil war: Septimius Severus seized in this way the goods of notables, supporters of his unfortunate rivals, Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus.[99] However, the disgrace of leading dignitaries of the state also ended in confiscations: in 205, the management of the praetorian prefect Plautianus' property required the creation of a special procuratorial post *ad bona Plautiani*. Later on, the 'persecutors' seized the goods of the Christians, as Eusebius of Caesarea recounts with regard to Valerian[100] and as is known from several saints' lives, and various canons of the Councils of Ancyra and Nicaea in 314 and 325 relating to the tetrarchs and Licinius. As for the restitution of confiscated property which was supposed to take place when the persecutions ended – such as the one stipulated by the 'Edict of Milan' of 313 – it was never fully carried out.

From the assassination of Commodus to the death of Constantine, the civil wars associated with the crises of succession and the attempts to reunify

[94] Estiot (1996). [95] *SHA*, *Marc.* 17.4.
[96] Herod. VII.3.5. [97] *De Reb. Bell.* II.2; Lib. *Or.* XXX.6.
[98] Firm. Mat. *De Errore Prof. Relig.* XXVIII.6: 'may the fire of the mint or the flames of the foundry melt these unworthy gods' (a work addressed to Constans and Constantius, around 346).
[99] Dio, LXXIV.8.4, LXXIV.9.4; Herod. III.4.7; III.8.2; III.15.3; and see *SHA*, *Sev.* 12.4.
[100] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.13.

the empire and religious changes led to massive transfers of landed property, reserves of coins and precious metal objects to the state, which then redistributed a major part.

The history of Roman coinage between the late second century and the mid-fourth century is better understood today, thanks to more sophisticated estimates and analyses by numismatists, although there remain large areas of uncertainty which hinder their interpretation. Underlying the imperial decisions and the practices surrounding the minting of coins, we can reconstruct some concrete responses to specific situations: on the one hand, to increase the coins available in order to cope with emergencies; on the other, by 'restorations' to rebuild confidence in the coinage in circulation and in the whole currency system. It would be interesting to relate these decisions and practices to the conceptual framework for thinking about money that is reflected, beyond the moralizing *topoi*, in texts such as the writings of Pliny the Elder or, from the early third century, the jurist Paul, for whom money is *pretium* and not merchandise (*merx*).[101]

The emperors had to deal with the most pressing demands – i.e. paying the army – but also take care of the prestige expenditures (beautifying the capital, maintaining a court) attached to their position, and any method that worked was acceptable. But they were also responsible for the whole economy of the empire, where coinage was rather widely used (even if many disparities can be observed between provinces, and between towns and rural areas). They could not allow confidence in the currency to be undermined without at the same time undermining the revenues from taxation needed to cover their spending. The next part of this chapter is therefore devoted to a study of taxation: the actual functioning of the economy – in particular, but not simply, the impact on prices of the currency manipulations – will be examined in the following chapter.

III. TAXATION

Despite the availability of many and varied sources, Roman taxation is poorly understood, and this is the case at every stage in its history. Between the writings of Cicero, which are used as the basis for all studies of the last century of the republic, and the mid-fourth century, our information is usually fragmentary, relating to some new tax, or a tax revolt, some request for tax to be reduced, satisfied or not, or a census, pertaining to a particular city or province, but never comprehensive. It is also sufficiently imprecise that it generates many different interpretations, about which specialists

[101] Paul, *D* XXXVIII.I.I *pr.*: *electa materia est, cuius publica ac perpetua aestimatio difficultatibus permutationum aequalitate quantitatis subveniret. Eaque materia forma publica percussa usum dominiumque non tam ex substantia praebet quam ex quantitate, nec ultra merx utrumque, sed alterum pretium vocatur.*

continue to disagree. For a period of four centuries, our knowledge is a jigsaw puzzle for which we have a tiny number of pieces: allusions in the writings of historians (Josephus, Tacitus, Appian, Cassius Dio, Aurelius Victor, Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosimus, etc.), remarks of jurists (Gaius), views of polemicists (Lactantius), fragments of writings of *gromatici* (land surveyors), Greek and Latin inscriptions engraved and displayed by communities that have received letters, rescripts or imperial edicts, extracts from jurists of the second and third centuries contained in the *Digest*, imperial constitutions quoted in the Justinian or Theodosian Codes, practical documents known from Egyptian papyri, and so on – all of them written in Greek or Latin, about different periods, provinces and subjects, and never using the same administrative language.

However, to discuss taxation in the modern sense of the word probably means projecting onto the levies carried out in different geographical regions under Roman rule a logic, a consistency and an overall view that never existed in practice or in the minds of contemporaries. This would explain that the uncertainties resulting from the disparate nature of the evidence are often made even less clear by the vagueness of ancient terminology: hence the multiple meanings and the evolution of usages over time of words like *vectigal* or *annona* (and the corresponding adjectives, *vectigalis* and *annonarius*) give rise to contradictory interpretations of the same documents.[102] But while there is no 'taxation' in the formal sense, there were certainly 'taxes': in the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, in 177, it is still specified that the *tributa* and *vectigalia* must be paid to the *populus* and the *fiscus*.[103]

1. *Romans and taxes: from diversity to relative uniformity*

Levying taxes was essential for the empire to function as a political and military organization. For Cassius Dio, who addressed the emperors of the Severan dynasty through the fictional speech of Maecenas to Augustus, there could be no survival without soldiers, and no soldiers without army pay. And it would be impossible to pay the army if the coffers were not regularly filled with sufficient income.[104]

Yet the army was merely the main item of expenditure, and there were many others that were just as constraining, and mostly constant and inflexible. The 'civil' administration, with its hierarchy of 'officials' whose

[102] An example: the *agri vectigales* discussed by Hyginus (p. 205 Lachmann = Campbell (2000) 160: *in quibusdam provinciis fructus partem praestant certam, alii quintas alii septimas, alii pecuniam, et hoc per soli aestimationem*) are identified by some scholars with the provincial lands liable to tribute (Brunt, Duncan-Jones, Garnsey, etc.), and by others with the *ager publicus* or public domain in the provinces (Grelle, Lo Cascio, etc.).

[103] *IAM* II.94 (see n. 108 below). [104] Dio, LII.28–9.

regular salaries were supposed to deter them from exacting payments from the populace, abuses being punishable – at least in principle. The provisioning of Rome, with its 150,000 to 200,000 beneficiaries of distributions of free grain (a figure to compare with the total number of permanent troops, which varies from 300,000 to 450,000 men, depending on the period): distributions to which one should add others of oil, wine and meat in the third century free or at discount price, not to mention the *congiaria* in cash. There are games and festivals; presents of land and money to the emperor's cronies and various members of the élite; numerous monumental buildings and urban improvements (baths like those of Caracalla and Diocletian, temples like those of the Sun, walls like those of Aurelian, and so on) that every emperor wished to name after himself, both in Rome and in the provinces, where the local élites were inclined to act in the same way, but where the beautifying of new 'capitals' (Milan, Trier, etc.) and above all the building of Constantinople added to the opportunities for spending: Constantinople even benefited in 332 from the diverting of the grain *annona* from Egypt.

The emperor in fact combined the functions of 'good government' (*buon governo*) with an obligatory and codified euergetism; or, put another way, of making expenditures connected with the exercise of well-defined responsibilities corresponding to those of the state, and of making redistributions in favour of certain social or statutory categories. He had therefore to be both economical and generous, avoiding both avarice and waste. Moreover, between the late second century and the fourth, a trend developed towards splendour and pomp (expressed in dress, palaces, etc.) in the daily life of the emperor, his family and the great aristocratic families, which added a new dimension to expenditures and is the concomitant of the creation of a real court.

In order to meet all these expenses, emperors took over from the republic a tradition of tax levies on the provinces that made it possible to grant tax relief to Rome and its citizens. Since, as a result of inheritances, legacies and confiscations, the emperors became the principal landowners of the empire, they were also able to 'live off their own', i.e. take responsibility themselves for certain expenditures and use their fortunes in the service of the state, as was already done in the time of Augustus (and displayed in the *Res Gestae*).

Furthermore, the empire was a state created by military conquests, with winners and losers. The various provinces, whether they had submitted voluntarily or were conquered by force – and were pillaged for resisting the Roman army – did not live under a unified tax system; rather, the systems were the continuation of those that had existed before, in particular in Sicily and in the eastern half of the empire. There, Rome carried on from the rulers that it had replaced. Elsewhere, especially in the western provinces, Rome

enjoyed greater freedom to impose the principles and the practices that it applied at home. As a result, the empire retained for a long time (at least until the end of the third century) tax arrangements that had an extremely unequal impact geographically: the richest provinces, in particular Asia and Africa, were most heavily taxed, much more so than Italy, and certain statutory categories were exempt. Alongside this unequal distribution of levies was the unequal distribution of expenditures, which were weighted in favour of Rome, on the one hand, and the frontier provinces where the troops were stationed, on the other. Thus there was a circuit of taxation and redistribution based primarily on geography.

From 167 B.C. onwards, Rome and Italy were exempt from all forms of direct taxation, whereas the characteristic feature of the provinces, and still in the third century A.D., is that they were obliged to pay a direct and permanent tax, the tribute, which Cicero[105] called 'the price of victory and the sanction of war'. Several provincial cities (fortunate to have either the *ius Italicum*, which put their territory in the same category as the Italic land, or simply the *immunitas*) constituted pockets of exemption, by virtue of their original status or later concessions. But time played in favour of the removal of privileges (for which the beneficiary communities, from Aphrodisias in Caria to Thugga in Africa, strove to obtain confirmation from successive emperors)[106] and unification of status. In the early empire, Roman citizens were subject to certain taxes: death duties (which they alone pay), indirect taxes, and the share of tribute to which any land that they might own in the province was liable. As for the residents of Rome, whether citizens or not, they had to pay the toll on merchandise imported for sale in the city.[107] Over the long term, however, the contrast between citizens and non-citizens became blurred as citizenship was extended and with it liability to taxation, from which only a few privileged groups and individuals escaped.

In the latter half of the second century, the imperial chancellery made it clear to new citizens that they still had to pay the taxes that they paid before.[108] Similarly, the Edict of Caracalla, traditionally dated to 212, that granted Roman citizenship to all the inhabitants of the empire included a 'restrictive clause'[109] that very likely continued to emphasize

[105] Cicero, *Verr.* II.3.12.

[106] For Aphrodisias, see Reynolds, *Aphrodisias* and Roueché, *ALA* 4–8; for Thugga, see Gascou (1997) and Lepelley (1997).

[107] Le Gall (1979) and Palmer (1980).

[108] As is clear from the document granting citizenship to a family of Berber princes under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus known as the *Tabula Banasitana*: *IAM* II.94: *sine diminutione tributorum et vectigalium populi et fisci* ('without reducing the taxes and fees owed to the Roman people and the imperial fiscus').

[109] The term is used by Coriat (1997) 501–3 in connection with *P. Giss.* 40, col. I, and seems more appropriate than the term 'saving clause' normally used by historians.

fiscal obligations and 'liturgies'. It is illuminating to compare this clause with the expression *colonos fecit salvis tributis*, attested by the jurist Paul,[110] a contemporary, with regard to the granting of the status of colony to the city of Antioch by Caracalla. The papyrological evidence confirms that the general grant of citizenship of 212 did not reduce the tax burden for the *peregrini* who benefited from it: after they became Roman citizens Egyptians still had to pay the poll tax;[111] and checks on their entitlement (*epicrisis*) were carried out on the sons of notables who did not have to pay it.[112] Conversely, the privilege of the *ius Italicum* still existed under the Severan emperors, who notably bestowed it on their native city, Lepcis Magna, as well as on several Syrian cities that had supported them in the civil war.[113] As late as 421, the fact that Constantinople was tax-exempt was described in terms of the *ius Italicum*.[114]

Hence the jurists of the Severan era could develop a doctrine according to which property taxes at least (the *intributiones* of Ulpian) are obligations that (in the context of provincial cities enjoying neither the *ius italicum* nor *immunitas*) applied to everyone.[115] Similarly, a constitution of Caracalla specifies that 'the charges imposed on personal assets in the public interest should be paid by all'.[116] At some time between Hadrian and the Severans an enormous transformation which is revealed in the literature took place: 'between Juvenal and Apuleius, the Romans stop talking about their provinces in terms of colonial literature';[117] henceforth the provinces are deemed to be 'pieces of the empire'. Even if it is still a commonplace for Tertullian,[118] a Roman citizen from Africa, the son of a centurion, to see the poll tax as a sign of captivity – a commonplace repeated by Lactantius[119] – a change of attitudes allowed a new perspective on taxation. However, this rarely developed into anything more than proposals.

The proposal that Cassius Dio[120] presented in the first decades of the third century through the mouthpiece of 'Maecenas' envisaged two groups of revenues: ordinary revenues supplemented by a tax levy. The sale of most of the imperial estates would provide a capital sum that, if reinvested in the form of loans to farmers at a modest rate of interest, would generate regular revenues for the state, which would be adequate to pay for the army and cover its other expenses. As for the tax that should be levied on *all* incomes, without exception, it would be accepted all the more readily by *everyone*, for it would be applied equitably and collected without abuses, and perceived

[110] *D* L.15.8.6.
[111] The last recorded instance is dated to 248 and concerns a poll tax of 40 *drachmae* levied in the Fayum: *P. Batav.* (*P. Lugd. Bat.* XIX) 14.
[112] Mélèze-Modrzejewski (1990) 1. [113] According to Ulpian, *D* L.15.1.
[114] *CJ* XI.21.1; Hinrichs (1989) 163. [115] Ulpian, *D* L.4.6.4–5.
[116] *CJ* X.42.2: *munera quae patrimoniis publicae utilitatis gratia indicuntur ab omnibus subeunda sunt.*
[117] Veyne (1980) 124. [118] Tert. *Apol.* 13.6. [119] Lact. *DMP* 23.1. [120] Dio, LII.28–9.

as a guarantee that it will make for 'their own personal security and for their fearless enjoyment of the rest of their property', and because the taxpayers likely to complain about it would receive a large share of it as 'governors, procurators and soldiers' – a comment that suggests that these social groups had previously been exempt, either *de iure* or *de facto*.

Such ambitious projects went no further. However, with the abolition of Italy's exempt status through the introduction to *parti Italiae*[121] of the *tributorum ingens malum* known from Aurelius Victor,[122] the end of the third century saw the completion of changes that gradually removed all distinctions between former victors and former vanquished,[123] and brought them all into the same category of 'taxpayers'. Significantly, this term has no real equivalent in Latin: depending on the sources and the periods, the documents refer to *municipes*, *provinciales* or *possessores*, or more accurately *tributarii* or *collatores* (with their Greek equivalents *hypoteleis* and *synteleis*). In the empire of Diocletian and Constantine, all property owners henceforth paid property taxes, including senators as well as soldiers and veterans.

Yet the tax paid to Rome is only part of the picture. The inhabitants of the empire also made contributions to a range of other expenditures within the framework of their cities and provinces. At the local level, we moreover find forms of more or less compulsory euergetism that, at the level of Rome and the empire, concerned the emperor alone.

2. Munera *and taxation*

The local level is also the focus for the jurists (whose works are known from the extracts in the *Digest*) from the Severan period onwards in developing the notion of *munera*, defined in many imperial constitutions of the third century which have come down to us in the Justinian Code. Far from defining the status of the taxpayer assigned to contribute to the expenses of the state, the term *munus* is set within the ideological framework of the gift and the tradition of civic 'liturgies'. It includes both the responsibility (*cura*) imposed on the rich and taxes in the narrow sense. Nor is a distinction clearly drawn between state taxes and charges due to the city; nevertheless, some jurists seem to use the term *munera civilia* exclusively for the latter.[124] The only administrative unit considered is the city: individuals are subject to obligations either because of the lands they 'possess' within its

[121] The phrase is understood by some, such as Cracco Ruggini (1995), to mean 'a part of Italy', i.e. *Italia annonaria*, and by others, such as Giardina (1997) 139–42, the *pars Italiae*, i.e. 'the part which is Italy'.

[122] Aur. Vict. *Caes*. xxxix.31.

[123] Petronius, *Satyricon* 57.4 contrasts the *civis Romanus* to the *tributarius*.

[124] Paul, *D* l.16.18: *municipes dici quod munera civilia capiant*.

territory – and, therefore, in their capacity as *possessores*[125] – or because of their *origo*[126] – and, therefore, of their status as *municeps* (local citizen) – or their *domicilium* – and, therefore, their status as *incola* (resident).[127] Before the addition at a late date of the category of the *munera mixta* – applied in particular to the *decaprōtai* and *isocaprōtai*, i.e. *curiales* responsible for levying taxes, who have the responsibility of a personal office (*ministerium*), but are also liable to pay out of their own resources and must pay for those who fail to do so[128] – the most commonly mentioned charges are, on the one hand, financial charges (*munera patrimonialia*) and, on the other, charges on individuals that do not involve money payments (the *munera personalia*, which sometimes mean the exercise of a responsibility and sometimes physical work, i.e. those corvées termed *munera corporalia* or, in the late third century, *sordida*).

The financial charges covered by the term *munera patrimonialia* are in turn of two kinds:

(1) Charges payable by *possessores* of *agri vel aedificia*.[129] The contributions specifically mentioned by the jurists are, in this case, the *tributum* (a tax due to the state), the upkeep of the roads and the requisitions of horses and pack animals to be provided for by the owners of roadside properties, the accommodation for guests, as well as certain payments in kind, like an *annona*, levied by certain cities for their own benefit. Everybody – every man, woman and child, regardless of age and sex – is therefore liable to taxes and to services related to the things they possess within the city's territory, even if they do not belong to it through their *origo* or their *domicilium*.
(2) Charges payable by those who have links with the city through their *origo* (the *municipes*), whether they live there or not, or else through their *domicilium* (the *incolae*). These may include the poll tax (*tributum capitis*) in the provinces where this tax exists.[130] But it also includes all the municipal charges imposed on its residents on the basis (if not *pro rata*) of their personal wealth (*patrimonium*).

The obligations covered by the term *munera* are, therefore, a single bundle made up of those due to the state and those due to the city. But they can be broken down into separate elements, each of which could lead to

[125] Ulpian, *D* L.4.6: *intributiones quae agris fiunt vel aedificiis possessoribus indicuntur*; L.15.4.2: *is vero qui agrum in alia civitate habet, ne ea civitate profiteri debet, in qua ager est; agri enim tributum in eam civitatem debet levare in cuius territorio possiditur*.
[126] Inherited from their ancestors.
[127] On these complex subjects, see in particular Grelle (1961) and (1999), and Charbonnel (1974).
[128] Arcadius Charisius, *D* L.4.18.26.
[129] Ulpian, *D* L.4.6 (quoted above). Cf. Ulpian, *D* L.16.27: *ager est locus, qui sine villa est*.
[130] At least in the view of Charbonnel (1974).

potential exemptions: of municipal charges alone, of requisitions for the *cursus publicus*, of accommodation for guests, etc. To take just one example: a dozen copies, found in the eastern half of the empire, of a rescript of Septimius Severus dated to 31 May 204 and confirming that senators are exonerated from giving lodging to unwanted guests have been publicly displayed by those concerned as a reminder of their right.[131]

3. The traditional system of taxation

From the state's point of view, and as far as can be judged from the sources, the tax system established by Augustus seems not to have undergone any major changes until the late third century, in spite of the debasement of the currency. This suggests that some modifications are needed to the picture of the system in the early empire often drawn by scholars[132] in which most of the taxes were collected in cash, a method of collection particularly sensitive to devaluations. From this point of view, these devaluations would have reduced the tax revenues even further just at the time when wars meant that expenditures were rising, and deepened the financial crisis in the empire. In fact, the tax system of the early empire also included both payments in kind (mainly grain,[133] but also other commodities), and cash payments but protected against currency fluctuations because they were indexed to prices and quantities (death duties, customs duties, tolls and octrois, purchases at controlled prices, as well as many different ways of allocating expenditures to a community). Finally, with the reform of Diocletian, the state deliberately established its right to fix every year the amount of tax to be paid in cash. We then need to determine whether, before that date, it had the power to do so and if in fact it did.

Two main direct taxes that belong, in part or completely, in the latter category were imposed on provincials: the property tax (*tributum soli*) and the poll tax (*tributum capitis*), explicitly mentioned by the jurist Paul in a passage about the tax privileges gradually granted to Caesarea in Palestine by Vespasian and Titus.[134] We do not know, however, whether the poll tax was levied in every province. In Syria, according to Ulpian, it was paid by women as well as men, from the age of twelve to sixty-five for women and from fourteen to sixty-five for men.[135]

[131] T. Drew-Bear *et al.* (1977); C. P. Jones (1984).

[132] Such as A. H. M. Jones and R. Rémondon who wrote in the same period.

[133] Tac. *Ann.* IV.6.4: *frumenta et pecuniae vectigales*; Edict of Caracalla set up in 216 at Banasa (*IAM* II.100): *debita frumentaria sive pecuniaria*; *annuas pensitationes sive in frumento seu in pecunia*.

[134] *D* L.15.8.7: *divus Vespasianus Caesarienses colonos fecit, non adiecto ut et iuris Italici essent, sed tributum his remisit capitis: sed divus Titus etiam solum immune factum interpretatus est*.

[135] Ulpian, *D* L.15.3 (according to Roman inclusive reckoning; i.e., probably 11 and 64, 13 and 64 by our system of reckoning).

As to the property tax, if the *agri vectigales* that the *gromaticus* Hyginus distinguishes from the *ager immunis* are the lands liable to the tax,[136] it would appear that in the second century there were both payments in kind and payments in money proportional to the area under cultivation; proportions of one fifth or one seventh of the harvest are explicitly mentioned for the payments in kind.

In fact, the details of the fiscal arrangements in the early empire can really only be determined for Egypt, for which we have abundant evidence. Yet in many ways Egypt is unusual and we can probably not generalize from its example. The property tax there was assessed in kind (one artaba of grain per *aroura*,[137] or more depending on the status of the land) on land used for growing grain, but in cash on vineyards and orchards (of which the production, whether consumed by the growers or marketed, was not in response to an explicit request from the state, unlike grain). In addition, there were various taxes payable in cash, such as the *naubion* (intended in principle to pay for the upkeep of canals and dikes) and, above all, the poll tax (*laographia*). This personal tax – 'the most important fixed-rate tax payable in money', according to C. Préaux – had to be paid by men, both free-born and slaves, from the age of fourteen to sixty-two,[138] at rates that fell as one moved south (from 40 *drachmae* in the Arsinoite Nome to 16 in the Oxyrhynchite Nome and 10 in the Thebaid). The fact that the rate was fixed hides a series of increases, probably by quite little, in the course of the second century, as small *per capita* taxes were added.[139] Roman citizens and citizens of the Greek cities of Egypt (Alexandria, Ptolemais, Naucratis, Antinoopolis) were exempt; the 'hellenic' provincial notables (residents of the metropoleis, members of the 'gymnasial' class) paid a lower rate of poll tax by hereditary privilege. A personal tax was levied on craftsmen, in particular weavers. As elsewhere (though the evidence comes mainly from Egypt), the Jews paid the 'didrachm' levied on them since Vespasian. Similarly, we know more about tolls and customs duties in Egypt, although they were also paid elsewhere. Thus while the majority of payments were in kind, money payments are also well attested; as for the arrears of the taxes in kind, they normally had to be paid off in cash.

Throughout the empire, indirect taxes payable in cash were levied on trading activities and on personal assets. The 5 per cent tax on freeing slaves (*vicesima libertatis*), which dated back to the fourth century B.C., went to a precise destination: it was paid into a reserve fund in the form of gold ingots held against exceptional needs and kept in the most secure part of the temple

[136] See n. 102 above.

[137] 1 *artaba* = 4.5 or 5 Italic *modii*, i.e. between 30 and 33.5 kg of grain; 1 *aroura* = just over one quarter of a hectare (2,756 square metres).

[138] I.e. probably from thirteen to sixty-one: see n. 135 above.

[139] Wallace (1938) 135–69.

of Saturn (*aerarium sanctius*), hence its name, *aurum vicesimarium*.[140] New taxes were created by Augustus and their revenues explicitly earmarked for military spending. One such is the tax of the twentieth on inheritances and bequests, as described by Cassius Dio[141] – the *vicesima hereditatium* mentioned in Latin inscriptions – levied on all Roman citizens from the time of Augustus, and which was paid into the veterans' pension fund (*aerarium militare*) set up in A.D. 6.[142] It was a way of emphasizing that the army, henceforth permanent and professional, was the responsibility of all. At the rate of 5 per cent, remaining unchanged for two centuries, it worked out at roughly eight to twelve months of income per generation, every twenty or thirty years, but only in the least favourable circumstances in which the deceased had no direct descendant, which limited its basis of assessment. We know little about the 1 per cent tax on goods sold at auction (*centesima rerum venalium*):[143] it was introduced after the civil wars, was already paid into the *aerarium militare* under Tiberius in A.D. 15, abolished by Caligula 'in Italy' in 38, and appears still to have been in force under the Severans to judge from a reference in Ulpian to a *vectigal rerum venalium* among the public revenues.[144] As to the 4 per cent tax on the sale of slaves (*quinta et vicesima venalium mancipiorum*), created in A.D. 7 and from the time of Nero paid by the vendor instead of the purchaser, it was originally intended to finance the upkeep of the *vigiles*.[145]

The evidence for the taxes on the movement of goods (customs dues, tolls and octrois), collectively called *portorium*, is constantly growing. Some of the professional equipment required has even been discovered.[146] These taxes were payable on both imports and exports, by land and sea, as stipulated in the regulations for the *portorium* of Asia known from a recently published inscription from Ephesus.[147] With the exception of Egypt and Syria, these customs duties were paid on entering and leaving the large customs districts that covered several provinces, but their rates varied: 2.5 per cent for the district of Gaul (*quadragesima Galliarum*), which included the Narbonensis, Aquitania, Lugdunensis, Belgica and perhaps the two Germanies. Although the state did not levy a specific *portorium* on goods entering Italy, customs dues had of course been paid on those goods as they left the province from which they came.[148] A papyrus dating from the mid-second century,[149] which records a part of the content of an Indian cargo and a part of the bottomry loan contract associated with it, sheds new

[140] Livy, XXVII.10. [141] Dio, LV.25.5. [142] Corbier (1977b) 227–32.
[143] For the evidence, see Corbier (1977b) 223–7. [144] *D* L.16.17.1.
[145] Dio, LV.31.4; Tac. *Ann.* XIII.31.
[146] For example, the bronze customs stamp of a *conductor* of the *portorium* found at Savaria (*AE* 1968.423) and a writing tablet that belonged to a customs employee found in the excavations of the Roman port of Marseille (France and Hesnard (1995) = *AE* 1995.1032).
[147] *AE* 1989.681 and 1991.1501; *SEG* 39.1180.
[148] Nicolet (1994). [149] *P. Vindob. G.* 40822 and Casson (1990).

light on the *portorium* of the Red Sea. It confirms that a custom duty of 25 per cent, i.e. ten times the standard rate, was payable on goods imported from India into Egypt: but was the reference price quoted for the products the price at which they were sold within the empire or was it a conventional price fixed in relation to what was known of the purchase value, and was this latter price regularly reassessed? Certain articles were exempt from the *portorium*, such as items for personal use, goods belonging to the *fiscus* or to the emperor or intended for the army, and also, after 321, agricultural implements. Certain categories of person also had privileged status: under Constantine, for instance, *naviculariі* (shippers) and veterans.

The practicalities of collecting these taxes were made easier thanks to the official arrangements connected with long-distance trade. 'Market places', called *commercia*,[150] were set up on the frontiers of the empire through which all goods for import or export were obliged to pass: the treaty with Persia in 297 thus envisaged just one, at the city of Nisibis.[151] Moreover, the export of certain types of commodities was forbidden: in the early third century this was true of salt, wheat, iron and whetstone.[152]

In addition to the regular taxes in money and kind, and the supplementary levies in the form of requisitions that were sometimes reimbursed afterwards or not, there were all kinds of corvées (for example, for upkeeping the roads) and the provision of chariots, draught or pack animals with their drivers needed to transport imperial agents or commodities regularly or on occasion (*angaria*, *cursus publicus*).

4. Tax assessment and tax collection

The basis of assessment for Roman direct taxes was an inventory of resources derived from the census of people and goods, which was carried out more or less regularly in the provinces since Augustus. The only place where the census was held according to a strict cycle, in that case every fourteen years, doubtless connected with the age at which boys became liable to the poll tax, was Egypt, where a house-by-house census (*kat' oikian apographē*) was conducted until 257/8. When, in the 290s, the tetrarchs revived the census, which had always been unpopular and which seems to have been abandoned at an unknown date as a result of the third century's problems, there was a strong reaction. Lactantius paints an apocalyptic vision of the census of Galerius in Bithynia in 305–6: perhaps because of the brutality with which it was carried out – and certainly for Christians there was an inevitable parallel with the census at the time of Christ's birth, as related in

[150] *CIL* III.1209 mentions a *conductor pascui, salinarum et commerciorum* at Apulum in Dacia in the early empire.

[151] Petrus Patricius, *fr.* 14 (*FHG* IV.189; Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 133).

[152] Paul, *D* XXXIX.4.11.

St Luke's gospel – but the attitude also reflects quite simply the opposition of the wealthy, with whom Lactantius identifies as a rhetor, to any control over their possessions. The specific details that emerge from this well-known passage, in which the census agents are accused of measuring the fields 'clod by clod' but also of counting every vine and (olive) tree,[153] nonetheless fit with the little that we know of how the census was conducted a century earlier from a fragment of Ulpian's treatise *De Censibus*.[154] Operations of revision of the land registers and the census, sustained for many years following the reform of Diocletian, recall the concern to make 'an inventory of the world',[155] which was already manifest under Augustus. In Syria in particular, the large numbers of boundary stones that have been found bear witness to the systematic nature of the enterprise.[156] In this regard, as in others, the reform of Diocletian looks like a 'restoration', a return to the old order which had been battered by wars, invasions, the division of the empire and devaluations: the resistance to the reform shows how radical it was. Yet its impact turned out not to be long-lasting: although census declarations for individuals are attested from Egypt in 309/10, there is no subsequent evidence of the procedure.[157]

In certain regions, the Romans inherited from the Greek or hellenistic states a model of taxes proportional to the yield (or to the area sown with cereal crop): for example, the tithe in Sicily, established by Hieron, or in Asia. But they also introduced and tried to apply generally a system of calculating property taxes on the basis of the area under cultivation, sometimes weighted by the quality of the soil and the nature of the crops. This was indeed one of the purposes of the census. Lactantius' complaints about the inquisitorial attention to detail of the *censitores* recall the description of Ulpian and the observation by the *gromaticus* Hyginus about Pannonia in the second century, where the lands were classified as *arvi primi, arvi secundi, prati, silvae glandiferae, silvae vulgares, pascuae*.[158]

In any case, wherever there were cities – and we must not forget that the urban framework in the empire was far from being total – the normal framework for assessing and levying direct taxes is the city, and its *curia* was made collectively responsible for paying them. Once the collection of direct taxes was no longer farmed out as a whole to publicans, as had been the case during the republic, it was in fact entrusted to the *curiales*, who were in charge of the *munus exigendi tributi*. Even if they tried to gain exemption for themselves – and sometimes achieved it, like the second-century rhetor Aelius Aristides[159] – because their own property is the surety, they could be tempted to resort to abuses in carrying out their duties:

[153] Lact. *DMP* 23: 'they measured the fields clod by clod, they counted the vines and the trees, they recorded every kind of animal and noted down men's names one by one'.
[154] *D* L.15.4. *pr*. [155] Nicolet (1988b).
[156] On these boundary stones, see Millar, *Near East* 535–44 and Sartre (1992).
[157] Bagnall, *Egypt* 183. [158] But see above, n. 102. [159] *Or*. L.

undercharging the rich, starting with themselves and their friends and relatives, and overcharging the poor and their enemies. These practices were vehemently condemned in the fifth century by the Gaul Salvianus, the author of the famous phrase *quot curiales, tot tyranni* – 'as many tyrants as *curiales*'.[160] But Constantine himself strongly criticized the collusion between the *potentiores* and the *tabularii* of the cities (the clerks who maintain the registers) in order to shift their taxes onto the poor.[161] In fact there is no period for which we know how the census declarations were applied by the *curiales* in dividing up the tax and calculating each person's share. It seems likely that taxes were not divided equally between the town and the surrounding countryside. A report by the *sitologoi* of Philadelphia dated 22 August 312 sets out the quantities of wheat and barley collected and for each crop states the exact amount to be paid by city dwellers (*politai*) and villagers (*komētai*).[162]

In accordance with the administrative practices of the time, the collection of the *vectigalia* continued to be farmed out to companies of publicans in the first century. According to several scholars, the significant change with regard to death duties occurred in the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian: the former introduced the direct collection, at least in most of the empire, since *conductores* are attested in Egypt as late as 160;[163] the latter devolved the collection of the 5 per cent tax by setting up large regional districts, each headed by an equestrian procurator. For the *portoria*, with the exception of Egypt and Syria (where small companies always farmed one or several customs posts), S. J. De Laet suggests a similar shift from tax farming to direct collection that would have occurred by stages in the second century: in about the year 100, first the customs districts would have been leased to *conductores* (farmers-general) instead of being granted to the highest bidder among the *societates*; then direct collection by imperial officials would have been brought in gradually from Marcus Aurelius onwards. Nevertheless, under Constantine, tax farming seems to have been the commonest way of collecting the *vectigalia*, without it being possible to know whether the system always practised in Egypt and Syria had been extended to the rest of the empire, as De Laet argues, or whether the two systems co-existed.

Everything suggests that, once the imperial administration had chosen from the first century A.D. onwards to give up farming out all tax collection, direct or indirect, to *societates* (farming out that, in republican times, was practised usually province by province, but also tax by tax), it hesitated – more often for reasons of efficiency than on principle – between delegating the collection (that of the *tributa* was delegated to the *curiales*), farming

[160] Salvian, *De Gub. Dei* v.7.8.

[161] *CTh* XIII.10.1: *quoniam tabularii civitatum, per collusionem, potentiorum sarcinam ad inferiores transferunt.*

[162] *P. Sakaon* 5 (formerly *P. Stras.* 45) cited by Déléage (1945) 71.

[163] *P. Ross. Georg.* II.26.

out each tax separately, and collecting these taxes directly; thus, it made different choices at different times and in different places. Hesitation and succession of options chosen show that direct collection and delegation to intermediaries were equally difficult. The complaints about the corruption of the tax collectors and the various forms of violence and pressures they applied are akin to and confirm the abuses of all kinds for which the publicans had been criticized before. These abuses, which are known from the complaints brought to the emperor and the condemnations he handed down, reveal that the practices exposed which were not peculiar to the Roman period were widespread.

We are relatively well informed about the harassment that accompanied the tax collection, such as the payment of the poll tax for those who had died in the course of the year. Most of these complaints were undoubtedly dismissed. But the epigraphic evidence of 'complaints' brought to the emperor by peasant communities that had suffered at the hands of imperial officials, tax collectors, soldiers or civic authorities[164] is constantly growing: thus recently the long bilingual inscription from Takina in Paphlagonia which records Caracalla's response to villagers.[165] The fact that these rescripts in response to *libelli* are concentrated in the period between the second half of the second century and the second half of the third has led some scholars to link them to special problems at that time and to interpret the growing number of documents as the sign of a 'crisis'.[166] But this proliferation (which is only relative: sixteen documents found so far) may also be explained in terms of 'the beneficial ideology' becoming generalized and above all of the selective spread of an epigraphic practice: the public display of documents mainly as a means of 'protection'. Nevertheless, these documents allow us to glimpse a change towards the increasing use of soldiers or agents of the state to collect commodities or taxes, as Stephen Mitchell has observed for Asia Minor.[167]

5. *The difficulties of tax collection*

The problems that the Roman state is known to have had in collecting taxes, and the taxpayer in paying them, are most obvious in the case of direct taxes. Most of the traditional taxes continued to be tariffed in grain

[164] E.g. the complaints of the *coloni* of the *saltus Burunitanus* in Africa under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus; of the villagers of Scaptopara in Thrace under Gordian III (see the new version of the text by K. Hallof in *AE* 1994.1552; and some suggestions by Hauken in *AE* 1995.1373); of the *inquilini* and imperial *coloni* of Aragua in Phrygia under Philip the Arab; of the peasants of three Lydian sites: Ağa Bey Köyü, Kemaliye (Mendechora) and Kavacık. These texts are now usefully collected, commented and translated into English by Hauken, *Petition and Response*.

[165] *AE* 1989.721; *SEG* 37.1186.

[166] Herrmann, *Hilferufe* and Sartre (1991); a different viewpoint in Scheidel (1991).

[167] Mitchell, *Anatolia* 1.253.

or in cash; designed for societies of settled farmers living in contact with towns, they were ill suited to nomadic peoples or to economies that used little or no coinage. Outside the regions subject to 'tithes', they did not take account of fluctuations in output from year to year, yet surpluses that caused the prices of agricultural products to fall could, like shortage, make it hard for peasants to pay taxes in money.[168] Paying taxes in cash was constrained by the degree to which the Roman farming world was monetized and could give rise to debt and usury. If one believes Lactantius, who criticized the excessive taxes imposed by Galerius to finance a festival of the *vicennalia* that was never held, once the taxpayers of that time had paid the taxes in kind, they had nothing left to sell in order to raise the money to pay the other levies (the *vestis*, which will be discussed below, as well as *aurum* and *argentum*).[169]

Two methods were used to limit the build-up of arrears (which seemed to have been widespread) and to stop indebted peasants from running away (for which there is good evidence in Egypt and Palestine): cancelling old debts, and preventing new debts from accumulating by restoring order to the tax system and reorganizing the collection.

When from time to time the state cancelled arrears, the occasion was marked in Rome by the ritual of burning the fiscal archives (Constantine revived a longstanding tradition, for which the latest surviving evidence is dated to Marcus Aurelius). A 'moral' obligation was placed on the emperor to grant these remissions in more or less exceptional circumstances. In this way he could show his generosity and his concern for the difficulties faced by the inhabitants of the different parts of the empire. A series of exceptions and dispensations to the general rule existed, and naturally all of these allowances applied only in peacetime. But during the worst years of the third century, foreign and civil wars, invasions, pillaging and confiscations threatened this ideal scenario, in which the ruler's benevolent and attentive generosity (through a decision intentionally named *indulgentia*) would provide compensation for bad harvests and natural disasters. However, this model hid the permanent weaknesses in the system. In Egypt, at regular intervals (every fourteen years until A.D. 257/8), the census offered the opportunity for the government to force the peasants who had fled to return to their *origo* (with what success is not known).[170] In Mauretania, Caracalla's Edict of 216 cancelled the tax arrears of the inhabitants in return for supplying wild animals, but without altering the taxes to be paid in future.[171]

A fair number of measures decided by the emperor or by provincial governors (and the prefect of Egypt) attest the efforts made to deal with

[168] For example, see Youtie (1979) 77–81 on a papyrus that he dates to the second or third century.
[169] Lact. *DMP* 31.5.
[170] See Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 26–8, 166–7.
[171] *IAM* II.100; Corbier (1977a).

some of the structural defects in the system – efforts inspired by a desire to improve the standards of administration. Thus the emperor allowed the jurist Licinius Rufinus (a member of his council), acting for the Macedonian confederation,[172] to plead before him for the (exceptional) 'renegotiation' of the Thessalians' contribution (*synteleia*). He constantly forbade forcing a taxpayer to pay another person's taxes,[173] and a remission of 'illicit' contributions (of unknown origin) in Tuscany in the joint reign of Septimius Severus and Caracalla indicated the willingness of the emperors to fight abuses.[174] At the provincial level the edicts of governors echoed this willingness, for example in Egypt from the prefect Tiberius Julius Alexander (in 68) to Aristius Optatus (in 297) (see further below).

6. Coinage and taxation

The state accepted coins at the value at which they had been issued. The Currency Edict of Diocletian states that taxpayers shall pay their outstanding debts according to the old rate (application of the new tariff would have halved the amount), but the same measure is also applied to private debts. This measure is presented as being *iustum . . . aequissimumque*, which may not have convinced those concerned. Yet the fiduciary value that this confers on the coinage exposes the state, *a contrario*, to the effects of the increase in prices generated by the devaluations, whether official or not: from the available evidence it is not possible to discover whether the state was able to raise taxes to match the rise of prices (and if so, with what delay). The state's best protection against devaluation is, it is true, to require that its coinage be accepted at the official rate.

Various interventions by the authorities, which sometimes have to be interpreted with great care, shed light on the public's reactions and practices linked to the condition of the coinage and on changes of emperor, etc. Hadrian's condemnation (if it is indeed by him) of the *aspratoura* practised in exchange transactions by the bank in Pergamum shows that the value of coins, as they passed between individuals, could vary depending on how worn they were.[175] In 317, a law of Constantine made it a capital offence to 'discount' a *solidus* of good weight on the pretext that the emperor's image was smaller.[176]

In the Greek-speaking provinces, where local coinages still circulated but where money taxes were tariffed in *denarii*, taxpayers paid their taxes at an official exchange rate. Official equivalents were established between the local silver coinages and the Roman *denarius*, as well as between local

[172] They honoured him with a statue: *AE* 1946.180; cf. Robert, *Hellenica* v.29–34; Herrmann (1997).
[173] Coriat (1997) 486. [174] *CIL* xi.1585 = *ILS* 4356.
[175] Oliver (1989) no. 84. [176] *CTh* ix.22.1.

bronzes and the *denarius*. In Egypt, where the tetradrachm was worth a *denarius*, a supplement (*prosdiagraphomenon*), an exchange premium in favour of the *denarius*, of 6.25 per cent was added to the sum due in tax at the beginning of the first century[177] – but until when?

The link between coinage debasement and taxation is strong because the coins that the emperors issued returned to them in taxation; but over the long term, the periods when rates and precious metal content were falling outweighed the 'restorations'. In any case, the Roman state was highly likely to be given mainly worn and debased coins. This could lead the emperors to adopt apparently paradoxical attitudes: given the tendency to hoard old coins of better weight and fineness, they were tempted to issue increasing quantities of lighter coins or coins of poorer alloy, which would have had a higher velocity of circulation since nobody would have wanted to hold onto them; on the contrary, everyone would have tried to spend them. As these coins circulated more rapidly and in greater numbers, the payment of taxes was made easier but also stimulated further price rises.

7. Changes in taxation: rigidity or growth?

The difficulties of the period from the end of the second century to the beginning of the fourth, which arose for a variety of reasons, undoubtedly put a considerable strain on the imperial finances. This is especially obvious after 253: the fall in the value (through debasement of the coinage) and the volume (because of loss of territory, wars and invasions) of tax revenues corresponded to an increase of expenses (cost of war, possible price rises). The problem is therefore to find out whether the various fiscal measures that we know about correspond to an attempt to bring revenues into line with expenditures, either temporarily by raising taxes or more lastingly by altering the taxation itself in order to protect it from the effects of the debasement of the coinage that the authorities were obliged to undertake.

The state had three main ways of maintaining the level of tax revenues while continuing to debase the coinage: regularly raising the amount in accounting unit of the taxes paid in cash; increasing the proportion of its deductions paid in kind; or requiring certain taxes to be paid in gold. Until quite recently, historians still dated to the Severans a gradual move towards the last two solutions, with, on the one hand, the introduction of a new tax in kind, the *annona militaris*,[178] and, on the other, the alleged increase in the requirement to pay taxes in gold.[179] However, this view was challenged by Corbier in the 1970s.[180]

[177] Gara (1976) and (1977).
[178] Van Berchem (1937); his conclusions were generally accepted.
[179] For example, Callu, *Politique monétaire*, considered that the third century was 'a century of gold'.
[180] Corbier (1976–7) and (1978).

On the first option, the increase in taxes, several innovations can be observed under the Severans, which are listed below, but there is no extension or real restructuring of the tax system before the end of the third century. The only solid evidence of a rise in the rate for the *tributum* in fact relates to the reign of Vespasian.[181] Admittedly an increase in the tax burden is not easily accepted. When in 238 Maximinus heavily taxed his African subjects in order to pay for his campaigns in the north, there was a revolt led by rich young men, who made their candidate, Gordian I, emperor; and while the precise reasons for the dissatisfaction are not clear, the result certainly is.[182]

The main increases are above all in the rates: 25 per cent under Septimius Severus (the tax on gardens in Egypt;[183] the *portorium* raised from 2 to 2.5 per cent, bringing the Iberian provinces into line with the neighbouring district, Gaul) and 100 per cent under Caracalla, who concentrated on death duties and the tax on freeing slaves (of which he doubled the rate: from 5 to 10 per cent); he abolished exemptions from the *vicesima hereditatium* based on family ties, but above all he increased the number of potential taxpayers by granting Roman citizenship to all free men in the empire (the consequence of, if not, as Cassius Dio argues, the sole motive for the *Constitutio Antoniniana*).[184] But these increases affected only the two taxes of one-twentieth, and, moreover, Caracalla's successor, Macrinus, brought both of them back to their original rate.[185]

Aside from the *portoria* and the sales taxes, where it is not clear whether they were simply a continuation of first-century taxes, the other indirect taxes – death duties, tax on freeing slaves – are no longer mentioned in the early fourth century. However, this does not necessarily mean that all duties of this kind had disappeared.

The tax reform of Diocletian, which certainly took place before the edict of the prefect Aristius Optatus of 16 March 297 and which is now dated by some scholars to 287,[186] was aimed instead at the basis of assessment – that is the only point of agreement among specialists on this highly controversial subject. The most widely held view was that the tax system was unified – from the two direct taxes attested for the earlier period, the property tax (*tributum soli*) and the poll tax (*tributum capitis*). This new system would have been built around the property tax by creating an 'abstract' fiscal unit called *caput* in some districts, *iugum* in others: that the two terms are equivalent was deduced from the attested expression *iuga sive capita*. According to this view, the term *caput* would refer to a unit used in assessing the land tax, whence the name *capitatio* given to the property tax from

[181] Suet. *Vesp*. 16.
[182] See the detailed account given by Herod. VII.4–6, with notes of Whittaker, *Herodian* II *ad. locc*.
[183] Wallace (1938) 348. [184] Dio, LXXVII.9. [185] Dio, LXXVIII.12.
[186] Hendy (1985), followed by Carrié, 'Fiscalité'.

the time of Diocletian. For J.-M. Carrié, on the contrary, Diocletian's fiscal reform adopted three different units of assessment: *iugum*, *caput* and *iugum sive caput* (here *sive*, instead of indicating an equivalence, would be used to create a compound noun, in Greek *zygokephalē*). The *iugum* would then be a unit of rate, the *caput* would be the result of a process of assessment (a fraction), and the *iugum sive caput* would be a unit of (basis of) assessment 'obtained by combining the other two'.[187]

The interpretation is made even more complicated by the fact that two meanings of *caput* appear to have existed side by side in the early fourth century.

The reference to the head tax is attested for certain regions from various documents stipulating the exemptions for which soldiers and veterans were entitled. The standard unit is the *caput*, 'one *caput* for each tax-paying individual' (Chastagnol), corresponding to a fixed amount in the tax district concerned, but perhaps also at a more general level. This meaning seems clear – according to a view now widely held,[188] though not unanimously – in two laws of Licinius and Constantine: the law of 311 recorded in the Brigetio Table[189] which was at that time in force in Illyricum, property of Licinius; and the law for the eastern diocese traditionally dated to 325.[190] By the law of Licinius, serving soldiers and those who have completed the normal twenty-four years' service are to benefit from a remission of 5 *capita* without any other details given. Whereas those who leave after twenty years, or earlier if they have been wounded in battle, have a remission of only 2 *capita*, and it is then specified that the 2 *capita* are those of the soldier and his wife. This leads Chastagnol to argue that the 3 other *capita* must be those of other relatives. Under the law of Constantine, the remission for serving soldiers is 4 *capita* instead of 5: here again, the *capita* explicitly refer to the soldier, his wife, his father and his mother. But the soldier is also authorized, if his parents are dead, or if he is unmarried or a widower, to deduct the 3 additional *capita* from his property tax. If he possesses land, he is actually subject to both property and personal tax.

The confusion arises because the word *caput* occurs in a text where it relates to a tax that includes a property element. The thanksgiving to Constantine Augustus by a rhetor from Autun,[191] reveals two grants to the city of the Aeduans (Autun): first, a rebate of 7,000 *capita* out of a total of 32,000 (the city is therefore to be taxed henceforth on the basis of 25,000

[187] Carrié, 'Fiscalité'.

[188] See especially Chastagnol (1979) (repr. in Chastagnol, *Aspects*); Carrié, 'Fiscalité'.

[189] *AE* 1937.232 = *FIRA* I.93.

[190] Known from the Theodosian Code, VII.20.4. Chastagnol prefers the date of 325 proposed by Seeck (1919); Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* suggests 329.

[191] *Pan. Lat.* V(VIII): on 1 January 312 (Carrié, 'Fiscalité') or better 25 July 311 (Barnes, 'Emperors' 541); the author, according to Faure (1961), may be the *rhetor* Eumenius, who had made the speech in 298 (*Pan. Lat.* IX(V)); but see Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici* 9 and 254.

capita); second, a remission of arrears for five years. The *caput* here is not a straightforward unit of population (and the 7,000 *capita* are not therefore to be identified with 7,000 exempted taxpayers, as has sometimes been argued in the past). It is fundamentally a unit of assessment: for Chastagnol, an 'abstract' unit; for Carrié, 'a fiscal share', 'a fraction of a total amount of tax that is later subdivided'. Or (and this hypothesis can be combined with the two earlier interpretations) the *caput* could be a constant unit used in calculating the tax payable by the cities collectively and then, within each one, by individual residents, taking account of both the number of individuals and their wealth. In that case, Diocletian's *capitatio* in Gaul would be a tax by assessment.[192]

The other unit of assessment, called *iugum*, would be a unit of rate: a uniform accounting unit applied across the whole empire for converting the various local measures of area (thus the *centuria* in Africa, the *millena* known from southern Italy,[193] the *aroura* in Egypt), according to Carrié, who suggests for the absolute value of this universal measure 100 *iugera* (= 100 *aroura* in Egypt). However, estimates for the *iugum* vary widely.[194] The conversion tables – known, for instance, from the island of Thera[195] – suggest that the value attributed to the *iugum* could vary not only from one place to another but also within the same area depending on what the land was used for: this is reminiscent of the quality of land and crops recorded in the census.

Once again, Egypt is the only province for which there is evidence for the practical details, although this does not mean that there is agreement about how the evidence should be interpreted. However, even if there is still controversy as to the status of those liable for the urban *epikephalaion* (a head tax known only at Oxyrhynchus between 296/7 and 319/20),[196] it should be noted that this money tax is a flat-rate tax (and not related to the individual's wealth), but that its amount is not the same from year to year: from 1,200 drachmae at the outset, it rose to 1,600 in 306/7 and 2,400 in 312/13.

The Edict of Aristius Optatus of 16 March 297 should be dated ten years after the tax reform, according to Hendy and Carrié. It did not alter the basis of assessment or introduce new provisions, but its purpose was to give users better information about existing provisions. It aimed to counteract the arbitrariness of tax collectors by informing taxpayers of their obligations:

[192] A tax by assessment is one where the total sum to be levied is fixed and then divided up step by step until the individual level is reached (diocese, province, city, then individual taxpayers within the city).

[193] Indicated by the letter M in the Volcei land register in 323: *CIL* x.407.

[194] A *millena* (= 12.5 *iugera*) according to Duncan-Jones, *Structure* ch. 13.

[195] *IG* xii.343–9; for different interpretations, see Déléage (1945) 173–6; Jones, *Roman Economy* 230; and now Duncan-Jones, *Structure* ch. 13.

[196] J. R. Rea at *P. Oxy.* xlii.3036–45; lv.3789; Bagnall, *Egypt* 154.

its main purpose was therefore to display an imperial decision, which has not survived, setting out the scale of tax rates. However, the prefect of Egypt specified that this decision stated, first, the tax rate per *aroura* depending on the quality of the soil; and second, the amount of the tax on the peasants by *kephalē*, with the age limits. For Carrié, *kephalē* here does not mean a fixed personal contribution but rather, as at Autun, a fiscal unit – the *caput* – and the scale of units would have defined the amount of tax to be paid by each person. Once he had been told the tax rate per *caput*, each taxpayer 'could assess his personal tax position *vis-à-vis* the village's total tax bill (expressed in number of *capita*)'.[197]

Although the chronology is debated, there can be no doubt that the tax reform, the currency reform and the creation of new tax and financial districts (the dioceses), usually with their own mint, went together. Diocletian modified the financial administration of the provinces without touching the central administration: in the dioceses, a pair of officials (the *rationalis summarum* and the *magister rei privatae*) was created to rank above the procurators, thus reproducing the dual character of the central administration. In his turn, Constantine – in 325, according to Delmaire[198] – reformed the financial administration. Henceforth, the regional praetorian prefects were responsible for all levies and all current state expenditures. In the central administration, two dignitaries were in charge of all revenues flowing into the imperial treasury (now called the *aerarium*): the *comes sacrarum largitionum* (replacing the *rationalis summarum*) and the *rationalis rei privatae*. The 'Count of the Sacred Largesses' took care of the largesses and distributions, as well as the levies that made them possible; the 'count of the Private Estate' managed the emperor's and crown properties. One of the peculiar features of the period of the tetrarchs and Constantine was that, despite decisions intended to apply to the empire as a whole (such as the Prices Edict of 301), the state administration tended to break up into regional units, presumably for reasons of efficiency.

In conclusion, Diocletian seems thus to have reorganized the basis of assessment and adapted it – and made it possible for the system to adapt itself in the future – to fluctuations in prices, currency, population, agricultural production and the needs of the empire. Every year, the state fixed the amount of tax that each fiscal unit in each tax district had to pay. The tax contribution of an individual or a community could be reduced in several ways: reduction in the amount payable by each tax unit; exemption from personal taxes for a given number of family-units (i.e. the tax relief for the soldiers and veterans); reduction by a given number of tax units for a city (the Aeduans obtained the tax relief of 7,000 *capita* from Constantine, and later the residents of Antioch were to obtain a reduction

[197] Carrié, 'Fiscalité' 55. [198] On these reforms in general, see Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées*.

of 3,000 *iuga* from Julian,[199] while in the fifth century Bishop Theodoret in his turn demanded a reduction in the number of *iuga* imposed on the city of Cyrrhus).[200] Ammianus praises Julian for having lowered the contributions due under the name of *capitula* from twenty-five gold coins to seven during his stay as Caesar in Gaul (355–61).[201]

8. Did taxes paid in kind increase?

Nevertheless, it is frequently argued that, well before the reform of Diocletian, which would merely mark the final stage (and whose beneficial effects have yet to be demonstrated), the state would have started from the end of the second century to increase levies in kind, in order to protect itself from the adverse effects of the debasement of the coinage. The state would have forbidden the practice of *adaeratio*, i.e. payment in cash of taxes due in kind (according to the current understanding of a rescript of Septimius Severus dated to 200[202] forbidding it to Egyptian peasants, whose grain was in fact needed to supply the city of Rome).[203] Modern scholars have often tended to reconstruct the tax system in the third century on the basis of a hypothesis proposed by D. van Berchem:[204] that an additional tax was introduced under the Severans, which was payable in kind and was to benefit the army, called the *annona militaris*, and this tax eventually replaced the two main taxes of the early empire, the *tributum soli* and the *tributum capitis*. This hypothesis has biased the interpretation of the reforms of the late third century: for example, in W. Seston's phrase, Diocletian's *capitatio* would have been simply a 'reformed *annona*'.[205] The idea that Diocletian's *capitatio* would have regularized the exceptional requisitions in kind that would have become increasingly common in the third century was widely held.[206]

Current thinking has two facets: on the one hand, the importance of levies in kind in the early empire is stressed[207] in reaction against those who argue that the majority of taxes were paid in cash; on the other, the notion of the *annona militaris* as a special tax has begun to be challenged:[208] it is merely 'the part of the normal tax earmarked for the army's needs'.[209] In fact, the use of the noun *annona* and the adjective *annonarius* is routine for the normal

[199] Julian, *Misop*. 370D–371A. [200] Theodoret, *Epp.* 42 and 47.
[201] Amm. Marc. XVI.5.14. [202] *P. Col.* VI.123, ll. 43–4 (= Oliver (1989) no. 235).
[203] Corbier (1978) 292. [204] Van Berchem (1937). [205] Seston, *Dioclétien* 277.
[206] Jones, *LRE* I.61: '. . . rationalising the requisitions in kind which were in practice the most important form of revenue. These requisitions had originated as *indictiones extraordinariae* . . .'.
[207] In particular by P. A. Brunt, M. Corbier, R. P. Duncan-Jones, C. R. Whittaker and S. Mitchell.
[208] See Cerati (1975), although he accepts the old position for Egypt; Corbier (1976–7), (1978); and see the debate between van Berchem, Corbier and Carrié in *Armées et fiscalité*.
[209] Chastagnol (1979).

tax in the documents from the time of the tetrarchs and Constantine.[210] This does not automatically mean, however, that the amount of the tax concerned was therefore 'assessed in kind' or that it was paid in kind, as for example Cerati and Chastagnol have suggested.

Nonetheless it remains likely that from some as yet unknown date in the third century, soldiers' pay was no longer docked to cover some or all of their food: their pay in cash indeed increases from 600 *denarii* per year under Caracalla (not including exceptional donatives) to 3,300, or 8,000, or, at the most, 12,000 *denarii* in 300 – based on *donativum stipendiumque*, the double term used for the monetary remuneration of the soldiers in the preamble of the Prices Edict of 301 – for the legionaries in Egypt affected by the Panopolis papyri in 300,[211] of which some of them mention payments in money and others supplies of foodstuffs for the soldiers. At most, this means that army pay increased by a factor of twenty, and perhaps much less, whereas prices increased by a factor of at least thirty.

Regardless of any devaluation, the needs of the army and of the city of Rome (as well as, probably, the largest provincial cities[212] which required more food than could be provided from spontaneous sales by peasants and landowners, the proceeds of rents and other dues in kind) could have justified a preference for levies in kind, wherever their proceeds could be shipped to the beneficiaries at reasonable cost, but conversely a preference for taxes in money, whenever it was easier and less costly to buy the goods in the market. The extension of the distributions of food – free or at a discount price – to the people of Rome to include oil, wine and pork, attributed to Septimius Severus and Aurelian, was part of the same trend but only to some extent.

The grain and oil distributed in Rome came essentially from the provinces. The wine and the pork included in the distributions from the time of Aurelian came from Italy; the regions that had to provide the *caro porcina* in the fourth century were the southern provinces, mainly Lucania-Bruttium and Samnium, where it was the principal tax. The swine-dealers, the *suarii*, were responsible for collecting the meat. A constitution dated 324 or 326 sets out the conditions in force under Constantine: the *suarius* went to the taxpayer whose contribution was fixed in pounds of pork-meat; he estimated the weight of the animals by feeling the back and the croup, but if the owner thought that the *suarius*' estimate was too low, he was authorized to opt for the *nummaria exactio*, i.e. to pay the equivalent amount

[210] See the texts cited in Cerati (1975).

[211] See Corbier (1986a), and a shorter version published in Morrisson and Lefort (1989), for a comparison of the sums proposed by the various specialists who have studied the Panopolis papyri.

[212] According to Procopius (*Hist. Arc.* 26), Diocletian decided to keep a part of the grain carried down to Alexandria in the city itself as food supply (*trophimon*), whereas the remainder would continue to constitute the cargo (*embolē*) sent to Rome.

according to the market price prevailing in his province, as announced by the governor.[213] Wine producers, too, in the regions of Italy concerned, were able to choose between delivering their barrels to Rome and the *adaeratio*. This resort to deliveries in kind ensured supply but could prove uneconomic and, above all, increased the possibilities of abuse on the part of the tax-collecting intermediaries, who could 'steal' both from individuals (on the prices) and from the state (on the quantities levied) – whence the subsequent measures that aimed to limit abuses, in particular by requiring the pigs to be weighed on scales, and left intact the taxpayer's complete freedom of choice as to the mode of payment.

As to the military requisitions (the *vestis*, intended to provide clothing for soldiers and state employees; supply of recruits and of horses which was linked to the former – and was distinct from the requisition of horses for the *cursus publicus*), it would appear that it was possible to pay an equivalent sum of money from quite early on; in Egypt, where more is known about these taxes than elsewhere, they were assessed on size of lands (possessed by the taxpayers) and gave rise to the definition of a large fiscal unit, the *capitulum*.[214]

9. Payment of taxes in strong currency

Another way of protecting state revenues was to tariff taxes, or make them payable, in strong currency. Modern scholars, who have stressed the increase in payments that had to be made in gold, have tended to anticipate a change that seems not to have occurred fully until the early fourth century.[215]

From the beginning of the empire, the majority of levies in gold actually came from the *aurum coronarium*, which was exacted from the cities (senators, however, were exempt and were not even obliged to participate in the offerings of gold crowns in the cities where they owned land). The cities voted gold crowns to celebrate the accession of an emperor or an imperial victory. In Egypt in the second half of the second century, the *aurum coronarium* would have become a standard form of tax, the *stephanikon*, though this did not therefore exempt taxpayers from exceptional levies as well.[216] When Severus Alexander renounced the *aurum coronarium* (attested in *P. Fayum* 20 and presented in the *Historia Augusta*[217] as if it were an exemption for the city of Rome), it was probably no more than an accession gift on the emperor's part, who gave up an exceptional payment without affecting the regular tax. For the early fourth century we have a specific example of

[213] *CTh* XIV.4.2; see Chastagnol, *La préfecture urbaine* 325–30; Cerati (1975) 164.

[214] Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 313–45; Carrié, 'Fiscalité' 46–7, 59–61.

[215] For a full picture of taxes and levies in gold and silver, see Jones, *LRE* 1.454–62; King (1980); Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 347–408.

[216] See Bowman (1967). [217] *SHA*, *Sev. Alex.* 32.5.

the process in an Oxyrhynchus papyrus:[218] the governor Antonius urges the city to give a crown to mark the *genethlia* of Licinius Caesar; the goldsmiths are requested to make a crown of 426 scruples; to the cost of purchasing the gold must be added the cost of the gold lost in the course of the work (14 scruples) and the cost of labour (1,776 *denarii*); the outlay is divided one third/two thirds between the metropolis and the rest of the nome.

Commodus, too, dipped into the senators' reserves by instituting a 'present' of two *aurei* that all members of the senatorial order had to give him every year on his birthday, while the decurions had to give 5 *denarii*, i.e. ten times less.[219] This gift was a precursor of the *aurum oblaticium*, well attested in the fourth century, which is supposed to be not a tax but a voluntary offering made by the senators and their families to mark the great festivals of each reign, which in fact meant at the same time as the provincial cities were expected to present the *aurum coronarium*.[220]

It was Constantine who, according to Zosimus,[221] instituted a special tax, the *gleba*, *collatio glebalis* or *follis senatorius*, that senators had to pay in gold, proportional to their declared landholdings, in addition to the property tax that senators had had to pay at least from the reign of Diocletian.[222] For these purpose, the *clarissimi* were divided into three categories, depending on their wealth.

As for the gold tax on merchants, which Severus Alexander was supposed to have remitted to the *negotiatores* of Rome,[223] it in fact dates from somewhat later: the author of the *Historia Augusta* introduced it by analogy with the *chrysargyron* that Zosimus[224] attributed to Constantine; it was a tax in gold and silver, levied according to Delmaire[225] every four years (i.e. quinquennial on the Roman system of counting) on traders and craftsmen. Its origins are probably to be sought in the gold and silver levies of the early fourth century, whence its name. Among the categories which were totally or partially exempted under Constantine were the *navicularii* (shipowners), doctors and teachers, veterans and clerics when they were making purchases to feed the poor.

The (refundable) requisitions in gold and silver, which are attested for the period of the tetrarchs and Constantine and relatively well documented from Egyptian papyri,[226] constituted a form of fiscal levy in as much as the state fixed the amount refunded at a level that was probably to its own advantage: 60,000 *denarii* at the most in early 300 according to the Panopolis papyrus no. 2 (the first attested mention of the practice); 72,000 *denarii* at the end of 301 according to the Prices Edict; 100,000 *denarii* in

[218] *P. Oxy.* XLIII.3121; cf. Rea (1986) 79–80; Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 387–400 esp. 392.
[219] Dio, LXXII.16.3. [220] Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 400–9. [221] Zos. II.38.4.
[222] Chastagnol (1992) 299. [223] *SHA*, *Sev. Alex.* 32.5. [224] Zos. II.38.2.
[225] Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 354–74.
[226] *P. Panop. Beatty* 2, ll. 215–21; Rea (1974) 163–74; Bagnall (1977).

306 and again in 310. Some historians think that the maximum price for a pound of gold imposed by the Prices Edict was set rather low (72,000 *denarii*) precisely in order to favour these purchases of gold by the state. Although gold ingots and gold coins are officially equivalent, someone who pays up in coins would appear to have benefited from a better rate of reimbursement in *aes* than someone who pays in metal by weight.[227]

It should be noted that all these taxes payable in gold were levied on the rich: senators, *curiales*, traders, etc., i.e. on those who had access to gold. In order to oblige the wealthiest members of the aristocracy to spend their excess funds, around 315 Constantine introduced a further compulsory expense: the praetorian *sumptus*.[228] The praetors, who were traditionally responsible for financing the games (shows of wild animals in the amphitheatre, chariot races in the circus) held in the first week of January to mark the beginning of their period in office, were forced to spend an additional minimum amount, called the *sumptus*, on presents for their friends, for the spectators and the actors.

Both the practice of making refundable requisitions in gold, established by Diocletian, and the increase in taxes in gold and silver were part of the same policy directed at bringing precious metals out of savings and back into circulation in order to have high-quality coins for prestige expenditures alongside the bronze used, according to the anonymous author critical of Constantine,[229] for everyday transactions and in which soldiers were always paid in 300, as we know from the Panopolis papyri. Yet a high proportion of the gold and silver coinage came not from tax revenues but from confiscations and from pillaging temples, and was the product of civil wars and religious persecutions.

Taking as evidence the texts of the complaints of taxpayers, of the remissions granted by the emperors and of the attacks made by various writers who were usually opposed to those in power (the power of the 'persecutors' for Christian authors, the power of Constantine for the pagans), the historiographical tradition has tended to blacken the picture, thus contravening the official discourse inspired by the ideology of the contribution of everyone to expenditures made for the public good and of the enlightened generosity of the emperors. It was argued that, at the end of the third century, as a result of its military, institutional and monetary problems, the empire was obliged to increase the burden of taxation to the point where it became unbearable. Hence the exasperation of the members of the élite and the complaints of the taxpayers, less against the amount of tax than against the methods used to collect it. Given the lack of any reliable evidence for this, recent writers have instead made a more balanced assessment

[227] According to Carrié (1993c) 206, citing *P. Oxy.* XIV.1653 (date: 306).
[228] See Chastagnol (1992) 245–6. [229] *De Reb. Bell.* II.

and stressed the objective difficulties of collecting and of paying a constant volume of tax. But we should not forget that, alongside taxation, there are other ways of meeting public expenditures at both imperial and local level.

IV. THE MODES OF PUBLIC SPENDING

The Roman state performed only partially the functions of a modern state. A large part of its expenditure was secured at the local level. Finally, the emperor had other resources besides the tax revenues.

1. Patrimonial revenues

Revenues from the imperial estate – whether from the *ager publicus* or from the patrimonial properties of the emperor (indeed the lands belonging to the former may have merged with the latter where they were not appropriated by the cities or private citizens) – covered some part of the state's expenditures (it is difficult to assess how much, but it was certainly a large share). In the course of two centuries, the imperial estate had grown enormously, as a result of the devolution of lapsed and ownerless assets, of the confiscation of properties belonging to condemned individuals, but also thanks to the clever use of inheritances (the emperors turned to their own advantage a common practice in Roman society: the legacy to friends) and the profits from the *familia Caesaris*. Even though, in each generation, some part of this patrimony was handed over to members of the imperial family or to the emperor's favourites, it often came back again – sometimes following a fall from grace, such as that of the praetorian prefect Plautianus in 205.

In this way, the emperor was able to gather into his own hands not only tax revenues but also a high proportion of the productive capacity of the empire's agriculture, forests and mines, which he could then redistribute or use to pay for his expenditures. In proconsular Africa in the second century, the *coloni* on the imperial estates paid their ground rent and their tax by handing over a third of their production of grain or oil.[230] The emperor was the largest property owner in the empire and there was no means of distinguishing, for example in the grain supply, the part paid as ground rent from the part paid as tribute from the provinces. The shipments were made on the same basis from Egypt and, starting in the reign of Commodus, from Africa to supply the needs of Rome until Constantine diverted the produce of Egypt to his new capital, Constantinople – though was it already as much as the 8 million artabas levied under Justinian?[231]

The vast size of the public estate and its recent expansion (resulting from the massive confiscations carried out by Septimius Severus) even caused

[230] Kehoe (1988). [231] Justinian, *Ed.* XIII.8.

Cassius Dio to suggest selling off the imperial properties, as mentioned earlier.[232] This prototype of 'privatization' scheme shows above all that Dio was not aware of any risk that inflation might reduce the cash income to be expected from the operation. While the state did sell off some of its property (such as the 'royal' land in Egypt) and gave more away (such as the many estates from the *res privata* that Constantine gave to the churches of Rome, as well as the precious vases and candelabra previously mentioned), it resorted more often to other kinds of concessions to private citizens: for large areas of public land[233] the *locatio–conductio* lease renewable every five years was replaced by the perpetual lease via an emphyteutic contract or the concession of the *ius perpetuum salvo canone* for the *possessores*.[234]

This change came about because of the problems of managing such vast landholdings. The administration had to become, in this case, a kind of public–private venture: *conductores* of the mines or the imperial estates, for example, reporting to the appropriate procurators – whose honesty and efficiency were not above reproach, and who, sheltered from any real competition, had no incentive to try to raise output or the amount of the rent significantly. The *emphyteusis* and the *ius perpetuum* were in the same vein as the proposition of 'Maecenas': to transfer imperial property to private hands, whether *de facto* or *de iure*, and long-term payment of a fixed sum to the state. In the case of the *emphyteusis*, the property owner himself was encouraged to invest directly in order to raise the annual yield of his land relative to the rent he had to pay. In the case of 'Maecenas' scheme, the operation would have on the contrary happened in two stages: first the sale, then the loan of money by the state. The *emphyteusis* was a quicker and easier solution. But the ambition to boost the amount of land under cultivation was the same.

However large (and probably growing) the revenues derived from the *fundi patrimoniales*, there is obviously no way of estimating the overall amount or even the percentage of the total spending that they would have covered.[235]

2. *Municipal finances,* munera *and euergetism*

The cities covered their expenses out of the revenues from their patrimony (municipal properties, *kalendaria* generated by legacies and donations),

[232] Dio, LII.28.

[233] But not on all imperial land, according to Delmaire; on the distinctions he makes, see Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 659–74.

[234] Vera (1987) and (1992).

[235] A much later law (*CTh* XI.26.13) allows us to establish that in 422, under Honorius, the lands belonging to the *res privata* made up one sixth of the area of Proconsular Africa and Byzacena. See Lepelley (1967).

the '*summa honoraria*' paid for holding magistracies and, from the second century, on entering the *curia*, as well as the benefactions from the wealthy (whether or not related to holding magistracies) and occasionally public subscriptions (*ex aere conlato*), but also taxes and dues. These last were levied on urban activities and consumption: customs and tolls, ferry and market dues, water concessions, access to baths, fines, etc. Nevertheless, Antoninus Pius authorized the request from a city in Macedonia to levy a tax of one *denarius* per head from its free population.[236] In order to prevent local taxation from growing and competing with his own, the emperor did not actually allow any new municipal taxes (*vectigalia*) to be introduced without his permission; this was an ancient measure[237] reaffirmed by Septimius Severus and Valerian.[238] But the emperor was also concerned that municipal finances should not decline either. The jurist Hermogenianus, who was Diocletian's praetorian prefect,[239] is quite clear on this: 'It is not allowed for the governor, or the *curator* or the *curia* to create *vectigalia* except by order of the emperor, or to reform those that already exist, or to reduce them.'[240]

Did Constantine take the cities' revenues for his own use? According to an interpretation that became generally accepted[241] but which has recently been challenged by Fergus Millar,[242] of a series of texts, in particular a passage of Zosimus[243] combined with Julian's restitution[244] of *vectigalia cum fundis* in 362, Constantine is supposed to have transferred the management of these revenues to the imperial *fiscus*, with the requirement that a part be remitted to the cities. Recent scholarship continues to include the 'confiscation' of civic revenues, perhaps without justification, among the range of new resources attributed to Constantine's reign.

Emperors were fully aware of the scale of expenditures incurred by the cities and notables. Consequently there were many measures with no other purpose but to prevent the rich from ruining themselves and the cities from running up debts or creating new taxes, in particular to cover games and contests.[245] The emperors' interventions were aimed at protecting the

[236] *IGBulg*. IV.2263 = Oliver (1989) no. 156.

[237] See, for example, Vespasian's confirmation of the *vectigalia* to the inhabitants of Sabora in Baetica: *CIL* II.1423 = *ILS* 6092.

[238] *CJ* IV.62.1–3. [239] Chastagnol (1989). [240] *D* XXXIX.4.10.

[241] Jones, *LRE* II.732–3; Delmaire, *Largesses sacrées* 276, 645, 651, and Depeyrot (1991) 13–15. Note that, in the view of Chastagnol (1986), the cities' properties were not taken from them until the time of Constantius II.

[242] Millar (1986) 305–6. [243] Zos. II.38. [244] Amm. Marc. XXV.4.15; see also Lib. *Or*. XIII.45.

[245] The *senatus consultum* of 177, whose existence is known from the bronze table found at Italica, aims to limit the expenditures relating to the gladiatorial fights (*CIL* II.6278 = *ILS* 5163). In the same year, the *oratio* by Marcus Aurelius to the senate (*AE* 1977.801) in response to a request from the Milesians suggests that he wanted to prevent other cities from doing similar things and incurring major civic expenses (*onus civitatum*). The Milesians had wished to honour Commodus on his becoming co-ruler by having their contests, the Didymeia, declared sacred (imperial), thereby enhancing their prestige; see Corbier (1985a) and (1999a).

tax revenues of the state, but also the established social hierarchy and the equilibrium between social groups. In this regard, the ban on freedmen becoming decurions is significant:[246] local financial needs did not justify breaking down social barriers. This policy made it possible, furthermore, to put the seal of approval on the ranking of expenditures in the public interest (defence above games or civic improvements) and on where they are made (Rome ahead of other cities). For these purposes, a hierarchy of levies was set up: if the imperial treasury had a privileged position vis-à-vis those in its debt, this privilege of *protopraxia* was only very rarely granted to cities vis-à-vis those in their debt.[247] The emperor, as the sole euergetes in Rome and in the empire as a whole, tried to restrain a 'propensity to spend' of the cities and the local aristocracies involved in contests for prestige that were all the more passionate because what was at stake was symbolic.

The emperors attempted to bring order to municipal finances by appointing curators (at first temporarily, sometimes from the ranks of the senatorial or equestrian aristocracy; later permanently, chosen in the local *curia*) and by watching over the use of public funds. Yet they also tried to protect local resources from being cornered or misappropriated, for instance by banning magistrates and their near relations from renting municipal lands,[248] or limiting the possibilities of exemption from the *munera civilia* (the properly municipal charges) on grounds of age, number of children, poverty, etc.[249] Yet the emperors themselves deprived the cities of part of their resources by institutionalizing, at the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, the privileges of rank and status connected with real or fictive services rendered in the imperial administration, which gave those concerned permanent dispensation from the *honores* and *munera civilia* in their city of origin (a dispensation extended to the clergy after 313). They then tried to prevent the *curiales* from acquiring such status unjustifiably, as well as from becoming members of the clergy.[250] In fact, through regular *munera*, a part of the municipal charges was transferred to individuals: the 'division of labour' between the decurions who paid in cash and the *populus* who discharged their obligations in the form of corvées[251] may reflect the different forms of *munera* that everyone had to assume, depending on their position in society.

As for the euergetistic contributions expected from the notables, they should above all constitute a form of insurance against collective risks: dearth of food,[252] the occasional costs for the maintenance of the passing troops and the imperial entourage accompanying the army,[253] etc.

[246] *CJ* IX.21.1 (dating from 300). [247] Pliny, *Ep.* X.108. [248] *Lex Irnitana* (*AE* 1986.333) ch. J.
[249] See the evidence from the Severan period in Coriat (1997) 487–92.
[250] Millar (1983) and (1986).
[251] See the dedication of the baths at Timgad, restored at an unknown date (*CIL* VIII.2342 = *ILS* 6843): *Concordiae populi et ordinis quod sumptus rei publicae manibus copiisque relevaverint.*
[252] Garnsey (1988) 260–6. [253] Mitchell, *Anatolia* I.132–4.

V. CONCLUSION

The lack of hard figures makes it difficult to sum up. The impression remains, however, that, in order to cope with its financial problems, the Roman state was obliged throughout the period under discussion to resort to manipulating the currency because of its failure to carry out, or perhaps even conceive, a thorough reform of its tax system.

The main reason for the debasement of the silver coinage was not a decline in the stocks of precious metals, but the emperors' financial needs. At certain times of political and military tension, when revenues were falling and expenses rising, the emperor had to use whatever money he had in hand to mint enough coins to pay his soldiers. Responsibility for inflation in fact lay principally with the military: the link between large issues of coinage and wars and the division of the empire among several pretenders or emperors is clearly demonstrated.

In the absence of a system of public borrowing, which would have allowed the emperors to borrow the sums they needed and then reimburse them or pay the interest out of their regular revenues in peacetime, there was no way of adapting the fiscal arrangements in times of crisis so as to cope with such massive increases in expenditures. Yet the moments of great tension did not last very long: a couple of decades records most of the debasement of the coinage (by fifteen or twenty times) and indeed a complete changeover to a currency system that, henceforth, relies almost entirely on bronze for daily transactions, and increasingly on gold for prestige expenditures. Once the crisis was over, the time came round for 'restorations': Aurelian contented himself with a currency reform, but he reigned for a mere five years. Diocletian attempted a more ambitious monetary, fiscal and administrative reform which left its mark, with some adaptations, on the whole of the subsequent period.

In spite of the internal modifications to the system, to the modes of payment and to the tax base, and in spite of the introduction of new taxes on commercial activities and on the rich, the tax system as a whole appears to have remained relatively stable. The emperor was, in a way, the guarantor of this stability. Yet the social structure of the empire changed, as did the currency, and the Roman state had to adapt its tax deductions to meet the new situation. Moreover, although the emperors no longer (or rarely) had access to foreign booty, they did not hesitate to emulate their predecessors from Augustus, indulging in internal pillage and confiscating their opponents' properties in times of crisis or civil war.

The model of spending that developed gradually under the empire put the emperor in a difficult position. He had to reconcile the *liberalitas* expected of the ruler[254] with the *parsimonia*, combined with the personal

[254] Kloft (1970).

frugalitas, yet never expose himself to the reproach of *avaritia*,[255] which is a condemnation of both stinginess and rapacity. For the worst criticism that could be made of a ruler is still that of 'avarice'. The obligation to give outweighed the obligation to balance the budget. The model of approved behaviour leaves little margin between the avaricious ruler who amasses wealth for pleasure – such as Diocletian seen by Lactantius[256] or Licinius seen by Julian[257] and Aurelius Victor[258] – and the spendthrift ruler. In the eyes of the senatorial élite and the intellectuals who share the same values, some expenditures are deemed illegitimate, such as excessive favours shown to the army (Caracalla), building mania (Diocletian), squandering money on 'unworthy and useless'[259] people (Constantine). Constantine's generosity is praised by Julian as Caesar but criticized by the anonymous author of the *De Rebus Bellicis*.[260] Via the *sparsio* coin-type, Constantine himself propagated the image of the emperor in his chariot, distributing coins.[261] The emperor played his part as redistributor, by using a part of the revenues of the state and of his own patrimony.

The lack of any permanent system of public borrowing (aside from the known instances of compulsory loans that were, in theory, repaid) is somewhat surprising: presumably such a system could have been established only by relying on a rich and powerful class of publicans able to advance to the state its own revenues. In fact, it is the emperor who makes, or is prepared to make, loans, not to borrow, whether in the case of the *alimenta* in the second century or the proposals of 'Maecenas'. Hence the need to have accumulated reserves, which have an effect of hoarding, in order to deal with any demands that might arise.[262] An anecdote reported (or invented) by Eusebius of Caesarea[263] suggests that the emperor always has to keep a well-stocked treasury: some time between 293 and 305, Constantius Chlorus Caesar (the father of the future Constantine) was criticized by messengers from the emperor Diocletian for having an empty treasury. He persuaded local notables to lend him enough gold and silver, then invited the messengers to inspect his full treasury; the story ends with him returning the money to the lenders.

Yet, in the end, the usual response was to play with the monetary instrument for minting more coins from the same quantity of silver, in the guise

[255] Walker (1978) 106–10.

[256] Lact. *DMP* 7.5: 'This insatiably greedy emperor was never willing that his treasuries should be depleted; he was always amassing surplus wealth and funds for largess so that he could keep what he was storing complete and inviolate.'

[257] Julian, *Or.* 1.8B (Panegyric of Constantius): 'Once master of the universe, after a crisis in which the insatiable greed of his predecessor had caused everything to run dry, as if after a drought, poverty was everywhere while the cellars of the palace were stuffed with riches, he opened the doors and suddenly flooded the world with abundance.'

[258] *Epit. de Caes.* XLI.8. [259] Zos. II.38.1.

[260] *De Reb. Bell.* II; see above, n. 257. [261] Alföldi (1963) pl. 21, no. 256.

[262] Corbier (1987b). [263] Eus. *Vit. Const.* 1.14, quoted by Millar, *ERW* 144.

of varied alloys reduced to ever lower levels of fineness. This was in effect the Roman version of 'printing money', making it possible to finance budget deficit despite inadequate revenues. This is confirmed by the chronology of the devaluations, linked to wars and the division of the empire. The chosen solution – striking more and more billon coins containing less and less silver and imposing on them a fiduciary value – was not without consequences for the economy, as we shall see in the following chapter.

At the end of the third century, taxation perhaps replaces the coinage as a unifying factor. Supplying the west with coinage from the Rome mint, as was done until the middle of the third century, was a way of maintaining Rome's role as the place where booty and levies from the provinces were centralized. By contrast, the developments of the third century were all in the direction of moving the minting of money closer to those who received it – above all, the soldiers – and to the taxpayers. Whether consciously or not, the emperors learned from the periods when the empire was fragmented. They adopted the policy of an abundant money supply, even if of less good quality, and of local imperial coinage, struck at regional mints. Thus at the end of the third century, with the monetary and fiscal reforms of Diocletian, there begins to be an awareness of the link between coinage and taxation and, in what seems like an extraordinary innovation, the liability of all the inhabitants of the empire, including Italians and senators, to the direct property tax. Contemporaries indeed complained more about taxation and the census than about inflation.[264] Nevertheless, the reaction to taxation has less to do with its actual burden than with its perception by the taxpayers and how they express it. Yet the vehemence of the fourth-century authors on any given aspect of imperial policy is closely connected with the very nature of the written sources of the time, and those among them that have happened to survive: it is far from certain that their views are representative.

[264] Corbier (1986a).

CHAPTER 12

COINAGE, SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

MIREILLE CORBIER

From the last decades of the second century to the first decades of the fourth, the economy of the Roman world without doubt suffered the aftershocks of the violent tremors that shook the empire, most of them of a military and political nature. Also without doubt, the economy underwent fundamental changes in several respects, in part as a result of these shocks, in part as a result of more silent and subterranean forces, which reveal its proper logical mode of operation. But these changes, which remain to be defined, should not obscure the elements of continuity: it would be an exaggeration to talk about a massive upheaval.

Among the tremors, the following need to be mentioned so that they can be better classified:

(1) the growing threats on the frontiers, starting in the north with the first invasions in the reign of Marcus Aurelius; then in the east, with the Sassanian conquest of Persia, and the subsequent series of invasions that sent raids ever further into Roman territory in the 260s and 270s in both east and west. We must consider that the enormous investments in defence were no longer sufficient to keep the frontiers secure;
(2) wars of succession such as the empire had not experienced since 68/9, with their attendant pillaging, confiscations and executions, from Septimius Severus' victory over Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus until the reunification of the empire by Constantine, by way of the defeats of Maxentius (312) and Licinius (324); at irregular intervals, the imperial power itself becomes the focus of a struggle for which the population of the empire paid dearly;
(3) lastly, the division *de facto* or *de iure* of the empire for long periods – even when the division is accepted by the various rulers, which is often far from being the case, this leads both to an increase in expenditures to cover the cost of maintaining several capital cities and to the break-up of the economic networks that symbolized the unity of the empire. Tasks such as collecting taxes, supplying and paying the army or issuing coinage tend to be carried out on a smaller scale, at the level of groups of provinces united under a single authority: the empire, therefore, ceases to be a relevant unit of analysis for the historian.

The 'long third century' (193–337) was therefore marked by an increase in the costs of defence, as well as of the functioning of the political system and the administration, and by the first challenges to the unity of the empire.

The more fundamental changes are hard to define and even harder to measure. The most commonly used indicators – apart from coinage, which has caught much of the attention of the historians – are some social as well as economic transformations which may have concerned the supervision of agricultural labour, the collection of revenues from land and from taxes, the means of payments and levies (with the growth of payments in kind), etc. This means, once again, the monetary framework of the economy: coinage itself, ground rent and taxation. But little or nothing on the population, the network of cities, the agricultural or craft production, and the internal or external trade.

The 'gloomy' view of the third century has been strongly influenced by what was said about it at the time, often critically, by authors whose texts describe the difficulties in more or less apocalyptic terms and present them as signs of crisis (political, economic, military, social, etc.), yet barely mention any positive signs. There was no dearth of panegyrics to the wonderful works of 'restoration' carried out by certain emperors but, taken together with the other texts just mentioned, they seem all the more sycophantic: the third century did not produce a credible Aelius Aristides after Tertullian,[1] who praised the prosperity of Africa about 200: *ubique populus, ubique civitates* ('people everywhere, cities everywhere!').

Historians have reacted by making repeated efforts to come up with different and often more positive readings. The first of these belongs to the category readings 'from above' and is based on indicators that are considered to be central and fundamental to the economy of the Roman world: the attribution and use of power, the payment of the army, the quality of the coinage, the supply of the city of Rome, the threats to the leading role of the cities, the signs of fragmentation of the Roman economic network. The second reading analyses the various sectors and aspects of the economy, in particular drawing on the new information provided by archaeology (rural, marine, mining, etc.) about local situations that the contemporary written sources either did not mention or else discussed in such a way that it is impossible to interpret them with any certainty and even less to apply their conclusions more generally. The third reading is more theoretical and relates to a longer period than just the third century. With references now to M. Weber, A. Chayanov, K. Polanyi, W. Kula, F. Braudel and I. Wallerstein rather than to Marx, this reading asks questions about the characteristic features of the Roman economy: peculiar attitudes to spending and accumulating wealth and therefore to saving and

[1] Tert. *de Anima* 30.3.

investment; the role of redistribution and reciprocity as opposed to the market; the importance of self-sufficiency compared with commercial production and consumption; and predatory behaviour of the state, that was transferred to certain social categories once the period of conquests was over.

These readings have been facilitated and stimulated by the spectacular growth in the quantity and quality of the information available. In addition to the literary sources, the Roman economy has left behind a large body of material evidence which it has become possible to study more systematically in recent decades thanks to advances in archaeology and epigraphy. However, this evidence still provides quite patchy information about products, people, trade, consumption patterns, savings, investment, supervision of the market, disparities between the regions of the empire and between the empire and its neighbours.

This evidence consists of artefacts that have resisted the passage of time: coins; pottery (fineware or commonware, amphorae, lamps) – the second category of artefacts to be represented and studied on a massive scale – and what can be deduced from it, such as the products transported and sometimes stored in the amphorae (above all wine, oil and garum); but only few barrels and skins, which are however known from figurative representations, although the period we are considering was precisely the time when barrels replaced amphorae and perhaps also large casks replaced *dolia* (earthenware jars). The stone infrastructures connected with transport by land and sea – roads, bridges and harbours – have survived, but not the drove roads, the tracks and itineraries used by pack animals; so have the urban amenities which were the result of either exceptional or repeated investments and also an indication of patterns of behaviour; and the centuriations 'fossilized' in the modern landscape or recorded (e.g. in the cadastre from Orange). Due to recent archaeological progress, we know more about mines and quarries, metallurgical analysis, ships and their cargoes, certain equipment (water-mills, oil- or wine-presses, garum tanks, loom-weights and spindles, but not looms), tools (mostly the metal parts, without their wooden handles) and animal bones, only recently studied systematically – but little so far about seeds. Rural landscapes, like those of Apulia, Sicily or Africa, were lastingly shaped by cereal monocultures, but we know little about other crops, apart from what the texts tell us. There are remains of villas (which were both residence and production centre, with their *pars urbana* and their *pars rustica*), urban houses and tenements, necropoleis and mausolea, with their tombs and sarcophagi, that tell us about the living and the dead, but few rural and peasant habitats. The information we have is growing, but it is itself the product of a selection which is partly due to chance and partly linked to the different conceptions prevailing among the historians.

Alongside this abundant material evidence, which is apparently 'objective' and in any case capable of being quantified and analysed in a systematic way, we have large numbers of texts that reveal the point of view of the towns rather than the countryside, of the ruling classes rather than the lower classes, of the administration and its efforts to impose its wishes (one thinks, for example, of the Prices Edict) rather than those at the receiving end (whose complaints we know about when they were heard and were occasionally successful), and lastly of the cultured classes, who sought to describe, theorize about, criticize or control certain flows or exchanges or patterns of behaviour, rather than the so-called lower classes. Sometimes these texts reflect certain aspects of economic thinking, by revealing something about the status of trade, of redistribution, of euergetism. But the rhetoric of praise – of towns or regions – equally inspires the request from the inhabitants of Orcistus in Phrygia to Constantine[2] and the *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* (written about 360);[3] they both repeat various *topoi*, from which it is hard to separate the reality.

We shall therefore take as our starting-point a model of the actual functioning of the Roman economy that is deliberately simplified and without any theoretical preconceptions; we shall then discuss the main problems of interpretation: the impact of the crises and profound transformations. Our analysis will first focus on the structures of the Roman economy, which were already in place in the preceding period, in order to try to identify – factor by factor and sector by sector – what may have changed during our period and to interpret these changes in terms not only of crisis or decline (or of stability, if not growth), but also of where restructuring may have occurred. Hence we shall examine any shifts that there may have been between natural and monetized economies, or between an empire-wide economy and provincial or regional economies, as well as in the uses and definitions of money (with the transition from a good-quality coinage handled mainly by the rich and with limited circulation, to a low-grade coinage used more widely by everyone and circulating more rapidly).

From the point of view of its functioning, the Roman economy can be defined in four complementary ways which highlight its outstanding characteristics. It is:

(1) A basically rural economy with an urban framework. This economy as a whole supplies the state's operating and other costs, which are more or less stable in peacetime, but fluctuate wildly in times of war, even more so when the empire is invaded, resulting in destruction and loss of revenues. The state, henceforth embodied in the person of the emperor, is responsible for military defence, for maintaining supplies to the capital

[2] *MAMA* VII.305.

[3] *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* (ed. J. Rougé, *Sources chrétiennes* 124; Paris, 1967).

city, and for various kinds of euergetism (towards Rome, the provincial cities, different social categories). In order to cope with its responsibilities, the political authority operates in a wide range of dimensions: a money economy (for supplying the cities and collecting taxes); voluntary or compulsory donations; tax deductions in kind as well as in money, but also requisitions and confiscations; direct imperial control over large sectors of activity (with the imperial ownership of mines, *saltus*, etc.); and lastly a small-scale economy, minimally monetized and relying heavily on subsistence, on payments and compensations in kind, on barter and exchange of services.

(2) An economy based on a large-scale organization of space and of the movement of goods: the army near the frontiers, peace in the provinces, trade in the Mediterranean region combining the priority of supplying Rome and its citizens, transactions reaching step by step the whole of the empire (with the export of Mediterranean products to the frontiers, the import of products from the frontiers and beyond to the Mediterranean and the movement of goods and peoples), and major disparities in the level of development among the various regions.

(3) An economy also based on the juxtaposition of many cells living mainly off their own resources (such as the cities off their territories) and for this reason enjoying a high degree of autonomy.

(4) An economy, finally, based on a varying mixture of slave and free labour.

1. THE STRUCTURES OF THE ECONOMY

1. The countryside

(a) An unknown: the population

All the questions about the Roman economy in the third century involve an essential piece of information that is in fact unknown: the population, key factor in an economy based on agriculture with stable productivity over the long term (in the absence of any major technical innovation). Area under cultivation and type of crop, place allocated to animal husbandry and forestry, volume of output, productivity of labour and land, numbers of mouths to feed and volume of consumption, workforce available for other activities, pressure of those without work and land on the urban and political authorities, pressures on land and balance between a more extensive and a more intensive agriculture: all the main variables ultimately depend on population. Yet of this population we know neither the absolute level nor the fluctuations for the period under discussion, any more than we do for the earlier periods. The results of the censuses carried out for fiscal purposes (regularly every fourteen years in Egypt until the middle of the third century, less regularly but perhaps roughly every fifteen years in

other provinces, particularly in Gaul) are known only for Egypt, and even then only patchily.[4]

Without figures, even approximate ones, some historians tend to present a negative picture of the period by applying to large areas of the empire the effects of the two major demographic events likely to have caused (besides wars and invasions) a lasting decline in population: the so-called 'Antonine plague', which according to the eye-witness account of the physician Galen[5] struck Rome in 166 in the reign of Marcus Aurelius and was thought to have been brought back from the east by the troops of Lucius Verus; and 'St Cyprian's plague', which affected Africa in the mid-third century and was described by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage.[6] We know when and where these two epidemics occurred, but naturally we have no idea of the exact death toll. Nonetheless, some scholars have argued, though this remains no more than a hypothesis, that these demographic events might perhaps be linked to other sporadic phenomena observed elsewhere and also thought to indicate a fall in population: a rise in the price of foodstuffs and wages in Egypt in the period between 160 and 190 (although the plague could just as easily have led not to a rise but to a fall in agricultural prices, as happened in Europe in the fourteenth century); a decline in building work in northern Syria supposedly connected with the arrival of St Cyprian's plague from Egypt around 250/1; a decline in the number of taxpayers registered in certain Egyptian settlements.[7] All of these clues should, of course, be followed up, but it is hard to reconstruct the full picture. They illustrate the difficulty of proving anything in this area because of our inability to provide reliable answers to two basic questions: did these plagues spread? And if so, was their impact lasting or, on the contrary, did the population rapidly recover? In the case of Egypt, the only region for which we have data, and where population density is particularly high, Rathbone[8] estimates that 20 per cent of the population died in the plague in 166, but he observes 'a considerable if not complete recovery' by the beginning of the third century; the curves of the age distribution established by Bagnall and Frier show clearly what the likely causes of this recovery were.[9]

A decline in population has often also been an integral part of interpretations of the changes in the pattern of settlements attested in Gaul between the second and fourth centuries. But scholarly thinking on this topic has recently changed.[10] After many years of relying on a quantitative approach, which involved measuring the growth, stagnation or decline of rural life

[4] Bagnall and Frier, *Demography*.
[5] See esp. Galen, XIX.15 and XIX.17–18 (ed. Kuhn); Duncan-Jones (1996b).
[6] Cyprian, *de Mortalitate* XIV–XV (CSEL III.1, pp. 305–6).
[7] Rathbone (1996) 334; Tate (1992) 301; Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 173–4 with n. 22.
[8] Rathbone (1990). [9] Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 175–6.
[10] Lewit (1991) 27–36; Van Ossel (1992); Raynaud (1996) and Ouzoulias *et al.* (2001).

on the basis of the number of occupied sites, archaeologists now prefer to analyse the networks and the hierarchy of settlements by identifying and excavating farms, *villae* and rural concentrations, and by environmental studies. For the Gauls, which have been studied particularly thoroughly, the fact that many sites were abandoned between the second and fourth centuries used to be taken as a sign that much farmland was deserted at that period; now, the same evidence is interpreted more simply as indicating a shift from dispersed settlements, characteristic of the early empire, to aggregated and nucleated ones. This change in the rural economy of Gaul began in the second century, continued in the third, and in some regions led to almost two-thirds of sites in the countryside being abandoned. Yet only in certain cases does this decline in the number of sites, some of which were 'agrarian annexes' (to use the term now normally applied to them), coincide with land being abandoned or taken out of cultivation.

Among the signs of social tension likely to have accelerated the decline in the rural population and in the area under cultivation, the following are mentioned: peasants running away because of the burden of debts and taxes, banditry and the 'colonate' system which is thought to have made their situation worse vis-à-vis landowners. The threat of running away is a common feature of the petitions to the emperor by peasants of the imperial estates recorded in inscriptions of the end of the second and of the third centuries, in Africa, Lydia, Thrace and elsewhere;[11] this recurrent 'blackmail' at least proves that the *coloni* were free to leave the estate. It is significant that the new letters of Augustine show that at the beginning of the fifth century the *coloni* of a private African *fundus* were still threatening their *domina* that they would run away (*Ep.* 20*).[12] The endemic banditry in the Nile delta grew to an alarming extent in the years 165 to 172, to the point where in 171/2 the intervention of the Roman army from Syria under the command of Avidius Cassius was required to put down a revolt that Cassius Dio attributes to the *boukoloi* (herdsmen).[13] But was brigandage, a factor of insecurity, also a form of 'social protest', recruiting its members from among the peasants and giving expression to their aspirations, claims and rebellions, according to the model proposed by E. Hobsbawm? *Anachoresis* for tax reasons can be observed from time to time in many Egyptian villages, according to the registers recording those liable to the *laographia*: hence, at Socnopaiou Nesos, the drop in the number of taxpayers observed between 178 and the beginning of the third century has been explained firstly by the dreadful consequences of the plague in 178/9, then by the peasants running away.[14] However, the loss of

[11] Herrmann, *Hilferufe*. These documents can easily be found now with an English translation in Hauken, *Petition and Response*.

[12] Divjak (1987) 292–342 (earlier edition: CSEL LXXXVIII (1981) 94–112).

[13] Dio, LXXI.4.

[14] Bagnall and Frier, *Demography* 174.

population from the villages is not irreversible, and amnesties, such as those willingly declared by the emperors on the occasion of the fourteen-yearly census in Egypt, can encourage the defaulting taxpayers to return. It is in this context that historians have been tempted to interpret the peasants' being tied to the estate where they were born (*origo*), mentioned by a law of Constantine dated to 332,[15] as a measure that allowed landowners to hold onto their labour force who might otherwise desert them. Although this legal constraint was certainly also used for this purpose, the motive is clearly fiscal, and aims to ensure a steady tax revenue from the estate ('anyone who is found to have at home a *colonus* belonging to someone else shall return him to his *origo* and pay the *capitatio* for the period that he held him').

(b) Agricultural production

The signs relating to the area under cultivation and agricultural production are also hard to interpret. The methods of farming intensification – drainage and irrigation, expansion of the cultivation of shrubs, introduction of new crops, etc. – and the technological advances that occurred throughout the Roman period suggest that the image of stagnant productivity of land in a world where growth could come only from extending the area under cultivation should be revised. Mediterranean agriculture of course remained basically 'dry', with a mixture of cereals (for human consumption rather than for animals), legumes, shrubs (vine, olive, a wide range of fruit trees) and livestock, and with the rural land divided between *ager* and *saltus*. This model was even extended further north, where the vineyards of northern France and the left bank of the Rhine have been described as 'a legacy of the Romans'.[16] Tacitus, observing the fertility of Britain in spite of the damp climate, merely remarks that it would be impossible to grow the olive tree and the vine there.[17] Although irrigation for farming developed, above all in desert or semi-desert areas (such as, in the east, in the great valleys of the Nile, Orontes and Euphrates, in the oases or even in North Africa), it was little used in the west before it was introduced into Sicily and Spain by the Arabs. In Italy, as in Narbonensis and Britain (in the Fens), the Romans demonstrated their skill as water engineers above all in drainage works that made it possible to improve coastal and inland marshes; they also created water meadows (for example in the Po valley) for cattle breeding. They left traces everywhere of imposing structures (aqueducts, reservoirs and cisterns) related more directly to supplying water to cities than to developing irrigation.

In North Africa famous texts document the way that water for irrigation was shared out,[18] while archaeology has revealed actual examples

[15] *CTh* v.17.1. [16] Dion (1959) 117–70. [17] Tac. *Agric*. XII. [18] Pavis d'Escurac (1980).

of hydraulic systems. A passage of Pliny the Elder[19] describes the model, which was to become standard, for sharing irrigation water measured in periods of time rather than by volume, as practised in the oasis at Gabès (Tacape). The great inscription from Lamasba,[20] northwest of Batna in Numidia, engraved and displayed at the beginning of the third century, sets out in minute detail the regulations for irrigating plots planted with olive trees between September and March. A constitution of Constantine, posted at Carthage on 9 March 319,[21] tries to rule in favour of the holders of emphyteutic leases (the 'farmers-general' of the imperial estates) on conflicts arising because the *coloni* illegally diverted spring water. In the high arid steppe in Tunisia, the exploration of the area round Kasserine (Cillium) has brought to light the hydraulic works of the Roman period which, by using native techniques, made it possible to extend olive cultivation to the terraced hills.[22]

The revised dating of the mills at Barbegal (7 km east of Arles, at the entrance to the valley of Les Baux in Provence) to the Antonine period or even the reign of Trajan, of the mills on the Janiculum in Rome to the third century, and the discovery of second-century water mills at *villae* in the Var region of southern France[23] have noticeably altered the traditional view that mastery of water power was not achieved until the Middle Ages. In M. Bloch's famous statement, 'invention antique, le moulin à eau est médiéval par l'époque de sa véritable expansion',[24] the first two words have too often been overlooked. There is a greater awareness today that advances in mill technology are not peculiar to late antiquity. That period, for all kinds of water use, is not a blank, nor a real breakthrough, nor the beginning. We do not know for how long the Phrygian city of Orcistus already possessed water mills when it flatters itself on having such amenities in its petition to Constantine.[25]

There is no lack of signs of the cultivation of cereals or shrubs like vine and olive trees, and raising livestock, with or without transhumance. But is it possible to identify any changes?

Rome had annexed the whole perimeter of the Mediterranean basin, including its semi-desert fringe and the southern and western part of continental Europe. The Roman economy therefore associates a Mediterranean type of agriculture based on the three basic crops – wheat, vine and olive – which provides itself the basic consumption models (bread, wine and oil) spreading throughout the empire, with regions with quite different climates, where agriculture was essentially based either on the combination of cereals/livestock and hunting (Europe) or, on the contrary, in semi-desert

[19] Pliny, *HN* XVIII.51.188–9. [20] *CIL* VIII.4440 = 18587; Shaw (1982). [21] *CJ* XI.63.1.
[22] Hitchner (1995). [23] Leveau (1996); Bell (1994); Brun and Borréani (1998).
[24] 'An invention of antiquity, the water mill is mediaeval in terms of its real expansion': Bloch (1935).
[25] *MAMA* VII.305.

areas, on other tree crops (figs and dates, which are included in the Prices Edict). These diverse climates also helped to widen and add variety to the diet: the 'meat eaters' are no longer to be found only in the northern and northwestern regions of the empire. The animal, which is central to the religious life of the Mediterranean, because of the emphasis on sacrifices and ritual consumption of meat, is also raised for wool, leather and tallow.

The importance of cereals in the diet throughout the empire is confirmed by the Prices Edict (chapter 1),[26] which gives first place to wheat (*frumentum*), followed by other crops of the same type (barley, rye, spelt), and also millet; oat (*avena*) is mentioned later, after the vegetables, as fodder. These cereals, sown and harvested separately but sometimes mixed to make bread, are the basis of the human diet, although their proportion varies from region to region. The city of Rome, supplied by Sicily, Africa and Egypt, appears to have received a special provisioning of wheat. In Egypt, wheat and barley are the main cereal crops, the former grown for making bread and the latter, in addition to bread, perhaps above all for making beer. The cultivation of spelt (*spelta*) spread rapidly on the plains of northern Gaul; because of its relatively fragile ears, it has to be gathered in unusual ways, in particular using a 'reaping machine', the *vallus*, which is described by Pliny the Elder (in the first century) and Palladius (in the fourth),[27] and pictured on the bas-reliefs of the gate of Mars in Reims and on funerary monuments at Arlon, Montauban-Buzenol, Trier and Coblenz, dating to the second and third centuries. By contrast, rye, which Pliny the Elder mentions growing in Piedmont in the first century,[28] and which became the principal grain cultivated in central and northern Europe in the Middle Ages, replacing spelt around 1000, is not widely grown, even though Roman authors, in particular Pliny, who swore by wheat alone, have tended to despise rye too much.

Apart from this qualitative evidence for the different types of crop grown, our information is on the whole much less about production (of which the various stages are described by the Roman agronomists) than about the provisioning of the cities, above all Rome, then Constantinople, to which Constantine decides to divert part of the Egyptian supply. We learn about occasional food shortages, fluctuations in prices, distributions (sometimes free, sometimes at a reduced price) provided by the emperor or local élites, requisitions and levies in kind imposed on the peasants, long-distance haulage from a small number of provinces producing a regular surplus and specialized in exports (Sicily, Egypt, Africa) for feeding these privileged cities, but necessarily other cities had to live off their own resources, given

[26] The best edition of the Edict is that of Giacchero, *Edictum Diocletiani*, with the addition of the new fragments from Aezani (Crawford and Reynolds 1977 and 1979) and Aphrodisias (Reynolds 1989).
[27] Pliny, *HN* XVIII.72.296; Palladius, VII.2.2–4. [28] Pliny, *HN* XVIII.40.141.

the high cost of transport by land, unless they had obtained from the emperor the rare privilege of importing grain from Egypt, like Ephesus and Tralles in the second century.[29]

The production of olive oil – the Prices Edict (3.1a–3) distinguishes three grades, *flos*, *sequens* and *cibarium* – and above all the provisioning of Rome in oil have been much studied, primarily because the containers (amphorae) have been preserved. The typology of amphorae is nowadays better understood and there is less debate about the meaning of the inscriptions on some of them. In addition, it is possible to identify where there were olive groves from the remains of ancient oil mills. Among the topics under discussion for the third century are the question of the drop in supplies to Rome from Baetica (mainly in amphorae of Dressel type 20, then of type 23), replaced by oil from the Byzacium and, to a lesser extent, from Tripolitania. However, the decline in numbers of Spanish amphorae, quite sharp between 230 and 250 as can be seen at once from the histograms for Ostia (excavations of the Terme del Nuotatore),[30] relates mainly to garum and fish conserves. The study of Monte Testaccio, the dump made at the harbour of Rome itself, downstream from the city on the banks of the Tiber, shows that there is no drop in Spanish oil imports until the 260s; and in fact at that date the dump itself ceases to be used (perhaps because the city's harbour facilities are moved elsewhere), so that Spanish imports do not necessarily stop then. Moreover, from the mid-third century, Spanish oil is shipped in differently shaped amphorae, and the types (especially Dressel 23) have only recently been identified.

Of the period of 500 years from the first century B.C., when Caesar levied a tribute in oil from Lepcis, until the fourth century A.D., for which the production and distribution of oil from Tripolitania are well attested, the half-century between 200 and 240/250 has attracted attention because of the amphorae stamped with owners' initials, among whom are identified the praetorian prefect Plautianus (dismissed in 205) and several *clarissimi* and *equites* of Lepcis, not to mention the emperors themselves. Some of these amphorae have been found in the area of production, some at their main destination, Rome (Monte Testaccio, Ostia). The stamps have been linked to the grant of the *ius italicum* – and therefore of the tax exemption – to Lepcis by Septimius Severus, known from the *Digest* (L.15.8.11), and to two famous passages of Aurelius Victor (*Caes*. XLI) and the *Historia Augusta* (*Sev*. 18.3), which, on the one hand, allege that the people of Lepcis presented allowances in oil to their compatriot, and, on the other, that Septimius instituted the regular distributions of oil to the Roman plebs. Should we see in this, as some do, a euergetistic offer made by the notables of Lepcis? Or should we rather wonder whether Septimius Severus did not

[29] Garnsey (1988) 255–6. [30] Panella (1986) 65 and 79.

stimulate oil consumption in Rome by making these distributions and at the same time open up the market for oil in the capital to producers from Tripolitania, of whom the emperor himself was one of the most important? The imperial estates, which were extended when Plautianus' property was confiscated and were managed from the early third century as part of an *ad hoc* patrimonial district, the *regio Tripolitana*, perhaps left their mark on place names until at least the tenth century, according to the Arab geographers. At about the same period, although the precise date is not known, a new procuratorial post appears (it is uncertain whether temporary or permanent) the *procurator ad olea comparanda per regionem Tripolitanam*, which suggests massive purchases (rather than just voluntary or compulsory supplies) for the *annona* of Rome.[31]

The vine poses the same problem as the olive, albeit to a lesser degree. The efforts made to plant vines as far as the Danube and the Rhine, like the drinking bouts of the 'Germans' described by Tacitus,[32] prove the strength of the Roman lifestyle model, which even affects Egypt, at the expense of beer. Wine is therefore at the centre of trading activities involving transport by land and sea; it indicates the forms and scale of organization covering the whole Mediterranean region to supply the cities, as well as Romanized Europe, with its transport to the northern and northwestern frontiers. With rare exceptions, there are no shortages of wine, and no lasting shortfalls of production: in the medium and long term, output adjusts to match demand, and actually monetized demand which is the decisive factor. However, the study of the wine trade is hampered by the shift from amphorae to barrels, a type of container that has left little trace. The barrel, invented by the Celts, is well known from figurative representations which become widespread from precisely the third century A.D. We know that barrels and amphorae were used at the same time from the bas-relief from Cabrières d'Aigues in the Musée Calvet in Avignon, which shows a scene with barrels loaded on a boat and, on a shelf, straw-covered amphorae of the 'Gauloise 4' type.

Pastoralism, the source of meat, wool and leather, is practised at three levels in the empire.[33] The first is as an element of mixed farming alongside crops – grazing livestock on the *fundus*, as recommended by Latin writers on agriculture. The second level corresponds to the pastoral sector of a sedentary agriculture, usually represented by transhumance: a form of animal husbandry which is associated in the Latin texts with references to the *saltus*. The word *saltus*, before it acquired the meaning of large estate, originally meant fallow land, by contrast with the *ager* or the *fundus*, which are regularly cultivated. The only detailed description of transhumance is much earlier than our period, in Varro's *Res Rusticae* Book II and some passages

[31] Manacorda (1983); Di Vita-Evrard (1985); Lewicki and Kotula (1986).
[32] Tac. *Germ.* 22–3. [33] Corbier (1991a) and (1999b).

in Book III, and concerns the Apennines and southern Italy. However, a long inscription fom Saepinum dated to around 170 reveals the conflicts that could arise between the farmers of the transhumant flocks and their shepherds on one side, and the civic authorities and imperial officials on the other.[34] The recent discovery of sheep pens in La Crau (Provence) has helped to shed light on the vague but evocative mention (with its reference to thyme) of this stony plain by Pliny the Elder.[35]

The third level of pastoralism concerns some genuine pastoral societies, usually nomads, that historians and archaeologists have looked for within the empire or on its fringes, in North Africa or the Near East. A concrete example of exchanges between nomads or semi-nomads and the sedentary population is provided by the tariff of Zaraï, known from an inscription dated to 202,[36] which lists the goods liable to the *portorium* on entering this small Numidian town, half of them the products of a pastoral economy (the sum due is fixed and the rate low). However, the Romans, sedentary people themselves, have always striven to control nomads and, in Italy itself, shepherds (*pastores*) – admittedly mainly slaves – who were readily considered to be brigands (*latrones*), as were the *boukoloi* in the Nile delta.

As Roman rule spreads, so too do bigger domesticated animals: cattle, sheep, pigs, horses and even cocks. This phenomenon, well attested by archaeozoology, continues in the third and fourth centuries – these large beasts disappear only after the end of the empire – and seems to have been the result of a combination of possible factors (imports of species from Italy, crossing with local breeds, acquisition of new know-how by livestock farmers). Indigenous herds are completely eliminated from northern Gaul, whereas the evidence of 'Roman' animals is less strong in Britain than on the continent, which suggests that the beasts in question are imports.[37] In Italy, pig-breeding benefited from the inclusion – according to tradition, from the reign of Aurelian – of pork meat in the distributions of food to the Roman plebs, either free or at low prices, and from fiscal levies in pork meat. Under Constantine the taxpayer was supposed to hand over live pigs of a certain weight in pounds; but if he thought that the *suarius* had underestimated the weight, he was authorized to pay the equivalent amount in cash, according to the current market price as announced by the governor of his province.[38]

Flax and hemp were the most widely grown crops for making textiles. We know that cotton (*ereoxulon*), unlike silk (which was imported from Asia), was not only used but grown in Egypt from the second century onwards, if not earlier.[39] Wool, however, remained the principal raw material for domestic or industrial production of cloth.

[34] *CIL* IX.2438, republished by U. Laffi, *Studi Classici e Orientali* 14 (1965) 180–1.
[35] Pliny, *HN* XXI.31.57. [36] *CIL* VIII.4508 = 18643. [37] Audoin-Rouzeau (1995); Lepetz (1996).
[38] *CTh* XIV.4.2, dated 324 or 326. [39] Wagner (1987) 291–2; Wipszycka (1965) 40–2.

Finally, the spread of new crops as substitutes for imported spices is another significant indication of the capacity to adapt and innovate in agriculture, even if its actual impact was small.

(c) Mines and quarries

Mining and quarrying are an important part of the products of the countryside. Among those whose activities are well documented in the third century are the quarries producing marble and decorative coloured stones; the main ones, like the mines, were designated by the term *metalla* and belonged to the emperor. The most famous marbles come from the quarries of Luni (Carrara) in Etruria, Simmithu (Chemtou) in Tunisia, Docimeion in Phrygia and from the island of Proconnesus in the Sea of Marmara. Of the coloured stones, the best red porphyry comes from Egypt, green porphyry from Greece, pink granite from Syene (Aswan), granodiorite from Mons Claudianus or granite from the Troad.[40] The demand is enormous: in 320, an edict of Constantine addressed to Africa urges private individuals to increase marble extraction.[41]

The Roman conquest stimulated the production of metals and led both to the exploitation of new mining areas (sometimes requiring a skilled work-force to be imported) and to a change of scale of activity in existing areas. Bullion for coinage (gold, silver and copper) is especially prized, while iron and lead are widely used – iron for weapons and tools, lead for pipes and in construction. In addition to the important mining districts of Iberia (silver, lead and copper mainly from the south and southwest, gold from the northwest), Noricum (iron), Dalmatia (gold, silver and iron), Pannonia (iron and silver), and Dacia (gold), mention should be made of iron production at many sites in Gaul, of lead and tin in Britain, gold in Thrace, copper and lead in Cyprus, iron and non-ferrous metals in Anatolia.[42]

Supplies to the central authorities were cut off by the secession of Gaul (260–74) and Britain (287–96), but this did not affect the output of the local mines, which on the contrary provided the 'usurpers' with bullion for their coinage. However, even though mines continued to operate until the second half of the century, for example at Vipasca (in the south of modern Portugal), metal production probably fell in the third century, though the decline cannot be quantified. Admittedly the invasions do not always lead to mines being abandoned for ever: this is normally thought to be the case in southern Spain following incursions by the Moors in the 170s, then the Franks and the Moors in the 260s. The gold mines of Dacia apparently halted production at the time of the invasions by the Marcomanni during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, but reopened under Caracalla; Dacia was,

[40] Pensabene (1994). [41] *CTh* x.19.1. [42] Domergue (1990) and (1994); Dušanić (1977).

however, lost definitively in 257/8. It is harder to explain why gold mining stopped in northwest Spain, as Claude Domergue has observed from the absence of signs of occupation at settlements beside or near the mines after the beginning of the third century. Should this decline be linked to competition from other mining regions, and/or (as some scholars think) to the loss of the potential labour supply to work on the agricultural *villae* that develop at this period in the Asturias and the rest of the northwest? By contrast, tin production in Britain, which slowed down in the first and second centuries because of the exploitation of the Iberian mines, appears to have been revived in the third century due to the closure of the latter.[43]

In the second century, which is relatively well documented, the *metalla* everywhere are under the supervision of imperial procurators, but there are regional variations in the way that they operate, with two separate systems: either direct exploitation, as at Mons Claudianus, or farming (*locatio*) of the exploitable plots to *coloni* or *conductores*, as at Vipasca and Alburnus Maior. The labour force in the mines and quarries is of three kinds: free paid workers hired either from the native population, coming sometimes from far afield; slaves (the *familia* of the lease-holder); and in some areas, but not all, those sentenced to forced labour, among them Christians, at the time of the persecutions from the end of the second century until the beginning of the fourth. Soldiers, whose presence is also attested, were not normally employed as miners. If the money wages paid to workers in the quarries of Mons Claudianus and to Dacian miners in the mid-second century really were similar, as recently noted, this might indicate that uniform levels of pay for free workers in the *metalla* had been established by some central agency. Nevertheless, it need not be a sign of 'the economic integration of the Empire',[44] but merely of its administrative unity: miners' pay, fixed centrally, would *mutatis mutandis* be comparable to army pay.

All in all, and taking account of the unknown demographic factor, it would be difficult to say that the rural areas of the Roman empire suffered a real crisis in the third century. It is true that there are plenty of signs of problems linked to exceptional events (famines, epidemics, etc.), some local or provincial, others more widespread. But there is nothing in the evidence at our disposal to suggest that the consequences can be generalized. The overall impression is that the Roman model survived intact, and that the processes of homogenization and diffusion of patterns of consumption and production that had begun earlier simply continued, doubly stimulated by demand from Rome at the centre and from the army on the frontiers. It would therefore be better to say that the model was basically stable, with oscillations dictated by the circumstances and the economic situation.

[43] Boon (1971). [44] Cuvigny (1996).

2. *Towns*

Towns make up the second element of the Roman economy. Although they are not all actively involved in trade, they are all marketplaces; once they reach a certain size of population, the need to supply them mobilizes the resources of an area larger than their own territory. The concentration of the élite in cities makes them important consumer centres, and the stimulus they provide is reinforced by their administrative and political functions and by the spread across much of the empire of an urban model which gives advantages to townspeople relative to the rural population; they benefit from a complex package of measures for redistributions and protection by the authorities and the powerful. Lastly, the urban setting gives rise to a whole range of compulsory investments on the part of the local authorities, the city's patrons and the wealthiest citizens: fora, public buildings (*curiae*, basilicas), temples, buildings for entertainment, honorific monuments, water supplies, fountains and baths; at regular intervals, the construction, upkeep and restoration of these amenities mobilize vast sums of money by contemporary standards. Consequently, the prosperity of the towns often also has a sumptuary dimension, and bears witness to the structural imbalances in the Roman economy and society, since most towns lived off the revenues drawn by the landowners and the authorities from the countryside, which are then concentrated and spent in the towns. For that reason, the towns are excellent indicators of the forces driving the whole of the economy, and of the contradictions that emerge; they provide more abundant and more easily datable evidence than the rural areas, thanks above all to inscriptions, although in many ways the problems of interpretation are just as difficult. For example, does the building of a smaller city wall indicate a decline in population or a change in the function of the wall, from purely prestige reasons to defence?

Here, too, the available evidence is scattered, varied and sometimes contradictory. Across the empire as a whole, two surges of urban growth can be observed, at either end of our period: under the Severans, and again during the time of the tetrarchs and Constantine. These surges could be connected with the emperor's favours (as at Lepcis Magna, the *patria* of Septimius Severus), or his temporary residence or to imperial foundations: the palace at Split that Diocletian had built for his retirement near his birthplace, Salona; the provincial capitals of the emperors during the periods of shared rule (Milan and Trier in the west, Nicomedia and Thessalonica in the east for the Augusti and Caesars of the first tetrarchy); lastly, the new capital at Constantinople, inaugurated in 330. The middle of the third century is by contrast subject to greater fluctuations. A close analysis of the epigraphical evidence for Africa relating to official buildings paid for by the cities themselves or by wealthy individuals has revealed periods of

boom and sluggishness:[45] steady growth from the mid-second century to the beginning of the third, a dead phase in the second half of the third century, followed by a revival under the tetrarchs that slowed again in the reign of Constantine. Here again, we must challenge the formulaic statements found in inscriptions of the end of the third century that attribute all repairs to the negligence of predecessors, leaving the impression of a environment full of monuments 'in ruins'.

For an economy in which building has always been one of the most prosperous activities, investments in cities are always considered to be a positive sign. Yet the reasons for a decline in the construction of new civic amenities can vary highly from region to region. In Italy, for example, but also in Gaul, the towns were equipped and embellished with monuments from the first century to the second, whereas in Africa such buildings date mainly from the Antonines to the Severans. Yet the chronology is likely to be even later in the east or on the periphery of the empire: just as Septimius Severus favoured Lepcis, Philip the Arabian (244–9) puts the finishing touches to the sanctuary of Jupiter at Heliopolis-Baalbek, where the propylaea dates to the reign of Caracalla. The work of transformation and monumental building at Antioch and Apamea, which begins mainly in the second century after the earthquake in 115 continues in the third century, as it does also at Palmyra. These eastern towns are all built on the same basic plan, with a main street (*plateia*) lined with porticos, which smaller cities are still trying to copy in the third century, for instance at Hermopolis in Egypt under Gallienus.[46]

Housing studies may provide clues as to prosperity or decline, since the rich invested part of their wealth in building and embellishing their houses. However, archaeological excavations of urban sites rarely cover large areas. The building of new residential districts (especially in Africa, for example at Cuicul, under the Antonines and above all the Severans) is seen as a positive sign, whereas the reasons why some areas were abandoned are obscure: at Vienne, the districts on the right bank of the Rhône were deserted, some time early in the third century, while at Lyons people moved down from the higher ground to the river banks.

The fashion of the time is to build on a giant scale, a taste facilitated by technical standardization, which also affected statuary: a colossal statue of Constantine seated (the head and one hand have survived) was erected around 313 in the most enormous hall of the Roman period, the basilica of Maxentius in Rome. A perfect illustration of this tendency can be seen in the construction of public baths, such as those of Caracalla and Diocletian in Rome or, on a smaller scale, those of Julia Mamaea at Bulla Regia,

[45] Lepelley (1979, 1981); Février (1996) II.813–39.
[46] Drew-Bear (1997a) 237–43 and (1997b) 127–30.

built around 230. Yet two forms of building seem typical of the period, the circus/hippodrome and the city walls, while a third emerges under Constantine, the Christian basilica based on the same plan as the civic basilicas.

The hippodrome is indeed among the building projects undertaken in the third century by many towns that did not already have one. Imperial residences, multiplied after the establishment of the tetrarchic regime, receive buildings necessary to their new function: a palace, of course, but also a circus, for the combined palace-with-hippodrome, inspired by the Roman *palatium–circus maximus* complex, linking two spaces where the emperor could be in direct contact with the people, makes it possible to hold a ceremonial of legitimation. Diocletian at Antioch and Nicomedia, Maximian at Milan, Galerius at Thessalonica and Sirmium, Constantine at Trier and Byzantium, Maxentius in Rome, though on the *Via Appia*, all reproduce this urbanistic model, sometimes complemented with an imperial mausoleum acting as a *heroon*.[47]

The reasons for building new city walls are not at all clear, especially as even the dating is controversial. P.-A. Février has demonstrated the ambiguity of this indicator.[48] In the case of Amiens a smaller wall enclosing only a fraction of the ancient settlement area, including the amphitheatre against which it is partly built, was erected after 277/8 (dated from coins found buried in the masonry), i.e. at a time when northwest Gaul had just been through considerable upheavals. Is Amiens representative of the transformations taking place in the towns in the third century? At the end of the second century, many cities in the west possess ramparts that are largely symbolic as they were not built for purposes of defence, but sometimes dated from the grant of colonial status – for the permission to build a city wall is in the gift of the emperor. But not all cities have walls. If the famous Black Gate at Trier really was built at the end of the second century, and the city wall before the middle of the third century, these buildings might have no connection with the invasions of northern and eastern Gaul. A city wall is not just a means of defence, it also extols the status as a city. Often the new walls follow the line of earlier ramparts or link up with monumental gates erected in earlier periods, as happened at Verona under Gallienus. Large stretches survive of the immensely long wall that Aurelian built for Rome. The vicissitudes of Byzantium, which had the misfortune to back the loser twice in a hundred years (first Pescennius Niger, then Licinius), illustrate the many different roles that walls might have. After the siege lasting from 193 to 195, Byzantium loses its civic status and parts of the city are destroyed; Septimius Severus shows his forgiveness by restoring its status as a city and having the wall rebuilt (the two things went together), as well as providing

[47] Dagron (1985). [48] Février *et al.* (1980) 244–61 and 399–410; also (1996) 1.411–24.

it with a large hippodrome, a theatre, baths and a colonnaded street. In 324, Constantine, having defeated Licinius, ordered the demolition of the walls as a punishment, but as he shortly afterwards decided to make the city his capital, he had a much larger wall built, along with monumental public buildings. In order to embellish his new capital, according to the tradition, he had statues brought from all over the empire, even from Rome.[49]

Reuse is indeed common practice at the time – an ambiguous indicator, if ever there was one. Where city walls were built using parts of earlier monuments, this may be a sign of hasty construction linked to imminent danger or to repairs after the destructions of war, but not necessarily, since mostly the reused materials come from tombs put up outside the walls, along roads, and abandoned when a family died out. The reuse of works of art is even more ambiguous. The practice is typical of the reign of Constantine, in particular the arch of Constantine erected in Rome incorporating figurative reliefs; it is not known whether these were taken from honorific monuments of earlier periods or brought out of storage. Whatever the reason for reusing material, the result was to reduce the cost of the building concerned.

The main change after the Severan period is that, although Rome continues to benefit from the emperors' munificence, they live there much less or not at all, which leads to the imperial palace becoming fossilized in the state in which it had been left by Commodus and Septimius Severus. Nevertheless, the city retains all of its privileges and advantages throughout the third century, the most important of these being the distributions to the *plebs frumentaria*, which evolve in two directions: first, a slight increase in the liberalities in money (the amount had been increased tenfold in a hundred years) and secondly, a wider range of foodstuffs are distributed. Two bas-reliefs showing a *congiarium* were included in the arch of Constantine, a reused scene of Marcus Aurelius and the other produced for Constantine; while what is most striking about them is the change that had occurred in Roman art between the two periods, they also bear witness to the continuity of the notion of redistribution although the terms varied, from *congiarium* to *liberalitas*, then *largitio*.[50] Imperial generosity extends to new products (oil, wine and meat). The distribution every month at the same place in the town of 5 *modii* of wheat is replaced by daily bread distributions at many different points, called *gradus*, which represent both an improvement in the diet of the recipients and a saving for the emperor, if the total ration was lowered. Although Rome does not lose its status as capital on the creation of Constantinople, part of the wheat levied in taxes from Egypt is diverted to the latter. This perhaps restored to Sicily the role of granary of Rome that it had lost long before, alongside Africa, which probably also had to ensure supplies to Carthage, now once again a vast metropolis. Any attempt to

[49] Dagron (1984). [50] Corbier (1997) and (1999c).

assess the importance of cities in the urban economy of the third century must take into account the competition that Rome now has to face from the large metropoleis which are also beneficiaries of the emperors' favours.

The towns are vulnerable, always under threat from fires (Rome as much as the rest, since the destruction of the centre in 283 justified the rebuilding of the curia by Diocletian), some also from earthquakes, and they are the first to be affected by epidemics or famines. Nevertheless, the third century does not seem to have suffered particularly from urban unrest: the most serious recorded incident is at Alexandria, where the visit of Caracalla in 215 ended in a massacre. The towns are also victims of pillaging and destruction, from which they recover more or less rapidly. Trier, after being destroyed by the Franks in 271, enjoyed a spectacular renaissance under the tetrarchy. Carthage, sacked in 310 by the troops of the praetorian prefect Rufius Volusianus who had been sent by Maxentius to deal with the usurper Domitius Alexander, began to be rebuilt in the reign of Constantine, who was presented as the *conditor* (new founder) or *restitutor* (restorer) of the city.[51]

This discussion so far has been based mainly on studies of urban buildings and needs to be supplemented with a consideration of the other economic activities of towns. Even the largest of them amounts to more than just the locus for prestige investments, for spending the income from ground rents and imperial taxation, and for conspicuous consumption, increased by the presence of the wealthiest social strata. They are also centres for trade and exchanges – partly, but not only, to satisfy the needs of the wealthy – as well as for craft production and, in some cases, manufacturing. Town residents are not all landowners and members of the political, commercial and financial élite. While occupations such as brick and tilemaking and even pottery, mining and smelting are located almost exclusively in the rural areas near the sources of the raw materials and the forests that supply the fuel, it is more difficult to pinpoint where textiles are made. In the east, it is principally an urban activity, and not only for costly fabrics; in the west it is perhaps more rural, for the production of 'Gallic cloaks' and other garments listed in the Prices Edict. Craft activities, however, remain typical of city life. Every town is host to a range of crafts that increases in diversity with the size of the city and the wealth of its richest residents; the names of the crafts are known mainly from epitaphs, but representations of these same activities are unevenly distributed from region to region (they were one of the favourite themes for funerary monuments in northeastern Gaul).[52]

At least at certain periods, gold and silversmiths who make jewellery and plate are amongst the most esteemed craftsmen: Constantine, for example,

[51] Lepelley (1981) II.12–14. [52] Reddé (1978).

exempts them from personal taxes.[53] A century later, Augustine[54] was to describe the silversmiths' quarter (*vicus argentarius*) and the division of labour among the skilled workers who passed the vases from one to another for the various stages of production.[55] In this sector, too, no signs are to be seen of crisis or decline related to the impoverishment or departure of the clientele.

Prudence is therefore needed in drawing conclusions: the urban model undoubtedly suffered frequent and sometimes major ups and downs; it was an expensive system, which provoked envy and resistance on the part of those whose labour was exploited to maintain it, but overall it survived. The network of cities remained intact. Perhaps fewer new cities were founded, but none was abandoned. Some grew and were promoted, often thanks to imperial favours, or, more often, were restored after being destroyed. The main uncertainties relate to the impact of the civil wars and invasions. However, the towns continue to benefit from preferential investments (because of the prestige attached to them) by the emperors and the local élites, and because this structural factor is permanent, it is sufficient to sustain the overall dynamics of their economies and to make that an element in the regulation of the whole economy of the Roman world.

Among the questions raised is that of a possible change of attitude of the rich to their responsibilities with regard to redistribution. Put simply, does the patronage of the rich remain steady or decline? In Italy, there is a sharp drop in the number of private foundations in the second half of the third century, since the last inscription to mention one dates from 259,[56] and there is then a gap until 323.[57] The explanation for this phenomenon lies in the monetary instability of the period. As to the efforts of rich council members to avoid liturgies, they are well illustrated by a papyrus describing how, at Hermopolis in the reign of Gallienus, a former gymnasiarch does not allow himself to be flattered by other members of the *boule*, who acclaim him as *Okeane* ('ocean of generosity'), and prefers to exchange his property for that of another *bouleutes* in order to spare his son the duties of gymnasiarch (mainly to provide oil for the gymnasium).[58] The comparison that the father makes between the expense involved and the difference in value of the two fortunes reveals that the ideology of gift does not prevent people from making economic calculations. But should we go a stage further, as Broughton did,[59] and take as a sign of economic decline the fall in the number of inscriptions mentioning public benefactions of buildings and euergetistic foundations observed in Asia Minor? Arguments from silence,

[53] *CTh* XIII.4.2. [54] Augustine, *Civ. Dei* VII.4. [55] Baratte (1993) 211.
[56] *AE* 1979.140, from Fabrateria Vetus. [57] *ILS* 9420, from Feltre (Feltria).
[58] *Stud. Pal.* XX.54 (prev. *CPR* I.20 = *W.Chr.* 402) (A.D. 250); cf. Lewis (1997) 102 n. 70 (= 1st edn (1982) 104 n. 63); Drew-Bear (1997b) 128.
[59] Broughton (1938).

which are legitimate up to a point, in this case leave us in the realm of hypothesis.

All that remains is to examine the last aspect of the role of towns, or at least of some among them: in the organization and conduct of both short- and long-distance trade. Every town has its shops and markets. As consumer centres, they attract trade flows geared to supplying them with goods – whence the role of Ostia as the port of Rome, with its guilds of boatmen and merchants. But many other towns are also centres of activity and staging points in trade networks covering longer distances, above all by sea, but also by river and overland. Their prosperity is then closely tied to the dynamism of trade.

3. Trade, exchange and consumption

Land and sea routes, the movement of people, of agricultural and manufactured products, the spread and standardization of patterns and practice of consumption above and beyond regional differences, and the ideological and physical prerequisites for trade (starting with coinage) together define a genuine economic space. Even though this economic space is still divided into internal customs (*portoria*), it exists as a single entity by contrast with the world outside, with which the empire conducts a special kind of trade. This does not involve relationships between states, or 'trade treaties' – the only sign of a direct agreement between governments being the treaty made in 297 with Persia, establishing a single trading centre, the town of Nisibis, through which all imports and exports were obliged to pass.[60] Instead, trade relies on private contacts between merchants and transporters, without any official sanctions.

These contacts, which often predated Roman rule, are maintained and developed throughout the first centuries of the Christian era. Trade between very different and very distant worlds compared with Rome, such as non-Romanized Europe beyond the Rhine and Danube, the Indian ocean and central and eastern Asia, or the desert and semi-desert areas, remains too limited to a tiny range of goods to give rise to a real division of labour or to productive complementarities. Each space sells to the other the few unusual products that it finds intriguing, but which it could ultimately do without. Rome pays for some of this trade in its own coinage, and the examples found outside the frontiers reveal the extent of its 'foreign trade'.

In this sense, the Roman world is indeed a 'world-empire', to use I. Wallerstein's terminology, in which the levies from its subjects are supposed to pay for the operation and defence of the whole entity, but which, for the most part, supports itself and is not in economic competition with

[60] Petrus Patricius, *fr.* 14 (*FHG* IV.189).

any other state. It means that the Roman world is not part of a larger 'world-economy' that includes its main neighbours and trading partners. Yet, despite its size, it does not succeed in permanently becoming a truly autonomous 'world-economy', with its growth sustained by the initial stages of a rationalized system of production based on regional specializations and on trade governed by the 'law' of comparative advantage. Although this would have been in the interests of some of the parties concerned, the interventions of the state in economic activities remain too frequent and heavy-handed for anyone to make moves, however tentative, in that direction.

Consequently commercial relations are organized according to the actual logic of the Roman economy, working in favour of the towns and the army, which enjoy special attention – personalized in the inscriptions – from the political authorities. The city of Rome calls the tune, with priority in receiving the main bulk shipments of grain, oil and wine supplied for the benefit of its population (these are the best known, thanks to the archaeological record they left), luxury products (such as costly fabrics, spices and perfumes, pearls and precious stones) reserved for the ruling classes, and wild animals offered for the entertainment of the crowd in the games in the amphitheatre. In this way the capital determined a model of state-controlled economy under the direct responsibility of the emperor. This is based on three principal elements. First – the supply element – on requisitions, compulsory levies in kind or purchases at regulated prices. Second – the transport element – on contracts with shipowners (*navicularii*); the state pays for their services, gives them a privileged status within which to operate, listens to their complaints and does not hesitate to impose its judgement. This is the story told by the famous early third-century inscription about the *navicularii* of Arles found in Beirut and now in the Louvre.[61] The legislation from the period of the tetrarchs and Constantine strengthens control by the state over all the corporations in its service. Third – the distributive element – free distributions or sales at prices below the real cost of the goods. Such is the strength of the model that it is extended in the third century to new commodities (bread instead of grain, pork meat, wine), that provincial cities like Oxyrhynchus[62] emulate it for their own benefit, and that its main elements are applied as well to the new capital by Constantine.

Nevertheless, this regulated commerce also benefits other Mediterranean cities which, like Carthage, Alexandria or Antioch, combine administrative functions as provincial capitals with commercial activities, and with a more complex network of harbours and transit points on overland routes: not all goods are destined for Rome or pass through it, and the east increasingly

[61] *CIL* III.14165(8) = *ILS* 6987. [62] Rea (1972) = *P. Oxy.* XL.2892–2942.

trades directly with the west. Moreover, the Mediterranean's power of attraction, which draws towards its shores products from the periphery of the empire or from even further away (amber from the Baltic, silks from China, spices from the Indian ocean, perfumes from Arabia, wild beasts from Africa), is counterbalanced by other networks. The first of these, over short distances, provides most small and medium-sized towns with the products of their immediate territory. The second is centrifugal and oriented towards the frontier regions, where the empire has to maintain much of an army of 300,000–400,000 men, plus their families; their presence led to the creation of a string of cities on the *limes*, which use the Rhine and the Danube as lines of communication among themselves, but which also serve as the starting-points for trade with territories outside Roman rule and with neighbouring populations. The vigour of the border trade is illustrated by the systematic reference to the *commercium* elicited by mentions of the outermost parts of the empire. For example, an annotation on the Peutinger Map on the Parthian *limes* (south of the route from Hierapolis to Zeugma via Apamea) makes the link *fines exercitus syriaticae et conmertium barbarorum*. A later inscription (from the reign of Valentinian and Gratian) refers to a *burgus* on the Danube 'that bears the name of *commercium* because it was built for that purpose' (*burgus cui nomen commercium qua causa et factus est*).[63] In the caravan city of Palmyra bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Palmyrene – the latest one precisely dated to 257/8 – honour merchants who have brought their caravan (*synodia*) safely to their destination; they talk about the crossing of the steppe as far as, and from, Vologaesias and Spasinou Charax on the Euphrates, and the need to protect the caravan from *nomades*. Some merchants journeyed as far as Scythia (northwest India). Reliefs decorating sarcophagi of the first half of the third century show the leader of the caravan as well as the camel driver, but in addition to the camels, a sailboat is shown, perhaps suggesting that the journey was continued by sea. Recently discovered archives on papyrus bring to our notice, in particular, a man from Beth Phouraia, near the confluence of the Chabur and the Euphrates, who tells his son about hiring camels for a journey from Beroea (Alep) to Zeugma.[64]

Because the Roman empire is formed around the Mediterranean, the most visible and best documented part of its exchanges is conducted by sea, whence the temptation for historians to use shipwrecks to measure the relative importance of this trade. To judge from the histograms made by Parker,[65] trade in the Mediterranean might have been at a lower level in the third century than in the first and second centuries. The indicator is, however, open to criticism, and indeed has been challenged, because the distribution of known Mediterranean wrecks is much more a reflection of

[63] *CIL* III.3653. [64] Millar (1998) 119–36. [65] Parker (1992).

where underwater diving is common – in an area where there are large numbers of tourists, along the coasts of Italy, France, northern Spain and the islands of the western Mediterranean (Corsica, Sardinia, the Balearics) – than of the real pattern of maritime trade in antiquity. However, the indicator remains significant for the study in the course of time of a single trade route as, for instance, the one hugging the coastline of Liguria and Narbonensis.

There is no doubt that exchanges in all regions – in Italy, Gaul, Baetica, Egypt or Asia Minor – were greatly facilitated by the interchange between sea and river transport: hence precisely the growth observed at Arles (like Seville, located on the river itself and away from its mouth), which a fourth-century geographer readily describes as the port of Trier.[66] Everywhere, the slightest possibilities offered by watercourses were exploited, for floating logs down rivers or for navigation. The best-known river routes – especially through the guilds of *nautae* – are in fact the Saône/Rhône route, continued northwards by the Moselle and the Rhine, and westwards by the Seine. From this perspective, the indications of the range of transport costs given in the Prices Edict continue to attract the interest of historians, even if their validity is challenged by other scholars with good arguments. For the same distance, overland transport is alleged to be ten times more expensive than by river, and about sixty times more expensive than by sea.[67] Over short and medium distances, however, goods were also moved by chariot and above all by pack animals. The latter must have used 'mule tracks', but the chariots used the network of Roman roads (the *viae militares*) which had been built for the army and the imperial postal system. The roads cannot have been as unsuitable for chariots as suggested by the rhetor from Autun,[68] who strove to incite Constantine to pity, and they had the merit of being passable all year thanks to their stone surface and the bridges across rivers. But the chariots also followed the secondary road system made up of old tracks. Ever since the work of Lefebvre des Noëttes, there has been a misconception that Roman cartage was inferior to that of later periods because the Romans are supposed not to have known about the rigid horse-collar, which is allegedly another great medieval invention. Recent research has caused this view to be revised as it is now seen to be based on a partial investigation of the iconographic evidence, which is particularly abundant in northeast Gaul and along the Rhine and Danube, as well as on a misunderstanding of iconographic conventions. The neck yoke as well as the harnessing to a pole or between shafts is, on the contrary, well attested for equines.[69] In addition, recent studies emphasize – because of their relevance to daily life in peasant societies – all the references to donkey and mule drivers, but also to camel drivers, whose daily wages are indeed covered by the Prices Edict.

[66] *Expositio* 58. [67] Hopkins (1983) xx. [68] *Pan. Lat.* v(viii).7. [69] Molin (1991).

Goods sometimes had to be trans-shipped several times, as in the case of oil from Baetica. The oil is transported in skins by mule from the region of production to the Guadalquivir or its tributary, the Genil; there it is decanted into amphorae of Dressel type 20, made in the *figlinae* on the river banks, and taken by boat down the river as far as Seville, and finally loaded onto sea-going vessels to continue its journey from Seville. All of these operations are carried out in the spring, the season when the rivers are high and the sea 'open' to traffic.[70] River communications are not, however, essential: a high proportion of the wheat and oil from proconsular Africa, as well as the cereals from Sicily, is carried to the Mediterranean harbours by pack animals.

In general, the empire is self-sufficient and relies mainly on the ease and low cost of water transport to conduct its medium and long-distance trade. This is clear from a recent study of a product that has received little attention hitherto: alum.[71] Amphorae of the type Richborough 527, recently identified for the first time in the west of the empire, appear to have been manufactured in the Lipari islands and used to transport alum, which was extracted on these islands. But the empire also trades with the non-Roman world, and these exchanges seem to flow in two main directions. The first of these follows a variety of routes overland and by river to the north, into continental Europe, a region that supplies Rome's demand above all for men (slaves, but also soldiers), forest products and a luxury item like amber, for which merchants go as far as the shores of the Baltic. The second goes either via the Red Sea or overland by caravan, with one route providing a link with the Persian Gulf, to Arabia Felix (Yemen), India and southeast Asia, and the other crossing Central Asia, ultimately to China. Chinese sources record that in 166, a Roman merchant bringing 'presents' was received at the court of the Chinese emperor.[72]

This explains how Roman goods and coins came to be found, on the one hand, along the coasts of India, on the island of Ceylon, but also in central Afghanistan and as far away as Korea (where many items of Roman glass have been discovered, probably brought overland), and on the other, in northern Poland, Denmark and Scandinavia.[73] The products are not always the same ones. Bronze, silver- and glassware and ceramics are found everywhere, but large numbers of Roman swords turn up in northern Europe, which cannot have been acquired through pillage and booty from victories over other barbarians alone: some must have been obtained through trade, even though this may have been in the form of barter, rather than paid for in coin.[74] The imports from the Roman empire reflect the attraction that

[70] Sillières (1990) 754–6. [71] Borgard (1994) and (2001). [72] Ying-shih (1986) 460–2.

[73] Iluk (1985); Begley and De Puma (1991); Bopearachchi (1992); Berghaus (1991) and (1993); Callu (1993); Whittaker, *Frontiers*; Tchernia (1995) for an earlier period, the reign of Tiberius.

[74] Dabrowski and Kolendo (1972); Ilkjaer (1989); Corbier (1994).

the Mediterranean world exerted over the 'barbarians' and the great lure of booty in triggering the Germanic invasions. Recent extraordinary archaeological finds illustrate the nature of this booty, which will be discussed further below.

Despite the scale of this commerce and movement of goods, which ensure the permanence of the Roman model of consumption and spread it abroad, Roman society always affected a certain contempt for 'business'. The anonymous author of the *de Rebus Bellicis*[75] divides society into soldiers, landowners, peasants and merchants, which some scholars[76] take as evidence that the status of the *negotiator* is changing. If times have changed, it is above all because of the disappearance of a familiar figure from the periods immediately after the conquests: the Italian *negotiator* operating in the provinces, i.e. the merchant from the 'centre' who came to the 'periphery' and did not hesitate to exploit it. In our period, merchants are usually local men, though they may also come from further afield in the case of more exotic goods, brought by merchants from the producing countries or by specialized middlemen. This is the picture that emerges from honorific or funerary inscriptions and religious dedications, such as the altars dedicated to the goddess Nehalennia at Zierikzee in Zealand,[77] of *negotiatores* or *mercatores* which often specify the *origo* of the person concerned, the nature of the product (*negotiator olearius, vinarius, salarius, allecarius*, etc.) and sometimes where they traded (*Brittannicianus*). Evidence for the free movement of goods throughout the empire comes, for example, from the fact that in the late second and third centuries Syrian merchants and craftsmen settled in Lyon and there sold or made goods from their native province: a *barbaricarius*, embroiderer using gold and silver thread, whose speciality (also listed in the Prices Edict 20.5 and 7) is redolent of the east's reputation for luxuries of all kinds;[78] or, again, a man named Ioulianos Euteknios, is praised for having travelled frequently between his native city, Laodiceia in Syria, and Lyon, the centre of his trading activities in the west, and for having brought the Celts all the gifts 'of the eastern land rich in produce'.[79] But these merchants and craftsmen also dealt in goods from other Gallic provinces, such as Aquitania.[80] As for the *negotiator Laudecenarius* (= *Laodicenarius*) of Lyons,[81] he probably imported textiles: wool if he was from Laodicea in Phrygia,[82] linen if he was from Syria.

The free movement of people and goods confirms that the empire is an economic space based not only on levies made by the ruling classes and the state and military officials, but also on commercial exchange. The

[75] *de Reb. Bell. pr.* [76] E.g. Callu (1993) 524.
[77] *AE* 1973.362–80; 1975.641–56; 1983.720–2. See now Stuart and Bogaers (2001).
[78] *CIL* XIII.1945 = *ILS* 7591. [79] *AE* 1975.614 = 1981.644; *Bull. Ép.* (1976) 800 (= *IGF* 143).
[80] *CIL* XIII.2448 (= *IGF* 141). [81] *CIL* XIII.2003.
[82] The most probable according to Rougé (1978) 61.

state-controlled trade accounts for only a part of its internal exchanges. But the trade flows do reflect the internal hierarchies within this space: the centre produced and exported 'Mediterranean commodities' (wine, oil) and craft products, whereas the periphery, especially the north, was expected to provide raw materials and ores; the other contrast was between the more recently developed west and the Near East, which had been urbanized much earlier, produced and exported high-value manufactured goods and luxury goods, and benefited from a long tradition of exchange with neighbouring regions, in particular with Asia of the monsoon and, more recently, China, that the wars for control of Mesopotamia or with the Parthians and Sassanians had never managed to disrupt entirely. Most of these internal hierarchies are maintained in the third century, with some regional exceptions that prefigure the trade patterns of medieval Europe, such as northeastern Gaul and the Po valley.

Our knowledge of this economy is far from complete, and the signs we have are often contradictory and hard to fit into an overall explanation. Our information is patchy and skewed. Exchanges are easier to examine than production and, for commerce, we know more about imports and consumption than exports. As J.-P. Morel has observed (1995), it is easier to analyse the provenance of products found at one site than the distribution of a single product across hundreds of sites around the Mediterranean basin and its sometimes extensive hinterland. The existence of local specialisms, known and appreciated in distant regions, suggests that there was at least a minimum amount of economic information necessary for an economy based on quality to function: for example, regional food specialities enhancing the image of products from livestock farming or fishing (Messapian hams, salt fish from the coast of Lusitania along the estuaries of the Tagus and the Sado). Sometimes it is the workers who travel rather than the products: this is true of the itinerant skilled stonemasons who came from Nicomedia, Aphrodisias and elsewhere, and whose activities would explain the similarities observed in many architectural programmes of the second and third centuries (marble bases, capitals and columns of marble or coloured stones). From the end of the third century onwards, the use of porphyry in sculpture (the group statue of the tetrarchs, Helena's sarcophagus) and architectural decoration (the arch of Constantine in Rome) appears to have been associated increasingly with the imperial ideology – like purple for garments. At the beginning of the fourth century a new type of revetment made of coloured marble inlay starts to be used to decorate the walls of high-class interiors in place of wall paintings.[83]

Conversely, whenever prestige is a factor, a different logic prevails and the Roman economy seems to operate with a total disregard for costs. For example, a part of the production of the quarries (which are included in

[83] Pensabene (1986) and (1994); Sodini (1989).

the imperial estates) is used by the emperor himself for his own building projects (such as the porphyry columns of Aurelian's temple of the Sun) or else presented by him to the cities (Lepcis Magna is alleged to have received supplies of marble from Proconnesus). But if the practice of farming operated for the quarries as for the mines (the only ones for which we have information) some opportunities may nonetheless have remained for private enterprise.[84] In the reign of Gallienus, the council at Hermopolis is thus able to make one of its members responsible for obtaining revetments in porphyry and other stones, as we know from the claim by the man in question to be reimbursed 'five silver talents in new money' for the cost and shipment of the plaques.[85]

Craft and manufactured products belong in the same category of economic transactions stimulated by local demand rather than by prestige or decisions of the emperor. This leads to the geographical diversification of production. Often, the first imports encourage regional output, as in the case of glass, a speciality of Syria, where techniques of glass-blowing had been perfected since the first century B.C.; by the third century, glass manufacturing is as well developed in Egypt as in the Rhineland (Cologne was famous for its vases with glass paste decoration). Ceramics provide the best illustration of the spread of production to new areas, with the rapid growth of provincial workshops, which had taken over from the classic Arretine ware in Gaul from the first century onwards. In each case, the geographical expansion creates new markets for products which no longer have to bear high transport costs, so that some of them eventually become in turn recognized specialities and exports. Once again, Gaul in the second and third centuries provides a typical example of 'import substitution', with sarcophagi first imported then produced locally, partly in response to a cultural factor – the spread of inhumation. The prestige of marble sarcophagi from Roman and Attic workshops generated a flow of imports of these expensive items, which in turn gave rise from the years 160–80 onwards to the creation and growth of a provincial industry, the type most commonly produced being the chest with *tabula ansata*.[86] The lead sarcophagi found in Gaul with decoration based on Syrian models would have a similar explanation. In both cases the raw material used – limestone, lead – was local. Conversely, the taste of buyers in distant regions might influence local production, such as, according to the specialists, the sarcophagi and Ionic capitals carved to the Italian taste in Thasos in the third and fourth centuries.[87]

Textiles (made mainly of wool or flax) have left behind fewer traces and remain the great mystery. Interest in them has now been revived[88]

[84] Sodini (1989) 169–70; Fant (1993). [85] *Stud. Pal.* v.86 (*C.P.Herm.* 1.86 = *W.Chr.* 195).
[86] According to unpublished research by Robert Turcan. [87] Sodini (1989).
[88] See for instance, Labarre and Le Dinahet (1996) and, after several studies of the author, Pleket (1998).

because of the comparison between antiquity and the Middle Ages (in which the key role played by textiles has long been studied) related to the debate about Max Weber's 'consumer city'. In the Roman world, sheep were raised everywhere and flax was cultivated in many regions. While it is not possible to evaluate the proportion of domestic manufacturing vis-à-vis production marketed over short or long distances, local specialities are listed in the Prices Edict: for wool or woollen garments Modena, Tarento, Altino, Laodicea in Phrygia, Astorga, Aria, Arras, Canosa.[89] Yet nothing can be said about the role played by the cities just mentioned in production: is all or part of the work of spinning, weaving and so on done in the rural areas while the cities take care of sales, or are the main stages of production carried out in the cities? Two African cities possess architectural complexes called at Cuicul (in the 360s) *basilica vestiaria*[90] and at Timgad (at an unknown date) *forum vestiarium adiutricianum*,[91] interpreted as cloth markets: yet were these goods imported or locally produced and in the latter case sold to be exported?

Linen is made in many parts of Egypt and in the province of Asia; there is evidence of a highly skilled workforce at Tralles, Miletus and Aphrodisias, where the salutation addressed by a dead emporiarch to the guild of linenworkers and to passers-by tells us that there was a market for linen cloth in this last city.[92] The availability of murex and the possibility of procuring high quality cloth from the cities of Syria made Tyre a centre for purple-dyeing. The most expensive fabric in Diocletian's list – purple-dyed silk (*metaxablattē*), with a maximum price of 150,000 *denarii* per pound – combined two scarce items: a rare dye and an imported product.[93] Also imported were the silk and fine cotton garments that rich residents of Palmyra are shown wearing on their tombs; some fragments have in fact been found on the best-preserved bodies. Analyses of the dyes show that the silks (in strips roughly 20 cm wide) were woven in China. But this passion for silk also stimulated imitations of its patterns in locally produced woollens.[94]

In the course of two centuries the fashions in clothing changed as a result of the greater possibilities offered by sewing rather than simply draping fabrics, in particular the switch to wearing sleeved garments with borders of coloured cloth and trousers. In contrast with the medieval and modern periods, in which furs have until recently been a symbol of wealth and status (whereas leather clothing is a sign of low social status, expensive wools having always been the social marker), in antiquity the wearing of *pelles* (skins of sheep, goats and wild animals) is associated with primitive people, whether barbarians or shepherds. The change occurred later,

[89] *PE* chs. 19, 21 and 25. [90] *CIL* VIII.20156. [91] *AE* 1909.4. [92] Reynolds (1995a).
[93] *PE* chs. 24.1a and 13. [94] Schmidt-Colinet *et al.* (1999).

between the fourth and sixth centuries, when Goths joined the military hierarchy.[95]

Among the novelties of the tetrarchic period is the creation of state workshops, long considered to be a sign of economic state control. The goods produced were intended for the soldiers and 'officials' that the emperor was responsible for maintaining. According to the *Notitia Dignitatum* there were thirty-five establishments spread across the whole empire which included workshops for spinning (*gynaecia*, *linyphia*) and dyeing (*baphia*),[96] and weapons factories (*fabricae*). Far from being an innovation, these weapons factories might in fact merely have been the successors of an earlier state enterprise, that of the Roman legions, this view becoming the new *communis opinio*.[97] Leather, despite being important for the army's needs, is not included in the list, but its great variety of uses must have meant that processing skins was an activity found in most places, though little is known about it. One of the exceptions is a caravan city like Palmyra, where the water skins for loading on camels were prepared; the skins were also used as floats for the rafts that sailed down the Euphrates from Vologaesias to the Persian Gulf.[98]

All this information, albeit fragmentary and often contradictory, confirms the enormous complexity of the Roman economy and allows us to address better the problem of the geographical unity or diversity of the empire. There is no doubt that the political framework, the coinage, the network of levies and redistributions, the provisioning of Rome and the army, overland, sea-borne and foreign trade contributed to creating some forms of global solidarity between the various provinces. This interdependance encouraged the rulers to adopt economic measures officially valid for the whole of the empire – like the Prices Edict – but that recognized that prices might vary considerably from one region to another. These price differences reflected in part the impact of transport costs: the price of wheat, and therefore the cost of living and wage levels, was inevitably higher in Rome than in Egypt, wine was more expensive on the German frontier than on the shores of the Mediterranean, and so on. But the differences also probably reflected the disparities between most advanced regions, which were most monetized and most expensive, and others living more in the framework of an economy where most of the payments were in kind. Both these phenomena must have operated, though it is impossible to say whether the two were linked.

Long-distance trade presumably involved only a limited range of goods in limited quantities: mainly wheat, oil, wine, garum and salt fish, ores, marbles and coloured stones, fine wares, high-quality textiles and luxury products. Yet they could alter local consumption patterns, as is shown by

[95] Kolendo (1999). [96] Wild (1976). [97] See James (1988). [98] Teixidor (1984) 87–8.

the story of garum. This fish sauce is used as a condiment and one of its most desirable varieties is made from mackerel (*scomber*); it is a marker of Roman culture throughout the Roman west, and especially in the army camps from Britain to the Danube. Its use also spreads from the third century onwards to Egypt, where it was not produced in the massive quantities that would have been expected, given the abundance of fish in Egypt, but the sales by *garopolai* do appear to have satisfied a genuine demand.[99] Again in Egypt at about the same time, wine starts to compete with the traditional local drink, beer; the price of wine rises steadily, perhaps because of an increase in demand.[100] The Prices Edict reflects how far certain luxury goods (spices, ointments, perfumes and products for medical use) have become commonplace: in 301 the maximum prices quoted for these products, compared with the rest, are well below what they had been in the time of Pliny the Elder, thanks to the growth of imports but also the production of substitutes within the empire.[101]

Nevertheless, the basic unit of economic life remains the city, wherever it exists. This unit comprises the main town and its territory, in which secondary settlements might be located – the precise arrangements vary considerably from one region to another. Some regional areas could thus be essentially self-sufficient: this is the topic investigated by Fentress (1990) for the inland city of Sétif in Numidia, and S. Mitchell derives the same impression from his study of Anatolia.[102] There are doubtless many other examples. Most of the food shortages affected only limited areas, whence the thanks and the esteem expressed in inscriptions for public benefactors whose euergetism, like that of the emperor in Rome, had made it possible to come through a crisis, beautify the city, build or restore its monuments or amenities.

At a higher level, disparities did not fail to develop between provinces. Some, like Africa, Syria or northeast Gaul (except during the invasions), show every sign of prosperity in the third century. Others, like mainland Greece and the islands, continue on the contrary to decline. To be near to the frontier, with the opportunities it provided for trade with the outside world and the presence of the army, was without doubt an advantage. The relative ease with which it was possible, in the second half of the century, to divide the empire among several rival emperors or joint rulers without shattering the bonds between the various regions indicates simultaneously the strength of the overall framework, counterbalanced by powerful centrifugal forces, and the recurring temptation to base political power on a less vast, but perhaps more coherent, grouping of provinces.

[99] Drexhage (1993).
[100] Rathbone (1997).
[101] Corbier (1985b).
[102] Mitchell, *Anatolia* 1.243–58.

II. THE STATE AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE ECONOMY IN THE 'LONG' THIRD CENTURY: PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION

1. The uses of coinage: expansion or contraction?

The third century saw the first documented experience of inflation in the history of Europe. Its phases – the issues of debased coins achieved either by reducing the weight and the fineness of the coinage or by artificially raising the face values – have been described in the previous chapter. But the effects this had on the economy are far from obvious, and historians have been inclined sometimes to condemn them as disastrous, sometimes to minimize the consequences by stressing the speed of adjustments, or sometimes to see them in a positive light, arguing that inflation stimulated both price rises and consumption and therefore also encouraged production. For all three points of view, prices are crucial.

However, our knowledge of prices is poor. For the Roman period we do not have at our disposal data comparable to commodity price lists. The few examples of grain prices that are known for the first and second centuries are more often than not atypical because they are linked to shortages; at least they give an officially fixed price of 1 *denarius* for a bushel of wheat (an Italian *modius* of about 8 litres). Even for Egypt, the province that has provided (with Palestine to a lesser degree)[103] most of our information on this subject, we have no series of prices, just random examples of prices, mainly for wheat, barley, oil, wine, slaves and donkeys. Recent studies have identified two periods of relatively stable prices from the end of the first century to about 160, then from the 190s to the 270s, separated by two periods of increase: of 178 per cent for the price of wheat and 200 to 255 per cent for wine between 160 and 190, then a tenfold rise around 274.[104] The Prices Edict,[105] promulgated at Nicomedia at the end of 301, records a set of officially fixed prices for a range of foodstuffs, raw materials and craft products, wages and transport costs. The accompanying edict of the governor Fulvius Asticus, known from the fragment found at Aezani,[106] mentions 'fair prices' (*timai dikaiai*), which makes specific and even goes beyond the notion of *modus*, the maximum price, the only one referred to in the preface of the Edict (*modum statuendum esse censuimus*).

Clearly we have very patchy information about the different variables in Fisher's equation which links price levels to money supply (money stock multiplied by velocity of circulation) and the marketed part of the global output. To apply this equation, a modern economic descriptor, to ancient

[103] Sperber (1991) ch. 15.

[104] Rathbone (1996). For a similar observation, see Johnson (1950) 158 ('inflation in prices quoted in terms of the fiduciary currency suddenly became acute during Aurelian's reign').

[105] Giacchero, *Edictum Diocletiani*; Crawford and Reynolds (1977) and (1979); Reynolds (1989).

[106] Crawford and Reynolds (1975); Lewis (1991–2). See now *AE* 1997.1443.

economies, as Roman historians often do, is a questionable exercise. Only a part (hard to estimate, but probably a minor one) of the output actually passed through the market; the rest was used for subsistence, for transactions in kind or short-range exchange, etc. In thinking about the problem it is very important to analyse these two aspects of production. If Roman historians have tended to focus on the volume of coinage issued and the fineness of the coins, they have been much less concerned with the relationship between monetized economy and non-monetized economy. It seems to be essential, on the contrary, to stress this distinction, in order then to investigate the relationships that developed between the two sectors in practice: does the latter avoid being influenced by the former, and if so, does it provide shelter from the fluctuations of the monetized economy, or is it, too, affected by all its upheavals?

For Egypt, which had its own closed monetary system until 296, historians have tried to find connections between the periods of price rises, that have long been known, and the quantities of goods available for cash in the market and the vicissitudes of the tetradrachm (massive issues and/or debasement).[107] New explanations have been suggested: the first increase might be linked to the Antonine plague that struck Egypt between 166/7 and the 170s, as well as to the unrest that affected the Delta at that time, whereas the second might be linked to a hypothetical but probable repricing of the Egyptian tetradrachm contemporary with the reform of Aurelian in 274.[108]

For the rest of the empire, the price rise justified the measure intended to stop it: the Prices Edict. Its preface presents soldiers as the prime victims of this increase: 'a single purchase is enough to deprive them of their *stipendium* and their *donativum*'. Which suggests that the state is concerned with only a part (a part crucial in maintaining the stability of its power) of the monetized economy, which itself is only a part of the whole Roman economy. But are soaring prices, which the emperors attributed to the *avaritia* of grabbers, the consequence of the Currency Edict promulgated three months earlier, which doubled the face values at least of some coins, as suggested by Callu? Or are the two edicts a coherent response to price rises?

There can be no doubt that the devaluation caused violent economic and social upheavals. But as far as prices are concerned, the adjustment appears to have occurred quite gradually over the long term, although with disparities that would make it possible, if we knew what they were, to measure how fast information circulated in the Roman economy and what was the confidence of the inhabitants of the empire in the coinage struck by the authorities. This was at least this author's conclusion after comparing

[107] E.g. Callu, *Politique monétaire*.
[108] Rathbone (1996) 337 and (1997) 215; Lo Cascio (1997) 168.

the main prices in the Edict of 301 with the prices usually taken to be representative of the first century.[109] Even if Rathbone found the indices I proposed spurious,[110] the method remains valid. It is a normal statistical test, used to check the co-variation of a set of figures, and it is a legitimate purpose of statistical studies to develop a sound model even if the actual figures are uncertain. Compared with gold, the prices of basic foods (wheat and oil) and wages remained stable. This adjustment, which some scholars have challenged, is hardly surprising in a society without technical changes in agriculture, mining, craft production, transport by land or sea. In so far as the empire had to have a means of storing value in coins – a role now assumed by gold – alongside a means of paying for *commercia vilia* – a role now left to *aes* – the prices of the main everyday goods and services had to come into line over the long term with the reference prices of the precious metals, themselves linked to their production cost as well as to the social demand and supply to which they were subject.

The upheavals affected different social and occupational groups unequally, and they all developed their own defensive strategies. The rich protected themselves from the debasement of the coinage by hoarding: many savings hoards are known from the third century, containing coins (notably coins mounted as jewellery), jewellery and silverware. They were also able to take advantage of inflation, which raised the prices of their produce and the revenues of their lands.

The disappearance of professional financiers (*argentarii* and *coactores argentarii*) observed in Italy during the latter half of the third century might be attributed to monetary instability.[111] On the other hand, the transformation of the monetary system (i.e. the shift to gold) led to an increase in the numbers of moneychangers (*nummularii*, *collectarii*), who bought and sold gold coins and tested coins for fineness.

The entire system of credit was also affected by the uncertainties created by the devaluation, which undermined the value and conditions of loans and their repayment. Roman society was accustomed to loans with interest, which the church banned for the clergy from the beginning of the fourth century. The legal rate was fixed at 1 per cent per month (due on the kalends), i.e. 12 per cent per year. Moreover, the burden of debts was a serious problem at all levels of society. A moving story tells us about Pamonthios, a wine merchant in the time of Constantine, who had to borrow a large sum of money to meet his liturgical obligations and was then obliged by his creditors to sell all his goods, whereas his children were forced into slavery to pay off the debt.[112] This lets us see the impact on an individual, which the papyrological evidence allows more often than inscriptions. But the

[109] Corbier (1985b). [110] Rathbone (1996) 321. [111] Andreau (1994) 201.
[112] *P. Lond.* VI.1916, republished by Tibiletti (1979) no. 23.

story reveals less about the misfortunes of the period than it does about the unbearable burden of non-voluntary euergetism forced on the upper classes for the purpose of taxation.

At all periods, inflation normally has the effect of reducing the burden of debts. This must also have benefited peasants: the weight of their debts in the second century (a time of monetary stability) and the early third century can be discerned from the new emphasis on *reliqua colonorum* in the fragments of Scaevola and Papinian recorded in the *Digest*. The first victims of inflation might have been the landowners, of whom Columella[113] had said much earlier that a reasonable amount of debt – neither too much nor too little – was both necessary and desirable in order to have a 'hold' on their peasants.[114] They were able to retort by making the debt payable in kind, in sacks of wheat and amphorae of wine. But in this way they lost the ability to take advantage of the differences in prices between bad years (when the peasants' debts increased) and good (when they repaid their debts). Even if peasants were tied to their land for fiscal reasons (the first recorded arrangements date from the reign of Constantine, but make it clear that measures had been taken earlier), landowners could also use this fact as a legal constraint in these circumstances to keep a workforce that might otherwise run away.

By contrast, inflation appears to have had contradictory effects on the uses of coinage and on the degree of monetization of the Roman economy. If more coins, though with lower purchasing power, circulated more widely and more rapidly, this would have worked in favour of a greater use of coinage by larger levels of the population, while 'good' coins were used only by the rich. Yet rising prices might also have led to a preference for payments and levies in kind, as a hedge against inflation. As for the effects of relying on gold as a means of payment and a yardstick for taxes, these could have been deflationary, if gold was too scarce and its use too limited to the wealthiest strata of the population. Hence the need to gather it in and redistribute it, as shown by the image of the *sparsio*[115] for which Constantine was precisely blamed.

This discussion about the economic uses of coinage raises the first of a series of problems of interpreting the particular circumstances of the long third century – a matter that continues to divide specialists of late antiquity. The principal problems relate to the consequences of war, the widening social gap between rich and poor, the importance of slave labour, and the social and legal changes affecting the peasantry. To these should be added the alterations to the spatial dimensions of the Roman economy.

[113] Columella, 1.7.2. [114] Corbier (1981). [115] Alföldi (1963) pl. 21, no. 256; *De Reb. Bell.* 11.

2. *Other principal problems of interpretation*

(a) War

How deeply was the Roman economy affected in the third century by invasions, civil and foreign wars? And if it did suffer, how quickly and easily did it recover, and what lasting changes resulted?

The scale of the destruction caused by barbarian incursions and by the public disturbances that occurred when a new ruler seized power are hard to assess. Even though at Noyon in northern France a hoard containing several pieces of silverware and jewels came to light in a destruction level dated to the 260s,[116] the historians of Gaul no longer automatically link such evidence of fire and coin hoards buried in the second half of the third century to German invasions. New information is now shedding light on the effects of these raids, which were common in the 260s and 270s. An inscription from Augsburg set up on 11 September, probably in the year 260, recounts a battle on 24 and 25 April in which Germanic people called Iuthungi or Semnones were defeated, apparently as they returned from a raid into Italy, bringing with them several thousand prisoners.[117] Objects recently found when an old bed of the Rhine was dredged have been identified as the booty from an 'Alamannic' (?) raid in the second half of the third century, which appears to have pillaged an estate – perhaps in Champagne, since the stolen tools suggest a region where there were vines, forests and sheep-rearing – from which the owner had fled, taking his most precious possessions with him. Carts that sank in the Rhine near Neupotz (Kreis Gemersheim, in Rhineland-Palatinate) were laden with over 700 kg of metal objects, mainly items that could be used in the *barbaricum*: cooking utensils, farm equipment, tools for cultivating vines and for smithing. At nearby Hagenbach, more booty was found in the Rhine, this time silverware pillaged from Aquitania: 128 silver votive plaques stolen from one or more sanctuaries; thirty-four of the plaques were inscribed, and these inscriptions provide clues to their provenance (twenty names of dedicands sound non-Roman and are typical of the onomastics from the French Pyrenean piedmont, where there were several large sanctuaries to Mars, the god to whom the plaques are dedicated).[118]

The impact of pillagers could be more lasting when fire destroyed a site so thoroughly that it was abandoned temporarily or permanently. From a wider perspective, the observed stoppage of the production of Attic sarcophagi has been attributed to the Herulian invasions of the Aegean provinces around 260,[119] though this hypothesis is not yet confirmed by the archaeological evidence.

[116] Baratte (1993) 23. [117] *AE* 1993.1231. [118] See Künzl (1993) and Callu (1995).
[119] Sodini (1989).

The conflicts between rival contenders for the empire raise similar problems of interpretation. Although the destruction, pillaging and confiscation have obvious effects in the short term, the long-term impact is harder to assess. After his victory over Licinius, Constantine finally decided to make Byzantium his capital, whereas the apparent decline of Lyons is often linked to the defeat of the supporters of Clodius Albinus. But the 'prosperity' of the Severan period has been attributed to the return to circulation of the money confiscated from the defeated rivals of Septimius, and it is argued that this, combined with the effects of the devaluation, stimulated trade.

However, the cost of war and defence is more lasting than the raids of invading barbarians and pillagers or the civil wars, and has a more profound impact on the empire's economy. The defence of the frontiers and a series of military campaigns with a variety of outcomes (especially in the east against the Parthians, then the Sassanians, who now turn into assailants) incur enormous expenditures and mobilize huge resources in terms of men, materials, food supplies, weapons, means of transport, as well as money, which an increasingly illusory booty is never enough to cover. After a century and a half of relative peace, punctuated by a few campaigns in Germany, Britain and Dacia, the empire returned to being almost permanently at war from the reign of Marcus Aurelius onwards. In addition to the taxes and levies demanded of them, the regions at the 'rear' do their bit. The ordinary passage of Roman troops could descend into pillage, as the residents of the provinces complained, for example in Bithynia after Elagabalus' soldiers had spent the winter there in 218/19,[120] or in Cappadocia after Valerian's army had passed through in 252.[121]

(b) A widening social gap?

While the categories of 'rich' and 'poor' were not unknown in a society that classified people above all by a combination of their legal status (free or slaves, citizens or non-citizens, senators and equestrians) and their wealth, it is interesting to observe the very occasional economic definition of 'poverty' by the jurist Hermogenianus at the end of the third century:[122] for this contemporary of Diocletian, the poor are those who possess less than 50 *aurei* (at that time, less than a pound of gold).

It would appear from simple observation of reports of daily life that the gap between the social classes had widened. Luxury spread among the upper classes, and it was no longer limited to women (their jewellery has survived in hoards). The court ceremonial plays a part in this: typical is the diadem of pearls and precious stones that Constantine wears for the first time when Constantinople is founded.[123] However, according to

[120] Dio, LXXIX.4.5. [121] Zos. 1.36. [122] *D* XLVIII.210. [123] Dagron, *Naissance* 25.

Zonaras,[124] Diocletian had already been sprinkling his clothes and shoes with gold and gems years earlier. The wealth of the élite is reflected both in the adornment of their homes, in town and country, and also in the scale and the decoration of their sarcophagi and the mausolea that contain them. The *domus* in town and the *villae* in the country (which are sometimes built like palaces) are paved with magnificent colourful mosaics conveying the iconographic messages of high status, such as hunting or country life, or in more intimate vein, the dressing of the *domina*, as in the late African mosaics of the 'Dominus Iulius' found in a villa in the neighbourhood of Carthage.[125] The villa at Piazza Armerina in Sicily is one of the most complete examples, whoever the original owner was and whenever it was built in the early fourth century.[126] Far from seeing these country houses as a sign that the élite had retreated to their estates, recent research argues that they reflect the pursuit of an ideal that goes back to Pliny the Younger: spending time in both the town and the country.

The other extreme, the poor, is much less accessible. For our period, we lack specific descriptions comparable to the writings of St Augustine, who gives an account of pitiful situations in early fifth-century Africa. Consequently the debate has tended to concentrate on labour (slave and free) and the phenomenon of the 'colonate'.

(c) Free workers and slaves

Roman historians have become cautious about the explanatory models that were still acceptable not long ago. Among them was the hypothesis that slave labour had become increasingly scarce, which was then supposed to have encouraged both technological change and the development of a new institution, the 'colonate'. Hence the dating of the building of the mills at Barbegal to the end of the third century led Fernand Benoit to link the construction of the complex to the decline of slavery:[127] the recourse to 'machines' was seen as a substitute for a supposedly cheap human workforce. The mills would have been imperial property and were thought to have ground grain brought to Arles along the Rhône, the flour being destined for the troops and the local population. The new dating, associated with the contributions of a micro-regional environmental study which revealed the existence of a cereal-growing area near Arles, gives rise to different interpretations: since it is now accepted that the grain was grown locally and that the mills were operating in the second and third centuries, Philippe Leveau has argued (1996) that they were a municipal enterprise to provide

[124] Zon. XII.31; cf. Aur. Vict. *Caes*. XXXIX.2.; Eutr. IX.26.
[125] Blanchard-Lemée *et al*. (1995) 169–72, figs. 120–1 and 162–3, fig. 116.
[126] Carandini *et al*. (1982); for the debate, see *Opus* 2 (1983) 535–602.
[127] Benoit (1940–5).

flour for the city of Arles; others argue that they were built and used jointly by several neighbouring *villae*.[128]

Nobody today doubts that slaves were extremely numerous until the end of antiquity, for – apart from conquest, which was now a thing of the past – the sources of supply were plentiful (reproduction, trade in men and women purchased or captured within the empire or abroad, exposure of new-borns, sale of children, voluntary enslavement by the persons themselves). Slaves remained the main type of household servant, but did their numbers in agriculture decline? In order to hypothesize a fall in the number of rural slaves in the third century and to impute decisive consequences to it, slaves would have to have been the basis of the rural economy of the Roman empire in the first and second centuries – which was not the case. Large-scale farms using mainly slave labour seem to have been concentrated in a few regions at certain specific (and relatively short) periods; they were never a general nor a permanent phenomenon.

The evidence about rural workers tells us more about groups than about individuals, although sometimes funerary inscriptions allow us to glimpse a person and, in rare cases, full life histories close to autobiography: as a result, some examples, traditionally dated to the third century, have become famous, even if the stories they tell are not necessarily representative. Slaves and freedmen are known above all from the staff responsible for managing and supervising estates: the land agent (*procurator*) and the bailiff (in the third century called *actor* rather than *vilicus*), and the slaves who had relatively specialized duties, such as shepherd (*pastor*), field guard (*saltuarius*), etc. Among the well-attested groups of free labourers are the tenants or lessees of small or medium-sized farms on the large estates – the *coloni* – as well as seasonal agricultural hired hands. On the large imperial and private estates in Africa from the second to the fifth centuries, the status of 'Mancian' *colonus* (sharecropper) gives its holder the right to possess and bequeath to his descendants in perpetuity the plots of land on which he has planted olive trees, vines or fruit trees, in return for one third of the crop once the planting has begun to bear fruit (after ten years, in the case of the olive tree). For private landowners, and even more for the emperor, relying on free peasants who are obliged to make payments in kind has many advantages: once the labour force is settled permanently on the land, this reduces the investment required, the costs of maintenance, management and supervision, and the current expenditures in cash, and also secures revenues in kind or products that could be sold for an amount equivalent or fairly close to the rent paid by a farmer or to the profit expected of a direct management.

[128] Bellamy and Hitchner (1996).

Not only is non-slave labour widely attested, but it is central to activities that open up flattering advancement up the social scale. For example, the anonymous 'harvester of Mactar', a small property owner who managed to acquire an estate and became a civic magistrate, had started out as the overseer of teams of day labourers (some of whom might have been, it is true, slaves leased out by their owners), as he boasted in his verse epitaph;[129] the same was perhaps true of Vespasian's paternal great-grandfather, who took seasonal workers from Umbria into Sabina.[130] In the region of Mateur, the *agricola* from Biha Bilta was, on the contrary, a private contractor (*conductor*) of a large private estate, the *fundus Aufidianus*, which he had brought back into cultivation by installing technical improvements (a well, a collecting tank?) and planting an olive grove, an orchard and vines, where he was buried, leaving no debts (*pariator*), an achievement valued by lessees.[131] He is a good example of the higher ranks of the *conductores*, who are also property owners, and who are responsible for much of the economic activity in the countryside, producing, looking after and selling crops. The named beneficiaries of the arrangements to share water to irrigate olive groves at Lamasba[132] are classed as small landowners by modern scholars.

(d) Land and the peasants' legal and social status

It is widely accepted that three changes occur during our period. For landed property, the imperial estates appear to have grown significantly. For the leasing of large estates, the tacit renewal of five-year *locatio–conductio* leases and, especially on the imperial estates, the use of emphyteutic contracts resulting in *de facto* permanent *possessio* would have had the effect of tying peasant farmers to their land. This stabilization, in addition to its positive consequences, would have brought about the third change, by making the *coloni* much more dependent on the landowners.[133] This last point warrants further discussion.

Arrangements tying small tenants and lessees to their estate of origin are in fact first attested with the force of law in the constitution of 332 mentioned above. This constitution does not present the obligation as an innovation but underlines three main points. First, owners are obliged to return to their *origo* any *colonus* who belongs to someone else (*iuris alieni*) and is found on their land and to pay the capitation tax for him for the period they had the use of him. Second, in order to protect the state's fiscal interests (the purpose behind the whole text), no *colonus* could be exempt from the payment of the capitation. Third, owners and peasants are to be treated quite differently, since the former are not to be punished or fined (apart from having to pay the capitation), whereas if the peasants

[129] *CIL* VIII.11824 = *ILS* 7457. [130] Suet. *Vesp*. 1. [131] *AE* 1975.883.
[132] *CIL* VIII.18587; see above n. 20. [133] In general see Rosafio (1991) and Marcone (1988).

'meditate flight', they should be 'bound with chains and reduced to a servile condition, so that by virtue of the condemnation to slavery, they shall be compelled to fulfil the duties that befit free men'.[134]

This text may be compared with earlier ones that make the permanent settlement of the *coloni* on an estate the basis for a special bond with the owner, whether that is a private individual or the emperor. The preference of both Columella and the wealthy Volusius Saturninus for the *coloni indigenae . . . et tanquam in paterna possessione nati*[135] is echoed in the request by the peasants of the *saltus Burunitanus*, who remind Commodus that they are *rustici tui vernulae et alumni saltuum tuorum* ('your peasants, born and bred on your estates').[136] In the 'grievances' that they present to the emperor about the abuses of the *conductores*, or of the agents of the tax collectors, peasants on imperial estates readily use the threat of running away as a means of persuading him to intervene on their behalf. The short-term interests of the lessees, concerned to increase their returns, are therefore at variance with the long-term interests of the landowners to hold onto their own peasants and, if possible, to attract others. The texts from immediately after our period confirm this impression of a 'hunt' for *coloni*, whom landowners – including the emperor, who increasingly makes decisions and judgements in his own favour – try to tie down on their estates and to protect from every external pressure and enticement. Constantine, for example, forbids 'his peasants' (*coloni nostri*) capable of keeping accounts or cultivating the land to work for private employers.[137] In 342 Constantius responds to a demand from individuals who referred to the *ius colonatus* in support of their claims to the privileges of the *res privata* and their refusal of the *munera* of the *curiales* (members of a city council) by confirming this exemption for all *coloni* who possess more than 25 *iugera* and in addition rent land on the imperial estates to grow their own crops.[138] In all three cases, the *coloni* concerned are not 'poor peasants' but small agricultural entrepreneurs, sometimes themselves owners of land, who lease and cultivate land on imperial estates. In 364, on the other hand, the *coloni* and *servi* on those estates are placed on the same footing: their sons and grandsons are forbidden to undertake other *officia* (civilian jobs) or to stay in the army, regardless of any oath they have sworn;[139] they are to be 'returned' to their estates. In 365 it is the status of the mother, if she is *inquilina nostrae domus*, that (as for the slaves) prevails over the status of the father, if he is a decurion, to determine the obligations of the son.[140]

Roman agriculture is thus at that time suffering from a shortage of labourers, and even more from a lack of entrepreneurs, so that efforts

[134] *CTh* v.17.1 (see above n. 15). [135] Columella, 1.7.3.
[136] *CIL* viii.10570 = 14464 = *ILS* 6870. [137] *CJ* xi.68.2.
[138] *CTh* xii.1.33. [139] *CJ*. xi.68.3. [140] *CJ* x.32.29.

are made to 'win their loyalty' at any price. Yet there is no proof of any worsening of the legal status of peasants up to the middle of the fourth century. On the contrary, all the evidence points to competition of two kinds. The first is between the emperor and the other large landowners for workers, and especially for small farmers (who possess experience, a team of plough animals, equipment, seeds and who can offer the guarantee of their own lands and the intimate knowledge of the land where they and their parents have worked). The second is between state and civic taxes: the emperor wants to be paid the capitation tax, but he does not hesitate to dispense his own *coloni* from the responsibilities of the *curiales*.

It is tempting to link this policy to the emperors' longstanding concern to bring more land into cultivation[141] and the ban expressed in several edicts of Constantine on any action that might reduce agricultural yields, for example by seizing cattle, slaves or implements for debt, by demanding corvées during the sowing season or the harvest, or by requisitioning for transport purposes animals used for agricultural work.[142] The farmers need to be protected as such.

III. DID THE ECONOMIC UNITY OF THE EMPIRE BECOME FRAGMENTED?

In the first and second centuries, the Roman economy benefited from greater contacts between areas that previously had had little to do with each other, a development of relationships that the sophist Aelius Aristides mentions in his address 'To Rome'. Between the end of the second century and the beginning of the fourth, the relative weights of the various parts of the empire change. Although the decline of Italy is a matter for debate, everyone agrees about the growing importance of the east and Africa. But the products are not the same: Africa's increasing dominance lay in the production and export, notably to Rome, of agricultural commodities (wheat, oil and wine), fishing products (salt fish) and therefore also ceramics (African red slip ware). Studies of the finds from the Terme del Nuotatore at Ostia, dated to the mid-third century, show for example that one third of the amphorae, all of the fine tableware and 90 per cent of the kitchenware came from the area that is now Tunisia. Syria's prosperity is linked to exports – handled by its own merchants and shipowners, to the Mediterranean in one direction, to Arabia and India in the other – of agricultural products (in particular, wines of great repute) and high-quality crafts (glass, textiles, metalworking), the most desirable of them based on processing imported raw materials (purple-dyed silks, cosmetics). The Gauls, who proved good at borrowing and developing new techniques,

[141] Such as Herodian (II.4.6) still attributes to Pertinax. [142] *CTh* II.30.1; XI.48.1; VIII.5.1.

such as the red-glazed pottery (*terra sigillata*), choose to specialize – or are made to specialize by the hierarchical system of the Roman economy – in more basic necessities: chariots, barrels, baskets, woollen cloaks, mattresses (a Gallic invention).

These shifts in importance and in the specialities of the different provinces do not by themselves alter the dynamics of the system as a whole: they are gradual and spread over time. The indicator of the long-distance trade tells us nothing about what happens in those provinces whose role in supplying Rome diminishes – how they adapt and whether they switch to other products. The special link between the Iberian peninsula and Italy, based mainly on shipments of bullion, oil and garum, is not severed until after 260. The demands and the opportunities provided by the local and regional economy perhaps offset the relative decline in long-distance exports.

It is therefore difficult to come to a conclusion by examining the signs about just one network within the economy – the one centred on the city of Rome, the beneficiary (with the army) of the main levies in money and in kind. Meanwhile the army along the frontiers stimulates other more diverse flows, from the centre or, at any rate from the hinterland, towards the periphery, that are harder to analyse, and even harder to quantify. The army is also the reason for creating cities and developing the hinterland in order to reduce the length of supply lines: the fall in wine transport from the Mediterranean to Germany could have been a change for the better if it occurred because the cultivation of vines was pushed north towards the Meuse, Moselle and Rhine.

The provinces have their own life, their own economic organization and their own horizons: a good example is the prosperity of the eastern provinces, which benefit from their trade with the Indian ocean and their long urban tradition. That by freeing themselves from exclusive ties to Rome they were able to diversify their trade with places near and far could be taken as a favourable development. Even the political fragmentation of the empire from the time of the tetrarchs could have had positive consequences. It does, of course, add to the state's costs, with the creation of new courts and new capitals, but these cities could in turn play a part in fostering growth, acting as centres of economic activity midway between Rome and the frontiers, organizing new flows of trade and supplies, and providing a source of coinage for local use from the increased number of mints.

These developments suggest that, contrary to traditional thinking, the empire is not necessarily the best spatial unit to take as a reference in looking at the economy, or at least it is not the only one. The Prices Edict itself recognizes in its preface that there are differences in prices from province to province, differences that it does not set out to abolish – indeed the

opposite. If the empire is a unit, this has to do with institutions – Rome and its provisioning, the army, coinage, provincial and civic organization, personal legal status, etc. – but also with models of consumption and urban living. In Braudel's terms, the empire is a superstructure, with its own strength and coherency, but it represents only one level of the economy, and we must learn to see the others.

Moreover, the empire combines – in time and space – several modes of economic organization. With regard to time, the third century probably marks a new stage in the transition from a predatory economy operating exclusively or mainly in favour of the conquerors to an economy that mixes market forces, gifts and redistributions, and forms of reciprocity. With regard to space, the changes in the economic hierarchies between Rome and other cities, between the frontiers and the Mediterranean provinces, or between regions with different levels of economic development and urbanization could have accompanied both the increase in contacts with areas outside the empire (of which the invasions are a special type) and the establishment of new economic networks at local, provincial or inter-provincial level. The best indicator here remains the cities, and they do not testify to a decline. The only major change is that Rome no longer occupies such a uniquely dominant position; other cities – such as the new capitals, including Constantinople, but also Carthage, Alexandria or Antioch – now copy, if not equal Rome.

This picture full of contrasts, and the differences of opinion among modern historians, some of whom continue to think in terms of 'crisis' while others strive to identify changes, should not obscure the essential fact that, despite all these adjustments and adaptations, a high proportion of the changes observed in the third century had irreversible consequences. In many ways, the economy and society of the fourth century differ fundamentally from that of the end of the second century. Linked to the political and military needs of a system in which levies are justified by the needs of defence, euergetism and supplies for both the army and one or more large cities, the level of both the monetary and official economy represents only one level – the upper one – and not the whole economy. The majority of the population, urban and rural, is of course affected. But most or many of the developments in production, consumption, exchanges and circulation occur at other levels, and with different rationale, and they in turn have an impact on the upper level. From the same standpoint, the overall level – the empire – is only one of several possible scales for analysing and interpreting events and situations. Recent research based on advances in archaeology demonstrates the insights to be gained from looking at other scales – local, provincial or regional, town and country, centre and periphery, eastern and western Mediterranean, the Mediterranean basin and continental Europe, and so on. One of the innovations of the period of

the tetrarchs and Constantine is that, despite the fiction of decisions that were meant to apply to the whole of the empire (such as the maximum prices decreed by the Edict of 301), the administration is broken down into regional groupings.

The historiography of the third century is therefore experiencing profound changes. However, although the sources for a new economic history of antiquity are now emerging, the ambiguity of the signs means that this new history has above all a critical value: it has not yet yielded all its conclusions. Even the increase in the number of texts emanating from the state that we have to deal with from the tetrarchic period is hard to interpret: does it reflect the state becoming stronger and attempting to extend the scope of its interventions? Or is it a sign that the state is ineffectual or impotent, as measures are repeated and never implemented?

The Roman economy is never completely 'disembedded', in the sense defined by K. Polanyi. This has led many scholars in recent decades to highlight the differences between the Roman economy and our own, and the rationales on which it was based, derived from a system of values that we now find in part incomprehensible. The approach was a useful one, in that it helped us to look at the Roman economy in new ways, and therefore to search for and find a whole range of aspects that we had not seen before, or to see them in a different light. But the approach has its limits, and gave rise to false and sterile debates. We must accept these differences, but we must also accept that we can identify in the Roman economy a set of sectors and domains about which it is permissible to raise questions similar to our own, without always departing from the terms in which people at the time raised these questions.

Fundamentally, we need always to keep in mind that it is a rural society held together by a network of cities. Agriculture provides the bulk of the production and consumption, but the state also stimulated the development of mining in certain regions in order above all, but not exclusively, to satisfy its own needs. The requirements of the army (along the frontiers), of Rome and other major cities (in the centre) as well as the ruling classes (in luxury products) encouraged the creation and growth of medium and long-distance exchange networks. To some extent these networks increased the value of the differences in climate and ecology: a certain number of Mediterranean products have to be dispatched or their production transferred towards the northern frontiers because of their place in a model of consumption that is also a model of civilization. But exchanges also work in the opposite direction, with the taste for certain products from the periphery spreading to the centre of the empire and the Mediterranean region.

We must also take into account the facts, first, that the urban framework is far from being the same everywhere, and second, that forms of frontier

economy also develop along the *limes* involving exchanges with areas outside the empire, whence in return the export of certain agricultural products (wine) and manufactured goods (weapons), as well as Roman coins. On the one hand, therefore, the Roman economy cannot be treated as if it were homogeneous, but on the other, any analysis cannot be restricted merely to the regions within the empire. This influence on the outside world and the attraction the empire exerted for its neighbours are precisely proved, at least to some extent, by the invasions. However, the forms of 'economic partnership' of the empire remain quite unlike those of modern economies, based as they are on exchanges between formally constituted states.

All these traces relate to a great variety of time spans which go from the very long (not everything is subject to change in the third century, far from it, and many aspects are not directly datable) to the very short, by way of the medium ones (for example, the rise of cities, such as Palmyra and Lepcis Magna in the second and third centuries). These traces prioritize either absolute or relative datings of such and such an economic event or, on the contrary, long or quasi-permanent realities. They show the value of a regional or even micro-regional approach to the study of ancient economies. They also highlight the Roman economy's capacity to innovate in response to new circumstances.

This extremely diversified approach to the geographical and temporal realities, which are themselves contrasted, has claimed its first victim: the general theories that were in vogue a century ago. To a significant degree, even more recent models (Weber, Polanyi, Finley, Braudel, Wallerstein) are now more used for sorting out the data than for explaining what happened: for this reason, they can be used in conjunction by the same historian, without any major risk of contradiction.

CHAPTER 13

THE GERMANIC PEOPLES AND GERMANIC SOCIETY

MALCOLM TODD

1. NEW GROUPINGS

After the relative richness of the written sources for the Germanic peoples and their dealings with Rome during the first century A.D., a pall of near-silence envelops the following century. The wars generally referred to as the Marcomannic wars in the reign of Marcus Aurelius are sketchily recorded and reveal Germanic society fitfully, and then only in limited aspects.[1] Dio's account of Roman relations with various German groups is not informative; later third-century writers offer little more than brief notices of raids and invasions. This extensive gap cannot be filled by recourse to archaeological evidence, important though this is. By its very nature archaeology cannot answer central questions of political and social history, however much it may illumine economic and technological matters. It is particularly unfortunate that the written sources give out when they do. Even in the *Germania* of Tacitus there are clear signs of change in barbarian society consequent upon a century and a half of contact and interchange with the Roman world. Within certain peoples social development had made major advances during the first century A.D., leading in some cases to internal strain, as among the Cherusci, or even to political collapse and dependence on Rome.[2] On the wider stage, changes in the political geography of Germania which had hardly begun by A.D. 100 were well advanced a hundred years later. Many of the small tribes known to Tacitus and Ptolemy are scarcely mentioned thereafter or disappear entirely, while larger groupings of a different stamp increasingly dominate the lands close to the Rhine and Danube frontiers, chief among them the Goths, Alamanni and Franks. We can perceive, dimly, the scale of the changes wrought from the second century onward. How those changes came about is matter for conjecture.

We are, of course, largely at the mercy of the terminology applied by classical writers to the social and political organizations of barbarian peoples; and there are serious problems in translating those terms into usages which

[1] Birley (1987); Böhme (1975); Bursche (1994). [2] E. A. Thompson (1965) 72–88.

relate to the conceptions of modern social anthropology.[3] Words like *gens*, *natio*, *populus*, *civitas*, *pagus*, no doubt conveyed meaning to a Roman audience, but it is far from clear to what extent they conveyed an objective account of barbarian society. When ancient sources speak of tribes or peoples, what are they referring to? Did Graeco-Roman writers know what these social units were like? Such problems are severe enough in the context of the first and second centuries. Matters become more complex in a period of profound change, such as the third century. When new groupings like the Alamanni, Franks and Goths emerge, new forms of social organization are in the making. How did these differ from the earlier tribes and were the new groupings as unified as their names might suggest? At the centre of the problem posed by the Franks, Alamanni and Goths is the matter of ethnicity.[4] To what extent were these peoples bound together by ethnic bonds? Ethnic identity is created and sustained by a variety of circumstances. Kinship is the most obvious of these and this is a prominent feature of most pre-industrial societies. Commonly, a series of interlinked kin-groups formed the nucleus of an ethnic association, though such groups did not remain static. Around the kin-groups lay a loose outer perimeter, within which alliances were made through marriage, gift-exchange and personal allegiance. In a society which depended heavily upon the productivity of land, the possession of territory was of fundamental importance. Although an equation of territory with *ethnos* is facile and misleading, territoriality underpinned the social and economic structure of most settled pre-industrial societies. This explains, in part, the prevalence of warfare in such societies. Possession of territory had to be protected or expanded by warfare for economic reasons. It also confirmed the identity of the social group.

In the case of the new groupings east of the Rhine, another factor must be taken into account.[5] For two centuries the peoples close to the lower and middle Rhine had been in contact with the Roman provinces and this contact had left its mark on Germanic society, especially at the higher levels. The élites among these peoples had long recognized the opportunities presented by, on the one hand, service with the Roman army and the prestige thus afforded, and on the other the material advantage which assaults on the frontier provinces could provide. As Roman defence of the frontiers was increasingly stretched, opportunities for both forms of activity were enlarged. The ethnic basis of the Franks and Alamanni may thus have been less significant than the circumstances in which their élites now found themselves.

[3] Wenskus (1961). [4] Ament (1984); Van Den Berghe (1987); Wolfram and Daim (1980).
[5] Perin (1987); Wolfram, *Goths*; Heather (1996).

Confronting the Upper German and Raetian *limes*, the Alamanni[6] are first mentioned in surviving sources in connection with Caracalla's operations against them in 213, but they had probably emerged in the late second century, perhaps as a result of tribal reorganization following the Marcomannic wars. Although they were an obvious amalgam of several groups, it is difficult to identify with certainty the constituent peoples. The Hermunduri, Semnones and Suebi were probably principal contributors; indeed, the name of the Suebi is occasionally substituted for that of the Alamanni in later sources, while the names of the Hermunduri and Semnones occur rarely after the mid-third century. Other smaller tribes in the region between the Main valley and the upper Elbe may have been drawn in. Although Caracalla won a victory over the Alamanni in 213, their threat was in no way diminished. Twenty years later they broke through the Upper German frontier and in 235/6 attacked Noricum, with marked success.[7] The entire frontier between Rhine and Danube was at risk from this time onward and some Alamannic groups extended their raids to the middle Danube. But the major invasions were still to come. By about 253 the *limes* could barely be held and by 259/60 was largely, if not entirely, abandoned by Roman forces. The invasions continued and barbarian groups were able to range widely over Gaul. There have been modern attempts to play down the seriousness of the invasions of Gaul between 260 and 280, but there is sound evidence that the effects were severe. Along the stretch of the Rhine between Mainz and Strasbourg, several large deposits of looted material have been recovered from the river-bed. The largest of these is a massive hoard found at Neupotz, near Rheinzabern, comprising many vessels of silver and bronze, tools, wagon parts and coins.[8] These were the fruit of attacks on Gallia Belgica between the Seine and the Moselle about 277/8, the date of the latest coin in the assemblage. The massive haul of booty seems to have ended up in the Rhine when rafts conveying it to the right bank were sunk. Another dramatic record of barbarian invasion in the period is a victory monument commemorating a success over the Iuthungi or Semnones in April 260 won by the army of Raetia and local people.[9] This engagement was presumably fought near Augsburg, where the monument was found, as the invaders returned from Italy, bringing many Italian prisoners with them.

The abandonment of the Upper German/Raetian *limes* apparently opened up the lands between the upper Rhine and Danube to Alamannic settlement and the first phase of land-taking had begun in the last quarter of the third century. Roman use of at least some of the forts on the old frontier line continued after 260, but probably on an occasional basis.[10] There are

[6] Christlein (1978); Krüger (1986). [7] Christlein (1978) 22–3.
[8] Künzl (1993). [9] Bakker (1993). [10] Stříbrný (1989).

clear signs that the early settlers accommodated themselves within the existing pattern of settlement, in some cases even continuing the use of Roman villa sites, as at Praunheim. The network of Roman roads which crossed this hilly region played its part in directing the course of early Alamannic occupation. Abandoned Roman forts may have served as focal points for early settlers, as at Walheim and later Hüfingen. Other Alamannic groups found employment in Roman service on the upper Rhine. There were, however, settlements on entirely new sites, for instance at Sontheim in the Stubental. Among these new foundations, a series of hill-top settlements is particularly notable. The most fully known is that on the Runder Berg near Urach,[11] where the summit was surrounded by a stout timber wall and the lower slopes were occupied by a sizeable community. This has the appearance of a chieftainly residence, established in the late third century, with an associated (and dependent) population of peasants and craftsmen. The terrain of southwestern Germany offered numerous prominent hill-tops as centres of local power and a number of these were occupied as early as 300. The topography of the region thus did nothing to unify the Alamanni. A plurality of kings and *reguli* continued to flourish long after the Alamanni settled on what had been Roman provincial soil. The confederacy remained a loose organization until the fourth century, but still one which posed a serious threat to the security of the Roman frontier.

Relations between Alamannic leaders and Roman commanders were not unremittingly hostile. About the confluence of the Elbe and the Saale a group of rich burials points to close relations between leading families, of the Alamanni or their associates, and the Roman world.[12] At Leuna and Hassleben, leading members of the locally based élites were buried in large, timber-lined chambers, along with a rich series of Roman silver and bronze vessels, pottery and other imported goods. The date-range of the burials is relatively narrow, between 260 and 290 at the latest, which suggests the possibility that these fine goods were acquired during successful raids on the frontier provinces. But the restricted geographical spread of the graves makes this less than likely. More probably this wealth was the reward for support given by German warriors and their retinues to Gallic emperors after 260. A scatter of gold coinage in central Germania may also be referable to payments to the *ingentia auxilia Germanorum* which are reported to have aided at least one of the Gallic rulers.[13] The Alamanni remained a disparate series of peoples throughout the third century and for long afterwards. Opportunities for employment with Rome may often have seemed more attractive than inter-tribal strife or attacks on the Roman frontier.

[11] Christlein (1978) 43–8.
[12] Schulz and Zahn (1933); Schulz (1953); Becker (1993).
[13] *SHA, Vict.* 6.2.

The peoples immediately east of the lower Rhine are barely mentioned in the early third century, but changes were taking place here too following the disturbances of the previous decades and they led to the emergence of a new and larger grouping of people.[14] The Franks are first mentioned by name in 253 but most probably this loose confederation had been in the making over the previous half-century or more. Gallienus found them enough of a threat in 257 to take the field against them in person from a base at Cologne. Successive Gallic emperors faced an increasing problem in maintaining a strong frontier on the lower Rhine against Frankish raiders. From at least 275, and probably somewhat earlier, Frankish war-bands were able to break through the defences on the lower Rhine and strike deep into Gaul. From 276 to 281 the emperor Probus and his commanders had to contend with frequent attacks on the lower and middle Rhine and these dangers persisted in the following decade. For the first time, we hear of Franks and others posing a threat to the security of sea lanes in the Channel and the North Sea, compelling the western Augustus to appoint Carausius to combat the raiders.[15] Carausius took the opportunity to seize power himself, using Frankish troops to support his position. These recruits stood to gain more from this relationship than from assaults on the lower Rhine defences. Even Franks who were taken prisoner by Roman forces could achieve a position within the Roman provinces. Constantius Chlorus settled groups of Franks on the territory of cities of northern Gaul in the last years of the third century, to cultivate vacant land in return for military service. The decades which followed saw a major increase in the deployment of Franks in the Roman army. Constantine won at least one victory over the Franks and condemned two Frankish leaders to the beasts in the Trier amphitheatre. From the early fourth century Franks begin to occupy ever more prominent positions in the Roman forces and more and more Frankish units appear in the roll of regiments.

The question of Frankish origins is complex and may admit of no certain conclusion. The name was applied by Romans and may be a Roman coining, despite its Germanic root. The Franks themselves had no well-defined tradition of their own origin as a people. When the Merovingian house had need of a founder, it had to turn to a sea-monster for aid. The name 'Franci', evidently meaning 'free' or 'brave', was applied to a number of tribal groups east of the lower Rhine, including some mentioned in first century sources: Bructeri, Chamavi, Chattuarii, Ampsivarii and Sugambri. Some of these tribal units retained their identity into the fourth century and the point is important for an understanding of what the early Franks were. Although they are often referred to as a confederacy, the term implies a closer union than existed at this date. Frankish warriors appear

[14] Perin (1987); James (1988) 34–50. [15] Casey (1994).

to have operated in numerous groups against the Roman frontiers and the provinces behind. Probably war-bands were assembled from the various tribes close to the Rhine and from the more coastal peoples, including the Chauci and Frisii. Such war-bands are unlikely to have remained in being for long and that is why we do not hear of individual leaders until the late third century. The early Franks were thus not a distinct people like the Burgundians or Lombards but a shifting body of inter-related warrior groups, acting together with specific objectives in view but having no permanent cohesion nor sense of identity. It follows that they also had no permanent system of governance. Like all such warrior societies, they were as likely to be recruited into Roman service as they were to maintain a hostile stance to the empire.

Given the nature of their origins, it is not surprising that the Franks cannot be distinguished in the archaeological record from other trans-Rhenane settlers in the third and fourth centuries. No major new developments in material culture can be discerned immediately east of the Rhine in the third century, nor can any specific series of artifacts be linked with a new grouping. Even the pattern and character of early Frankish settlement are poorly known. The most fully excavated sites, such as Westick near Unna and the later Gladbach in the Neuwied basin, were relatively small villages. Cemeteries that might be assigned to the Franks of this date are scarcely known at all.

The eastern Germanic peoples were in tumult from the early third century for reasons which had little or nothing to do with the Marcomannic wars.[16] Migrant groups began to move south from the Vistula basin to the western Ukraine and Black Sea hinterland from the later second century, combining there with existing mixed populations. By the 230s at least, warrior bands were issuing from this region to assault the provinces on the lower Danube, earning subsidies from Roman commanders unable to repel them. The name Gothi was applied to this aggressive grouping, but no cohesive ethnic unit lay behind the name; several tribes provided warriors to these early Goths.[17] The southward spread of the Goths is less likely to have been a sudden migration than a steady movement into the rich lands of the Ukraine. The archaeological record suggests a movement of population along major rivers from the upper Vistula basin, the archaeological culture which marks this process being known as the Wielbark culture.[18] When we first hear of Goths in the literary sources, they were threatening Moesia and Dacia in the 230s and 240s. It was not long before the coastal cities of the Black Sea and Asia Minor experienced their sweeping raids. Little is heard of leaders or of any centralized power at this time. The most

[16] Hachmann (1970); Heather (1991).
[17] Wolfram, *Goths*; Bierbrauer (1994); Heather (1996).
[18] Heather (1996) 18–25.

formidable of their commanders, Kniva, is referred to as a king by the sources, but he may have owed his authority solely to his military prowess. By the middle of the third century, the Goths and their associates were the most resourceful and threatening of the barbarian enemies of Rome. They could strike deep into the rich provinces of Asia Minor and range widely on naval expeditions. They could attack the peaceful lands of Greece, as well as an exposed province like Dacia. For the time being they made no concerted efforts to settle on Roman soil. The hinterland of the Black Sea offered them ample land for settlement; raiding provided them with portable wealth. Third-century emperors such as Claudius II and Aurelian could defer the Gothic problem, but came nowhere near solving it.

Major cultural change also took place from the late second century in the broad region between the upper Oder and the Vistula, the homeland of the Przeworsk culture.[19] This was an amalgam of several local cultures, in the formation of which the Vandalic groups presumably played some part. After the Marcomannic wars this culture began to extend its influence southward towards the Danube and southeast into the Ukraine and the upper Dniester valley. Warrior graves are one of the prominent features of this phase of the Przeworsk culture, though very richly furnished burials are rare. The expansion into the rich lands of the Ukraine may be a reflection of a steady move of Germanic settlers, and others, into this region. The possibility of a connection with the Goths is obviously raised but cannot be demonstrated. In the Ukraine itself, from the upland steppe to the Black Sea, another extensive culture had developed from the later second century: the Chernjakhov culture, named after a cemetery site near Kiev.[20] The bearers of this rich culture occupied the main river valleys in some density, supported by an efficient agricultural economy. Metalworking and other crafts flourished, and a steady flow of imports was received from the Roman world, including metal vessels, glassware, pottery and silver coinage. Those responsible for this mature Iron Age culture were probably ethnically mixed and not necessarily predominantly Germanic. But Gothic settlers had certainly established themselves in this region by the third century and must have contributed to the Chernjakhov assemblage. By the later third century, Chernjakhov elements had begun to extend southward towards the lower Danube, providing further support that the carriers were Goths.

The Danube had been the most important and sensitive of the northern frontiers from the earlier second century. Roman success in maintaining its security relied heavily upon a policy of paying monetary subsidies, as well as other diplomatic means and the occasional application or threat of force. The payment of subsidies may not have been a regular practice, but it was often an effective way of securing the support of Germanic and

[19] Godlowski (1970); Kenk (1977). [20] Rybakov (1960); Symonovic (1983); Heather (1996) 18–23.

other barbarian leaders. Gifts of fine objects could supplement the supply of money. One such was probably the splendid silver lanx found in a chieftain's grave at Stráze in the Váh valley in Slovakia.[21] Roman supervision of tribal groups north of the middle Danube, especially in the valleys of the Morava and Nitra, worked well over a long period. After the Marcomannic wars this sector of the Danube frontier was not visited by serious conflict until the mid-fourth century. There is striking archaeological testimony to peaceful interaction between Roman and barbarian in this region in the form of sites on which recognizably Roman structures are present.[22] The most remarkable of these is at Cifer-Pac, some 40 kilometres north of the Danube in the lowland between the river Váh and the Lesser Carpathians. The high quality of the Roman constructions here, and of the associated finds, indicates that it was the residence of an elevated social group, either a chieftaincy family or *potentes*, during the third century and extending into the fourth. At Dubravka, 4.5 kilometres north of the Danube, a bathhouse of Roman style was associated with timber buildings of Germanic plan; this settlement was occupied from the first century to at least the late fourth. Other sites are more suggestive of direct military involvement by Romans, as at Stillfried on the Morava, Milanovce on the Nitra and Mosov on the Thaya. There are of course possible connections with trading activity, but the larger of these sites probably owed their trappings to recognition of local chieftains by Roman officials and to the material benefits which flowed therefrom.

II. SETTLEMENTS

The Germanic communities of the early Roman Iron Age had developed settlement forms that were much more complex and sophisticated than would have been deduced from the literary record.[23] Over the past forty years investigation of settlement sites in northern Germania, especially in the German coastlands and in southern Scandinavia, has revealed the steady growth in size of many communities from the first century B.C. onward, and in a number of cases has indicated a remarkable degree of internal planning and order within settlements occupied over several centuries. The most extensive excavation on such sites has taken place in Holland, northern Germany and Denmark, so that there is a bias in our knowledge towards those regions. But there is increasing evidence from eastern Germany and Poland that similar social and economic processes were at work in other areas of Germania.

The fullest account of the archaeology of an individual settlement is yielded by the excavation of the site at Feddersen Wierde on the coastal

[21] Ondrouch (1957). [22] Pitts (1987). [23] Jankuhn (1976); Krüger (1986); Hedeager (1992).

marshes of the Weser estuary near Bremerhaven.[24] The exigencies imposed by the context, on low ground liable to inundation by the sea, led to the gradual building up of a mound as occupation continued. From the first century A.D. growth was steady, a radial plan being adopted to accommodate an increasing number of long-houses and their ancillary buildings. Thirty or more long-houses, each probably representing a single family holding, existed by A.D. 100. During the second century growth was maintained within the radial plan, and now a single large dwelling at the southeastern edge of the settlement was marked off from the others by a palisade and ditch. This prominent building was the focus for a number of smaller structures which were used by craftsmen working in a variety of materials: wood, antler, bone, leather and bronze. This enclave within Feddersen Wierde is most reasonably interpreted as the residence of a head-man or local leader, with the power to control resources and to command the labour of dependent craftsmen. This ordering of the settlement endured throughout the third and fourth centuries, the entire community at its peak consisting of some fifty families. The social differentiation within the settlement is unusually clear and compelling. No less interesting is the fact that the *Herrenhof* continued in existence for two centuries or more.

Deliberately planned settlements which remained in existence for centuries are also known in Holland. Wijster, in Drenthe, was at its peak in the third and fourth centuries, planned on a rectangular grid of streets or lanes marked off by timber palisades.[25] The individual long-houses lay mostly within separate ditched plots. Up to sixty families may have been accommodated in this community in the third and early fourth centuries. Wijster lies only 100 kilometres from the lower Rhine and was in close contact with the Roman provinces by trade and possibly other means. Another settlement in which internal planning is evident is that at Bennekom, only 40 kilometres from the Roman frontier, though this was much smaller than Wijster, numbering only four substantial farmsteads and ancillary buildings at its height.[26] The fact that both Wijster and Bennekom enjoyed their most prosperous period in the third and fourth centuries is not due to chance. Economic links with the frontier provinces will have contributed much to the prosperity of this entire region. When an organized frontier on the lower Rhine ceased to exist, both settlements came to an end.

Many smaller settlements existed in the coastal regions of Holland and Germany. Among the coastal settlements were many settlements on mounds (*Terpen*, *Wurten*), some of which were radially planned hamlets or small villages like Ezinge.[27] Enclosed settlements within strong fences are known on the sandy lands of Drenthe, but these seem to belong largely

[24] Haarnagel (1979). [25] Van Es (1967).
[26] Van Es, Miedema and Wynia (1985). [27] Halbertsma (1963).

to the earlier Roman Iron Age. Further planned settlements are known in Denmark. At Hodde in southwestern Jutland a series of successive nucleated settlements has been identified within an area defined by valleys, the sites of the villages being no more than 400 metres apart.[28] Within this enclave, a community of up to 200 inhabitants existed for four centuries, the site of the main settlement being moved at intervals of 100 to 150 years. This same shifting of settlement focus within a territory is also evident at other sites in Jutland, for example at Drengsted and Vorbasse. The Vorbasse settlement in its later stages reveals a development which is to be related to social change. The long-houses were much larger than those of the earlier Iron Age and were set within sizeable plots which were fenced off from each other. By the fourth century Vorbasse contained about twenty of these steadings, extending for 300 metres to either side of a broad axial street.

These settlements were clearly maintained by communities which were fundamentally stable but beginning to experience degrees of change by the fourth century. The significance of individual families is evident in the self-contained farmsteads, but an underlying social cohesion is demonstrated by the continuing nucleation of settlement. Growth in size evinced at many sites points plainly to population increase, a fact given further substance by intensive surveys of limited areas. The impetus this presumably gave to the search for fresh land and for fresh resources led to greater mobility in many parts of Germania. In the settlement growth of the north there can be discerned one of the major forces which brought about the later migrations.

Hill forts and other hill-top strongholds at present make little showing in the settlement record of the Germanic peoples, though this is probably due to lack of research at the relevant sites.[29] Tacitus' famous dictum about the absence of defended sites in Germania seems increasingly vulnerable, especially in the central regions. Numerous hill forts are known about the upper Weser and Leine on the Unstrut and Saale, in Bohemia and in southern Poland. Very few of these sites have been excavated on any scale and none has been studied as extensively as such sites demand. In western Germania, too, hill forts exist and a number have produced evidence of use in the Roman Iron Age. The Heidenschanze and the Heidenstadt near Bremerhaven, for example, occupy prominent positions above the coastal lowlands and the Heidenschanze, at least, was occupied in the early Roman period. Other hill forts close to the Rhine and Danube were occupied within the Roman Iron Age, though details are lacking. It is a striking fact that when the Alamanni moved into the area behind the *limes* in the late third century, they took possession of hill tops without delay, presumably reflecting well-established practice.

[28] Hvass (1985). [29] Mildenberger (1978).

All the excavated settlements reveal the importance of animal husbandry to the agricultural economy.[30] In all parts of Germania cattle were the most important domesticated animal, usually by a considerable margin. In the coastal marshlands of the north they frequently accounted for more than 60 per cent of all livestock. Sheep and pigs came next, though in varying proportions, depending on the available pasturage. Horses came a long way behind, and in some settlements were not present at all or only in very small numbers. The domestic fowl was reared in small numbers in some settlements, and dogs and cats were known. There was a distinct tendency for all the domestic breeds to be small. Cattle were slender and short, probably as a result of non-selective breeding over a long period of time. There is virtually no sign of the introduction of larger animals from the Roman world. The same is true of the horses and pigs, the latter often being dwarfish by the standards of modern European animals. The sheep, however, compare favourably in size with those of today.

Many young animals were slaughtered for their meat. Calves and young cattle formed a major part of the meat diet, about 60 per cent of animals being killed after about four years. Lambs, too, were a favoured source of meat, 20 per cent being killed in their first few months, 40 per cent in their first two years. Horse-meat was eaten, though probably normally after use as draught animals. Game animals and birds do not figure to any extent on the best recorded sites so that, surprisingly, hunting seems not to have provided a major supplement to the diet.

Cereal cultivation has had a long history in northern Europe, extending back to the fourth millennium B.C. Several forms of wheat, especially Einkorn and emmer, had been grown from that early time and these crops continued into the later Iron Age. But other grains increased in importance in the Iron Age, notably barley, millet and rye. Oats was also increasingly to the fore from the first century A.D. onward. The range of grains grown at individual settlements is generally impressive and specialization is rare. At Bentumersiel on the Ems estuary, for example, barley, wheat and millet are represented, along with flax and gold-of-pleasure, probably valued for their oil-rich seeds. Beans were widely grown in the north, along with peas, carrots, cabbage, radishes, rape and asparagus. But there is little indication of the growing or collection of fruit, though wild fruits were presumably consumed.

III. WARFARE

The armament of Germanic warriors underwent no profound change during the first and earlier second centuries. Weapon types were little affected

[30] Krüger (1986) 109–19.

by Roman equipment and body armour was not adopted, even by leading warriors. From the later second century, however, the beginnings of significant change can be discerned in central and northern Germania, and eventually this process was to bring Roman and Germanic war equipment closer together and thus to reduce the technological gap between the Germans and Rome.[31] The process was long-drawn-out and proceeded at varying speed in different areas. In all parts of Germania, however, armed forces remained predominantly infantry. Little is heard of cavalry formations among the third century invaders of the empire, except for the non-Germanic Sarmatians and other steppe peoples; and there is no sign of any notable increase in the importance of cavalry in the archaeological record before the fourth century. The Alamanni later enjoyed repute as horsed warriors, but these were the retinues of chiefs rather than the rank and file. Gothic horsemanship finds frequent reference in the fourth century, possibly due to their contacts with the peoples of the south Russian steppe.

Most German warriors still went into battle equipped with the spears and lances which were the principal weapons of the previous few centuries.[32] Swords do not seem to have been normally carried, though some warriors did possess them, perhaps having acquired the weapons after a successful engagement with Roman troops or through illicit trade. Swords became somewhat more common from the late second century onward. Weapons with a ring at the end of the hilt (*Ringknaufschwerter*) appear in northern Germania after about A.D. 150, either as booty or as items carried home after service with the Roman army. These were relatively short weapons, designed for use at close quarters and thus not ideal for hit-and-run tactics. The longer slashing sword (*spatha*), long known in Celtic Europe, was better suited to the kind of fighting favoured by German warriors. From the earlier third century to the period of the migrations this was the principal sword type in northern Europe. By the later third century it is very difficult to distinguish specifically German swords from Roman weapons.[33] The short *gladius* had now given way to the long slashing sword in the Roman forces too and the situation is further complicated by the fact that so many Roman swords found their way to northern Germania in the third and fourth centuries. A considerable number of these imports bear the stamps of Roman makers and were presumably originally carried by Roman troops. In some of the northern votive deposits, e.g. Nydam and Illerup, Roman weapons greatly outnumber those of German manufacture. Indeed at Illerup all the swords represented in the deposit may be Roman in origin.

Body armour did not increase in use during the period, though Roman imports appear a little more frequently. The major defensive protection for

[31] Todd (1987); von Carnap-Bornheim (1994).
[32] Raddatz (1967). [33] Ilkjaer and Lønstrup (1983).

Germanic infantry continued to be the shield of wood or wicker, often with an iron or bronze boss covering the hand-grip. The shield-board was now usually round and the boss domed rather than spiked. Occasionally, the boss might be elaborately ornamented, like those from Herpály and Lilla Harg. The axe is found in warrior graves during the third century, a heavy weapon for close-quarter fighting, not a missile like the later franciska. There is some evidence that the bow and arrow was entering use in parts of Germania as a weapon of war. Bundles of arrows and long bows occur in the later votive deposits, and sets of silver and bronze arrow-heads figure in rich graves, probably as marks of rank. Use of a long-distance weapon like the long bow is understandable, especially against the well-armoured forces of Rome. Curiously, there is no clear indication that the short composite bow used by the Sarmatians and other steppe peoples was adopted by Germanic warriors at this date.

The third-century invaders were usually little interested in laying siege to walled cities and the conduct of siege warfare made little progress in the following century. Only rarely do we hear of organized attempts to break into a well-defended circuit of walls using siege engines. When we do, Germanic success was limited. The construction and deployment of siege machines by the Goths at Thessalonika in 269 and at Side about the same time met with no success, chiefly because the defenders came up with well-planned counter-measures. The invaders of Gaul and Spain were able to take towns and cities in those provinces because many had no adequate defences or no defences at all. Generally speaking, barbarian attacks on walled cities manned by determined defenders were doomed to failure. It was not only that the relevant engineering skills were lacking. Barbarian forces could rarely be kept together for long enough to complete an investment that might last for weeks or months, and even then produce little in the way of plunder. There were easier and more productive targets in the provinces and rank and file warriors were not easily persuaded that a siege was worth the effort and danger. Even in the large-scale invasions of the fourth and fifth centuries, Germanic leaders were reluctant to commit their armies to long sieges, except in cases where there was a political prize at stake or where a demoralized citizenry might be defeated by a short blockade.

In terms of tactics, Germanic warfare probably changed little during the third and early fourth centuries. But it would be wrong to assume that no advances were made in other respects. Weaponry certainly improved, and access to Roman armament, however achieved, added a new dimension. Germanic strategic aims also seem to have become more ambitious, as successes against Roman frontiers were increasingly registered. The breakthroughs on the Rhine and lower Danube in the mid- and late third century were signal achievements and must not be underrated. Aside from their

immediate effects, these successes raised barbarian perceptions of what was possible, both in direct military objectives and also in gaining Roman recognition as potential allies or adherents. The latter relationship was increasingly to the fore from the late third century onward and was to be a dominant theme from the reign of Constantine onward.

IV. TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY

Trading and other exchanges continued unabated between the Roman provinces and the Germanic peoples throughout the late second and third centuries, though with significant changes in the goods which changed hands and in the overall pattern of trade.[34] Bronze buckets of the Hemmoor type and other metal products of Gaulish factories began to predominate, along with fine glassware from Cologne and northern Gaul, and terra sigillata from eastern Gaul. The late second century marks a watershed in trading relations between the Germans and the Roman world. From this time on, production centres in the western provinces played an increasingly prominent role, those in the Danube lands and the central Mediterranean correspondingly less. The distribution of trade goods in Germania also underwent marked change. In some regions the flow of imports was greatly reduced or even wholly interrupted. This is true for large areas of central Germania in the first half of the third century. Even in Denmark and the west Baltic islands, one of the most important destinations for luxury goods in the first and second centuries, significantly fewer imports were received. Late in the third century, presumably under the pressure of altered political circumstances, the stream of traded goods thinned still further. Not only was the volume of imports much reduced; the range of commodities, especially metal and glass, was considerably narrower.

Although the turbulent change of the third century left its mark on cross-frontier trade, the lands around the western Baltic retained their position as the principal recipient of luxuries. The island of Zealand enjoyed a special status in this regard and probably served as a major centre of redistribution to the adjacent areas. The richest northern *Fürstengräber* of the period are found on Zealand (Valløby, Himlinghøje and Varpelev) and the overall quality of the imports is outstanding. Late in the third century Jutland and the island of Fyn came to the fore as bases for trade. On Fyn, the area centred on Gudme appears to have begun its development as a port of trade and distribution-centre about this time.[35] Minor items, as well as luxuries, continued to pass from the Roman provinces into Germania: brooches and other personal ornaments, finger-rings, bronze statuettes, mirrors and beads. How the traffic was organized, at any level, remains

[34] Kunow (1983); Lund Hansen (1987). [35] Nielsen, Randsborg and Thrane (1994).

elusive. That *collegia* or *conventus* of Roman *negotiatores* may have been resident in Germania is likely, though not directly attested. In the late first century a legionary centurion and interpreter later turned to trading activity beyond the middle Danube; he will surely not have been alone.[36] The concentration of fine merchandise on Zealand is best explained as resulting from the activity of Roman agents, though there must obviously have been contact with German traders or middle-men. Native traders are not recorded by any source, but they are reasonably to be assumed. The mechanisms for transport of goods across Germania are obscure. Overland routes have tended to receive attention from archaeologists, with greater or lesser degrees of plausibility, but a sizeable proportion of trade goods could have been moved by sea from the Rhine mouth to the northern coasts and thence by the major rivers into the interior.

The commodities which passed from Germania to the Roman world have long been a matter of debate, very few being specifically mentioned in ancient sources. The most celebrated of them is amber from the western Baltic and from the Samland peninsula on the eastern shore.[37] The amber trade is often assumed to have been a casualty of the Marcomannic wars, the main routes leading to the Danube having been disrupted by the long campaigns. There is abundant evidence, however, that the traffic continued throughout the third century, though along different routes. The long-established routes from the Baltic across the Vistula basin and the Bohemian uplands to the Danube at Carnuntum and thence into Italy were no longer the most frequented arteries of trade, possibly because the popularity of amber ornaments had steadily declined in Italy during the second century. But amber was still reaching the northwestern provinces in the third and early fourth centuries; a likely centre of working the material was Cologne. This amber most probably came from the western Baltic rather than the rich deposits exploited on the Samland peninsula, but the eastern sources were neither exhausted nor ignored as some export continued to the Sarmatians in the Theiss basin, often in the form of beads. The westward trade to the lower Rhine is of particular interest, as this region sent much to the western Baltic at this time, notably bronze vessels and glassware.

The mechanisms of commerce and exchange do not account for all the goods which crossed the frontiers into *Barbaricum*. A high, though incalculable, proportion of the luxury goods, especially the fine vessels of silver but perhaps also including bronzes and glass, will have arrived as gifts from legates and other officials to Germanic leaders and their adherents. Such gifts had long formed part of the currency of Roman diplomacy, the need for which was greater in the third century than ever before. Individual finds can rarely be identified with total confidence as the result of trade

[36] Kolnik (1978). [37] Wielowiejski (1975).

rather than gift-exchange, and this must temper the ways in which this exotic material is viewed and related to the contemporary socio-economic scene. The same goes for the finds of Roman gold and silver coinage in Germania.

Coinage in the precious metals, especially *denarii*, continued to enter Germania and occurs in hoards, in votive deposits, in graves, and more rarely as single finds on settlement sites.[38] It is clear that the stream of gold and silver coinage reached a limited social group and most of it remained within that milieu. The great bulk of the recorded *denarii* are of emperors down to Commodus, but the evidence of many archaeological contexts demonstrates that second-century coins continued in use throughout the third century and well beyond (as the grave of Childeric (*d.* 482) indicates). As with the fine metalwork, certain areas attracted more coinage than others. The island of Zealand is again to the fore, though Bornholm became more prominent in the fourth century. Gotland has produced some 6,000 *denarii* from various finds, though a high proportion probably reached the island in or after the fourth century. *Aurei* are everywhere scarcer and more even in their distribution before 400. After that date there began the great stream of gold to the islands of Gotland, Öland and Bornholm, much of it probably payments by eastern emperors to barbarian leaders. Hoards of the mid-third century occur across central Germania and clearly attest the disturbances of that period.[39] A series of gold hoards of the years 255–75 includes coinages struck by the Gallic emperors in Cologne and Trier and these may represent military payments to Germanic warriors in the service of the Gallic empire. The presence of so much precious metal struck to a standard weight appears to have stimulated the adoption of a system of weights by the northern Germanic peoples during the third century. The weights of gold neck-rings and other ornaments seem to follow a standard close to that of the Roman world. At the same time, finds of balanced scales appear in the archaeological record, suggesting that the weight of individual objects, including coins, was a matter of more general concern.

Given the increased flow of gold and silver into Germania in the second century (both metals being very scarce in the natural resources of central and northern Europe), it is not surprising that working in these materials made considerable advances from this time onward. Artistically, a significant role seems to have been played by craftsmen in the northern lands and around the western Baltic.[40] It has long been argued that 'Gothic' influences from the Black Sea/lower Danube region were formative in the development of new techniques and styles of ornament. This is clearly too simplistic an explanation of a complex cultural phenomenon. Many of the developments

[38] Lund Hansen (1987); Lind (1988).
[39] Laser (1980); Bursche (1996). [40] Nylen (1968).

in design are to be referred to the complex cultural heritage of the middle and lower Danube basin, not to one group of peoples nor one region.[41] Some of the artistic influences did stem from the area to the north of the Black Sea; others were generated in the Roman frontier provinces. The rapidity with which new styles of ornament and new techniques of craftsmanship spread over huge distances is extraordinary. The magnificent gold neck-ring found at Havor on Gotland is the earliest well-dated gold ornament of large size yet known in the Germanic north. Dating to the second century, it has close analogues in south Russia and may have been made there. Gift-exchange at a high level may have carried this superb object to its eventual burial-place on Gotland, along with six imported Roman bronze vessels. The Havor torc was soon followed by other gold ornaments and this number was significantly increased as gold became more readily available in the third century.

The rapidity with which the new techniques of craftsmanship and the new styles of ornament spread is extraordinary. Within a few decades of A.D. 200/230 the foundations of a soundly based tradition of working in gold were laid down. There were influences from the Roman provinces which need further elucidation. The decorative friezes on buckets of the Hemmoor type clearly stimulated imitation and presented a range of animal forms upon which endless variations could be played. One of the most formative developments of the third century involved the use of gold and silver-gilt foils, often over repoussé ornament. Such foils were applied to a variety of objects, beakers, ornamental discs and brooches. The two silver beakers from Himlinghøje on the island of Zealand, with their friezes of galloping animals and human figures, and the phalera from Thorsbjerg with its procession of sea creatures and deer, exemplify the new developments of the early to mid-third century. Another innovation of the period was to have far-reaching effects on Germanic design: the use of coloured stones set in gold and silver. Brooches of gold and silver, encrusted with semi-precious or other coloured stones, appear in rich graves from the mid-third century, and set the fashion for centuries to come. The brooch from Aarslev on the island of Fyn combines garnet settings with gold filigree and the later graves at Hassleben contain early examples of garnets on gold and silver objects. The inspiration for these designs is not to be sought solely in the 'Gothic' regions north of the Black Sea. At this same time, Roman jewellery was also tending towards a more ornate style in which inset stones were widely used.

Another development which had far-reaching consequences for Germanic art and design was the increased employment of figured motifs, both animal and human. Among the earliest Germanic objects to reveal the

[41] Nylen (1968).

trend is a shield-boss from Herpály (Hungary), with its fantastic creatures in sheet silver. One of the Roman phalerae from Thorsbjerg had animal figures in gold added by a Germanic craftsman to the classical designs in the outer zone of the disc.[42] Animal and human figures also began to appear on more mundane objects, small bronzes, mounts, pottery vessels. The most favoured motifs were deer, boar and cattle, the deer often being shown in rapid movement and with the head turned back over the shoulder. The human figure remains relatively rare before the fourth century and even then tends to appear in stylized form.

One of the most interesting cultural developments of the later second century, so far as this can be discerned, is the advent of runes.[43] The earliest runic signs occur after about A.D. 150 on weapons, chiefly spear-heads, shield-bosses and scabbards, and on large brooches and combs. The early runes are very brief, giving the name of the owner or the giver of the object or quoting some epithet deemed appropriate to its functioning. Many runic signs cannot be interpreted and it can only be guessed that they were usually invocations to increase the effectiveness of a weapon or to give protection to its user. Each of the twenty-four principal signs in the runic *futhorc* (alphabet) had its own peculiar meaning, often symbolic in origin, such as the rune for aurochs, denoting strength, or for birch, symbolizing fertility. The earliest runic inscriptions are found in the western Baltic islands and in southern Scandinavia. Ultimately, the signs appear to be derived from north Italic letter forms, though how these were transmitted to the north has not yet been adequately explained. The use of signs on perishable material such as wood is an obvious possibility; the marking of twigs by signs used in augury was known to Tacitus. But it is surprising that no single rune is reported on any object before the late second century. Thereafter, the great majority are concentrated in the western Baltic lands down to the fourth century. Very few runes have been recorded from the regions occupied by Goths, Franks, Alamanni and Vandals before the fifth century.

A steadily increasing competence is also evident in the manufacture of iron implements and weapons. Iron was much more freely available to the Germanic peoples than Roman writers either believed or chose to convey, and far more efficient use was made of the metal than can be deduced from written sources.[44] Large-scale extraction of iron ore and the skilled production of iron are attested in several parts of Germania, the most important centres being the Lysa Gora hills in Poland, Silesia, Bohemia, Slovakia, Moravia, the Ruhr and Lippe valleys and Schleswig-Holstein. The iron deposits in the Lysa Gora hills were particularly rich and efforts were made to mine the ore by means of adits and underground galleries. This same region has produced evidence for the smelting of iron on a huge scale, several

[42] Werner (1941). [43] Krause and Jankuhn (1966). [44] Pleiner (1964).

sites revealing extensive batteries of furnaces. The scale of this enterprise in the third and fourth centuries was such as to pose the question whether all the metal produced was destined for use in Germania or whether some of it was traded to the Roman provinces on the Danube. Impressive, though less extensive, evidence for manufacture comes from Schleswig-Holstein, Jutland, Bohemia and Moravia, with a marked tendency towards an increase in production from the late second century onward. The social basis for this central industrial activity is poorly understood at present. It is likely that leaders and other landowners controlled much of the extraction and production of iron, but they can hardly have exercised strict jurisdiction over so widespread an activity. The processes of smelting and smithing obviously imply a measure of specialization, but the mechanisms of organization and distribution are virtually unknown. The centralized manufactories in Lysa Gora and Silesia presumably sent out finished iron, either in the form of blooms or rough castings, along well-established trade routes. The status of iron smiths was carefully defined in the later Germanic law codes and it is a reasonable surmise that they enjoyed a relatively elevated position in earlier Germanic society. But whether or not they operated independently of chieftain patrons or other masters is not revealed by present evidence. The existence of a number of smiths' graves in several areas of Germania, however, containing specialist tools as well as the equipment of a warrior, is suggestive of a measure of independence, as well as a recognized and honoured social rank.

A wide range of other crafts also developed during the period. Working in wood is attested not only by finds of tools such as chisels, awls, adzes, axes, augers, planes and mallets, but more strikingly by the remains of large and ambitious timber structures, including long-houses, funerary chambers, water cisterns, wells and shafts. The survival of parts of houses above their foundations at sites such as Feddersen Wierde and Ezinge reveals a high standard of construction in wood. Such expertise must have extended to the roof structures, now vanished but demanding a high competence in carpentry and building techniques. Various forms of jointing were employed in the larger structures, including the scarf joint, the mortice and tenon, and tongue and groove. The carpenter's lathe was in use in the northern regions, as is demonstrated by the survival of thin-walled wooden vessels. At Feddersen Wierde, rubbish from lathe-turning indicates the presence of a skilled carpenter. Sophisticated work in wood was also required for the building of sea-going craft, though this is not yet represented in the third-century record. The boat from Halsnøy in Norway is a simple boat and it is not until the fourth century that the surviving ship from Nydam reveals a seaworthy rowed vessel that might have conveyed raiders or migrants in northern waters. Even then, the Nydam ship seems better suited to the low tidal Baltic than to the North Sea. Late Roman sources speak of

barbarians using ships with sails, but none has been certainly attested by archaeology.

Cult-places of several kinds are strongly in evidence from the end of the second century and a number remained in use until the fourth or fifth centuries. The most famous and productive of material are the great votive deposits in peat-bogs in Denmark and northern Germany, though other sites may well have been as significant in their own contexts. More recent examination of votive deposits at Illerup and Ejsbøl, both in southern Denmark, has afforded clearer detail on these kinds of deposition than was provided by the pioneering work of Engelhardt in the nineteenth century. There are, however, still many uncertainties of interpretation which defy the investigator.

The Thorsbjerg deposit,[45] or deposits, near Schleswig, has been extensively studied, though debate still rages over details of its history. Early deposits of pottery and probably perishable offerings gave way early in the third century to a large deposit of war-gear, including swords and scabbards, spears and lances, knives, shields, horse-harness and ornamental items, including the well-known Roman decorated phalerae. This material seems to have been deposited at one time by the victors after a successful engagement. One of the interesting features of the Thorsbjerg deposit is that it contains a considerable number of brooches which are not native to the Thorsbjerg area but come from the region between the lower Elbe and the Rhine. This may be a pointer to the origin of the defeated force, though it does not explain the presence of Roman material.

This interpretation of the Thorsbjerg find, as one dominated by objects deposited at one time, is in accord with the results of a recent study of a votive deposit in water at Illerup, near Aarhus.[46] Here a huge quantity of weapons and other war equipment was deposited widely in a lake some 400 metres by 325 metres at a date which can be set at about A.D. 200. More than 10,000 single objects have been found, representing the equipment of several hundred warriors. More than a hundred swords were sacrificed, about half of them bearing stamps indicating Roman manufacture. Most, if not all, of the other swords also appear to be Roman. At Illerup, as at Thorsbjerg, a single act of deposition was made at one time, presumably after a successful battle, in which Roman weaponry had been widely deployed.

Broadly contemporary with Thorsbjerg and Illerup is the votive deposit at Vimose, which also includes Roman weapons, a complete mail garment, brooches and tools.[47] These three deposits suggest a period of turbulence in the north in the early third century, with competing groups from the western Baltic and from the Elbe–Weser region coming to blows. The

[45] Raddatz (1967). [46] Ilkjaer and Lønstrup (1983). [47] Engelhardt (1869).

general historical context, a period when new tribal groupings were in the making, is an entirely plausible one for serious warfare.

A large number of smaller cult-places are known in northern Germania, many of them in peat-bogs, pools, springs and streams. Their significance is difficult to assess in detail, but there is an understandable emphasis upon cults of fertility. At some of these sanctuaries wooden, roughly anthropomorphic idols were set up, some of the largest, as at Braak in Holstein, being 3 metres high. Occasionally, these figures occur in pairs, male and female. Sanctuaries on dry land are less frequently recorded and their chance of survival and recognition is much slighter. As among the earlier Celtic peoples, sacred woods and groves were venerated and embellished with offerings which might include war-prisoners and other war-trophies. Cult-shafts and pits are another shared link with Celtic practice. The sacrifice of human victims played some role in cult, but it is difficult to assess its frequency or significance. Some of the human bodies[48] found in peat-bogs may have been sacrificial victims, but this is rarely demonstrable. Aside from the bodies in bogs, human remains occur in recognizably votive deposits throughout the late Iron Age, often in association with animal remains, weapons and implements.

The decades following the Marcomannic wars clearly witnessed formative changes in the social and political structure of the Germanic peoples. New groupings appeared which were more than tribes, less than early states. Interaction with the Roman world had done its work and the processes set in motion would continue for the next two centuries. Close to the Roman frontiers, societies had begun to emerge which were neither Roman nor barbarian, and these would play their part in the later transformation of the west. Roman and barbarian drew closer together in a complex relationship which provided elements to the final phase of Roman power in western Europe.

[48] Dieck (1965); Glob (1969).

CHAPTER 14

THE SASSANIANS

RICHARD N. FRYE

1. INTRODUCTION

The circumstances of the last years of Parthian rule and the rise of the Sassanians are not well known because of scanty and conflicting information in our sources.[1] Unfortunately the second century of our era in the east is especially dark even though it was a time of great change from the past. In

[1] The principal sources for the early period of Sassanian history are: GREEK: Agathias, Cassius Dio, Malalas; LATIN: Ammianus Marcellinus, the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (*SHA*); ARABIC: Tabari, Thaʿalibi, *Ghurar*, Yaʿqubi, *Taʾrikh*, Ibn Qutaiba, Dinawari, Masʿudi; PERSIAN: Firdosi, Balʿami, *Fars nameh*; ARMENIAN: Agathangelos, Moses of Chorene; SYRIAC: Chronicle of Edessa, Chronicle of Arbela, Elias of Nisibis, Michael the Syrian, Acts of the Martyrs. The inscriptions of Shapur (Greek, Parthian and Middle Persian), and Narseh (Parthian and Middle Persian) are prime sources, whereas all of the literary sources are both fragmentary and at times contradictory. Details of selected editions and translations are as follows:

Sassanian inscriptions: These may be found in Back (1978), to which may be added Humbach and Skjaervø, *Paikuli* (vol. III.1 has text and English translation, III.2 the commentary). The *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (*ŠKZ*) have recently been re-edited in the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum III.1.1 (Huyse, *ŠKZ*, 2 vols. including German translation). The Middle Persian *Karnamak* of Ardashir (Antiâ (1900)) is a romantic account of the founder of the dynasty, and has as much validity as Xenophon on Cyrus. A Middle Persian geography has been translated by Markwart (1931).

Classical writings: Published in the Teubner or Loeb series and the *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum* (*FHG*), these include Cassius Dio, Herodian, Dexippus (*FGrH* II.A, no. 100), and, for the wars between Romans and Persians, 'Trebellius Polio' on Valerian, etc. in the *SHA*.

Less detailed later sources include: Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* (CSEL XXVII); Eusebius' *Chronicle* (Helm 1984) and *Ecclesiastical History*; S. Aurelius Victor; and Petrus Patricius (*FHG* IV.184–9). Agathias (Keydell 1967), although later, has information about the early Sassanians. Later classical writers, such as Ammianus Marcellinus and the Byzantine historians, are concerned with later periods of Sassanian history.

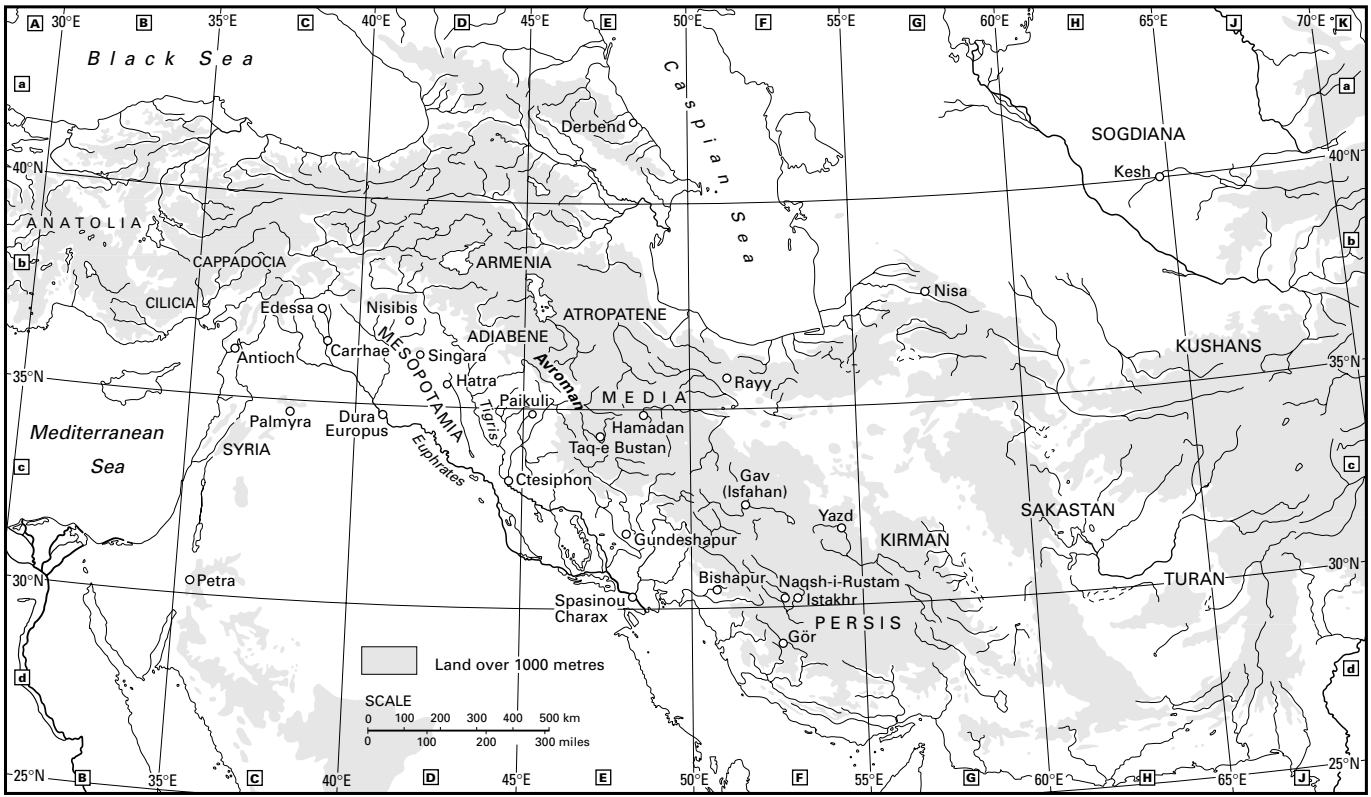
Armenian sources in translation: all are late but have items about the early Sassanians, Agathangelos (Thomson 1976), Moses of Chorene (Thomson 1978). Faustus of Byzantium has several details but is unreliable (Langlois 1867–9).

Syriac sources in translation: *The Chronicle of Arbela* (Sachau 1915) has information on the rise of the Sassanians not found elsewhere, but the text is suspect as a forgery. The Acts of the Christian Martyrs also has material not found elsewhere: cf. Hoffmann (1880) and Braun (1915).

Arabic and Persian sources: Tabari's history is the primary source, which later authors copied (trans. Nöldeke 1879). Other sources for various items may be found in the secondary writings below.

Selected texts in English translation on the Roman–Persian wars of the period, can be found in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*; cf. French translations in Gagé (1964).

Secondary sources: Christensen (1944) is the standard work, also Frye, *Iran* (HAW III.7), and Yarshater, *CHI* III. Further bibliographies will be found in these volumes.



Map 6 The Sassanian empire

the realm of native written sources alone, for example, we have inscriptions from the middle Parthian period dating from the first century of our era in Nisa (present Turkmenistan) and Avroman (in Kurdistan) which have been characterized as written in degenerate Aramaic, whereas in the third century the Parthian versions of inscriptions of early Sassanian rulers can be read only as Parthian. This is an indication of a change from a continuation of the past to a new world, which is further suggested by the change from a 'feudal' Parthian state to a centralized Sassanian empire. Furthermore, the state of Zoroastrianism under the Parthians as a loosely organized company of priests contrasts sharply with the hierarchically formed state church of the Sassanians. Briefly, the later Parthian age may be characterized roughly as a time of many semi-independent principalities, varieties of religious expression and flourishing trading centres, such as Petra, Palmyra, Hatra and Spasinou Charax on trade routes leading to the Persian gulf and India. The Sassanian empire, on the other hand, had a centralized court and bureaucracy with a state church organization paralleling the hierarchy of the state, and the trading centres, especially the 'caravan cities' as Rostovtzeff called them, were destroyed or absorbed into either the Roman or Sassanian empires.

The Romans, however, in 193 only saw a weak Parthian state whose vassal kingdoms were almost as powerful as, and at times even more dangerous than, the Parthians themselves. Armenia was a perennial source of conflict between the two great powers, but internal wars between rival claimants to the throne of Augustus caused more trouble for the Romans than corresponding conflicts among Parthian pretenders to the throne of Arsaces. The Syrian desert provided an effective barrier between the Roman and Parthian domains but in the north the area between the upper Tigris and Euphrates rivers remained a theatre of warfare, and the advance and retreat of boundaries throughout the second and third centuries dominate our history of relations between the two states. To understand better those relations we should ask what was happening in the Roman east in the last thirty years of Parthian rule.

Seen from the east the expansion of the Roman empire by annexation of allied or client kingdoms was a continuing threat to the independence of those peoples not yet under Roman sway. In 106 the Nabataean kingdom was incorporated into the Roman Provincia Arabia and this was followed by Trajan's conquests in the east with the formation of several provinces including Mesopotamia. This new arrangement of provinces and boundaries seems to have had a turbulent existence with varying fortunes until the time of Septimius Severus. The existence of pro- and anti-Roman factions in the cities of the Roman east is attested by classical sources, and those who were unhappy with Roman rule frequently looked to the Parthians for support. The Parthians, however, were not in control of all their provinces and

client states at the end of the second century, and the capture of Ctesiphon, their capital, by Septimius Severus in 197 boded ill for all of the enemies of Rome. The rise of a new power in Fars province (ancient Persis) changed the picture, however, and the Romans were faced with unforeseen and additional problems on their eastern frontier. The main danger came from an energetic ruler with expansionist aims, Ardashir son of Papak, a local ruler in Persis or Fars province.

II. THE EARLY SASSANIANS

The rise of the Sassanians is better documented than subsequent history, but even so there are conflicting versions of the origin of Ardashir. The native, Persian tradition, as found in a Middle Persian book called the *Karnamak* (Book of Deeds) of Ardashir son of Papak and in the eleventh-century *Shahname* (Book of Kings) of Firdosi, as well as a scurrilous adaption of this story by Agathias, has Sassan, after whom the dynasty was named, as the real father of Ardashir and husband of Papak's daughter, the mother of Ardashir. When we turn to the *Res Gestae* of Shapur, son and successor of Ardashir, an inscription in three languages, Middle Persian, Parthian and Greek, on an ancient stone structure at Naqsh-i-Rustam, called today the Kaʿba of Zoroaster, we find Papak, Ardashir and Shapur mentioned in succession with their important courtiers, but Sassan appears only with the title of 'lord,' whereas Papak is a king, while both Ardashir and his son hold the title 'king of kings'. The difference between these last two is only that Ardashir is called king of kings of Iran, whereas Shapur has 'Iran and Aniran' (non-Iran). This indicates the growing power and domains of the successive rulers, but Sassan is mentioned apart and not as the father of Papak, as the ninth-century Arabic history of Tabari has it. Only here, and in later sources which copy Tabari's history, do we find mention of Sassan as the father of Papak. Normally one would suppose that Sassan was the eponymous ancestor of the dynasty, but then we should explain the curious story that he married Papak's daughter and was the father of Ardashir. There seems to be no propagandistic reason for inventing the story, and its existence is indeed enigmatic. One possible solution, however, is that Sassan was the real father of Ardashir but died when the latter was a child, so Papak adopted him and was his legal but not natural father. Another source, the Middle Persian text called the *Bundahishn* (ch. 35), claims that Sassan was the father-in-law of Papak which may fit better into information about relationships from Shapur's inscription. In that inscription Rudak is designated the mother of Ardashir and Mirdut is the mother of Shapur while Dinak, called 'queen of queens', is a daughter of Papak, hence a sister of Ardashir, and perhaps his wife according to Zoroastrian next-of-kin marriage practice. In any case, there is a problem about the origin of

Ardashir and his relationship to Sassan and whether he was a natural or adopted son of Papak.

In Tabari and the sources which follow his work, as well as in the Paikuli inscription of Narses, a son of Papak called Shapur is mentioned as his successor. Tabari further says that Ardashir revolted against Shapur, whereupon the latter marched against him but was killed in an accident presumably at the ruins of Persepolis. Unfortunately the context of the inscription of Paikuli in which king Shapur appears is unclear because of long lacunae. One may suggest that Narses, in that inscription, sought to compare his succession to the throne with that of his grandfather Ardashir. Just as Ardashir had succeeded Shapur, Narses may have contended that he should have succeeded Hormizd-Ardashir, whereas in fact Vahran I did. Otherwise there is no apparent reason for Narses to mention king Shapur, son of Papak, in his inscription, especially since no other inscription does mention him. The relationships between the early Sassanians – Sassan, Papak, Shapur and Ardashir – remain unclear.

Another inscription, in Middle Persian and Parthian, on a pillar in the city of Bishapur, Fars, is dated in three dates, the year 58 of some era, perhaps the declaration of independence of the Sassanians from the Parthians, corresponding to the year 40 of the fire of Ardashir and the year 24 of the fire of Shapur. By fire, presumably is meant the coronation or the beginning of the first year of rule of the sovereign when his royal fire was started. According to best estimates this would give the years 224 and 240 as the beginning of the reigns of Ardashir and Shapur, respectively. Another inscription in Middle Persian at Barm-e Dilak near Shiraz, which tells of the foundation of a fire temple by the master of ceremonies of the private quarters of Shapur, says that in the third year of the monarch's reign the Romans attacked the Persians and Parthians, which must refer to the campaign of the emperor Gordian in 243. So the date 240 should now be accepted for the accession of Shapur rather than one of the conflicting dates in Greek, Latin or Syriac sources, and this would place Ardashir's accession in 224. But even before that date we can reconstruct some of the background to his rise to power in the geographically homogeneous province of Fars in southern Iran with a reservoir of manpower.

The first capital of Ardashir in Fars most likely was at Firuzabad, then known as Gor, although later in the reign of Ardashir it received the name Ardashir-khwarreh 'the glory of A', probably in honour of his victories over the Parthians. Today the ruins of two palaces and two rock reliefs of Ardashir attest his attachment to the circular town and its surroundings. Here he built his power base and expanded control over neighbouring rulers in Fars until he felt strong enough to challenge the Parthians. In the first decades of the third century both Artabanus (MP Ardawan) and Vologaeses contested for supremacy, which probably allowed Ardashir to consolidate

his authority in the south with little or no interference from the Parthians. So the weakness of the Parthian state as well as internal strife enabled the Sassanians to prepare for a meeting with the Parthians for control of all of Iran.

As mentioned, another factor which aided the rise to supremacy of the Sassanians was the geography of Fars province which separated it from the rest of Iran by highlands to the north and a depression and desert to the east, with the Persian gulf to the west and south. It had a kind of self-contained geographical unity as well as sufficient manpower to give an ambitious ruler the means to conquer other parts of Iran not so favoured by geography and population concentration as Fars. How was Ardashir able to rally support for his plan to unite all of Iran under his rule?

The lack of sources hinders a reconstruction of the history of Iran, so we can only speculate on the propaganda employed by Ardashir to unite support behind him. According to Herodian and other authors[2] Ardashir proclaimed the restoration of the empire of the Achaemenids, but on the Iranian side this intention is nowhere attested, and it can have been only a vague memory if such an idea existed at all – for later Iranian tradition, as recorded in Arabic and New Persian books, has no mention of the Achaemenids and the name Cyrus is completely forgotten.

It is clear that Ardashir had to subdue many local rulers in Fars, as the legendary *Karnamak* or 'Book of Deeds' of Ardashir describes, although one can place no faith in the historicity of various episodes in this work. It seems certain, however, that over ten years were spent by Ardashir in consolidating his power in Fars. It was probably only when he moved against local rulers outside of Fars that he roused the ire of the Parthians to the north of the province. One can only speculate about the relations between Artabanus and Vologaeses, both of whom struck coins which are the sole indications of a division of power and authority between two Parthian rulers. From the findspots of coins one might conclude that Vologaeses held sway in parts of Mesopotamia while Artabanus ruled in Media and northern Iran. Since there is no mention of conflict between Ardashir and Vologaeses in eastern sources, it is possible that the latter had been defeated by Artabanus or lost power before Artabanus met Ardashir in combat.

It is uncertain whether the two sides fought a number of battles of which only the last one was decisive, or there was only one battle of Hormizdagan which Artabanus lost as well as his life. The location of the battle is unknown, although attempts have been made to identify it as a site in Media. In any case, we may assume that after that battle Ardashir was proclaimed king of kings of Iran, as his title in inscriptions appears, and afterwards a ceremony was held in which his royal fire was kindled,

[2] Herod. VI.2.2 and Dio, LXXX.4.

perhaps in a fire temple dedicated to the goddess Anahita in Istakhr near the ruins of Persepolis. Since distinctive crowns appear on the coins or rock reliefs of the Sassanian rulers, we may assume that the ceremony included a crowning of the king and this was probably the year 224 for Ardashir.

After the death of Artabanus most of the Parthian great lords surrendered to Ardashir, although there may have been some local skirmishes to secure their allegiance. Members of the great families such as the Karen and Suren were brought to the court of Ardashir and members of the family of Ardashir were then appointed kings of various provinces. Although they held the titles of king they really served as governors on behalf of the centralized government instituted by Ardashir. Only in Armenia did an Arsacid ruler of the fallen Parthian dynasty maintain both his independence from and opposition to the Sassanians. One can only speculate about the extent of opposition to the establishment of Sassanian hegemony over Iran and Mesopotamia, but Ardashir in a few years had consolidated his power and was strong enough to move against the Kushans in the east and the Romans in the west not long after his accession.

All we know about early Sassanian conquests in the east is a notice in Tabari that the king of the Kushans submitted to Ardashir, and in the inscription *ŠKZ* we find the inclusion of the realm of the Kushans, 'extending to the borders of Peshawar, Sogdiana and Kashgar (or Kesh, mod. Sharizabz, Uzbekistan)', in the empire of Shapur I, son of Ardashir. The dates of any battles and the submission of the Kushans are unknown, but, since we do know that the Kushans ruled extensively on the sub-continent of India, one may presume that only a western kingdom of the Kushans came under some sort of Sassanian suzerainty. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the Sassanians always had an eastern frontier which caused them as much concern as their western marches against the Romans, although the latter were considered the more powerful adversary.

Ardashir not only defeated local rulers but, unlike the Parthians who usually left them on their thrones as clients or vassals, the Sassanian ruler removed many of them and appointed members of his family as his lieutenants. In the *ŠKZ* inscription there was an Ardashir king of Merv, another Sassanian king of Kirman and still a third Ardashir king of the Sakas all under Ardashir king of kings. Presumably they were members of the extended royal family of the Sassanians. Under Shapur the court appears to have become more centralized as well as expanded in size and parallel to the state went an organization of the Zoroastrian church. Before examining the internal problems of the Sassanian empire, however, a survey of the wars with Rome during the third century will set any internal history in a larger context, since the Iranians were much influenced by their western neighbours.

It seems that Ardashir, after conquests on the Iranian plateau and in the east, turned his attention to the Roman frontier where his first goals were the caravan oasis fortress of Hatra and the city of Nisibis to the north of the former. The date of this campaign is uncertain, but a time of about 230 appears likely. Ardashir was unable to capture either place, but his troops raided to the west of both. The new young Roman emperor, Severus Alexander, sought peace but apparently was rebuffed so he led an army to the east in 231 and the following year counter-attacked with three army divisions, one advancing into Armenia, one to the south along the Euphrates and the middle one with the emperor at its head to Singara. According to Herodian[3] the southern column was defeated and the entire expedition was abandoned after which Hatra requested and received a Roman garrison inside its walls. Under a new emperor Maximinus Thrax, the Romans were on the defensive and Ardashir again invaded Roman territory, capturing Nisibis and Carrhae (or Harran) in 237 and 238. In 240 Hatra fell to the Sassanians and shortly afterwards Shapur succeeded his father. Edessa and Dura Europus, as well as other towns, remained in Roman hands. Ardashir had to face another Roman emperor Gordian III who opened hostilities with an advance in 242 into Mesopotamia where Carrhae, Singara, Nisibis and other towns came again under Roman suzerainty. The architect of Roman success was the praetorian prefect Timesitheus, father-in-law of Gordian, but he died either accidentally or of sickness and Gordian met Shapur in a battle at Misiche (Massice or MP *mšyk*) in 244, where he too perished and was succeeded by Philip the Arabian who himself had succeeded Timesitheus. Shapur received 500,000 *denarii* as ransom for Roman prisoners and peace was established between the two powers while the site of the victory was renamed Perozshapur, 'Shapur's victory'. From all sources it does not seem that the Romans ceded any territory to Shapur and rather the *status quo* was maintained for a number of years.

Shapur, in his inscription, says that, because the Roman Caesar lied and did wrong to Armenia, Shapur attacked the empire. The date of this second war is uncertain but it was probably almost a decade after the death of Gordian. During that period we may presume that Shapur not only consolidated his empire, perhaps with further conquests in the east but most likely he also fought against the Armenians. In spite of confusion in our sources (both Greek and Armenian but no Persian sources), we may suggest the following scenario. Chosroes, king of Armenia, was assassinated and the Sassanian ruler took advantage of that event to annex Armenia, the dates of which are unknown but *c.* 251. Then Tiridates, son of the dead king, fled to Roman territory and this may have been the *casus belli* which

[3] Herod. VI.2–6.

Shapur used to justify his attack about the year 252. He captured several towns and then destroyed a Roman army of 60,000 men at Barbalissus (Balis) on the large bend of the Euphrates to the north. After this victory the Sassanian army seems to have split into several parts, raiding from Hierapolis (Manbij) and many towns were pillaged. This campaign of Shapur probably lasted several years, but the sequence of events is much disputed. Antioch, the Roman capital of the east, was captured twice by the Sassanians, but we do not know the date of the conquests, either 253 or 256 and 260 after the capture of Valerian in Shapur's third campaign. Dura Europus was captured by the Persians in 256, in which year Demetrianos, Christian patriarch of Antioch, was led into captivity by the Persians and settled in a new town in Khuzistan called later Gundeshapur. These two events suggest that Antioch was taken in 256 rather than 253, although numismatic evidence would favour the latter date. Conceivably, the city was taken three times, but we do not know.

In any case, the entire period was one of war and pillage in Syria, Cappadocia and Cilicia, with the Romans on the defensive. In his inscription the list of cities captured by Shapur indicates the routes followed by his armies, although problems of identification of sites exist which have been much discussed. The sequence of events in the third campaign of Shapur is also uncertain, but again the best guess is that Shapur was besieging Edessa and Carrhae when the emperor Valerian with 70,000 men met the Persians in battle near Edessa. Valerian and his officers probably sought to make peace with Shapur but were captured and, together with others captured in the localities seized by the Persians, were brought as prisoners and settled in Sassanian domains. After the capture of Valerian, probably in 260, many towns in Roman territory were taken by the Sassanians, including again Antioch.

The unexampled capture of a Roman emperor and Shapur's victories over other emperors were commemorated in five extant stone carvings in Fars province. But Shapur did not reap the fruits of his conquests in the west with the weakness of the Roman empire. Rather it was Odenathus, the ruler of the Roman client oasis state of Palmyra, who expanded his domains. A question at once arises, why the far-reaching conquests of Shapur did not last and how a local ruler could defeat the Sassanians who had just secured such a resounding victory over the Romans. The answer to this is probably that Shapur had no intention of re-establishing the boundaries of the Achaemenid empire, as some in the Roman empire may have thought, because first Shapur probably did not know about the Achaemenids, and second he was primarily interested in booty and prisoners, not in permanent conquest. Furthermore, one should not underestimate the wealth and power of Palmyra, last of the 'caravan cities' of the Near East. Hatra, Charax in Mesene and the Nabataeans had succumbed to the two great empires,

but Palmyra had grown richer than previously without much competition. Whether Odenathus had tried to come to some accommodation with Shapur but had been rebuffed, as some sources suggest, is uncertain, but it is plausible. Furthermore, Odenathus became the defender of Roman interests, and it probably was he who reconquered Carrhae and Nisibis from the Persians. It appears that the Persians had little desire to try to repeat Shapur's successful campaigns, or they may have been occupied in the eastern part of their realm, although there is no information about inner Sassanian affairs. Also after his campaigns in the west Shapur must have been satisfied as well as tired and, of course, aged. Although military actions are not recorded, they are not to be excluded, and the last years of Shapur's reign seem to have been relatively peaceful for the Persians.

Likewise the reign of Hormizd-Ardashir, son of Shapur (*c.* 272–3), was not only short but presumably involved no wars against the Romans. The succession of Vahran I, however, was not universally accepted by all members of the royal family or aristocracy, for Narses, after his accession to the throne caused the name of Vahran I to be excised from a rock relief inscription in Bishapur and his own name substituted. Obviously Narses thought he should have succeeded to the throne instead of Vahran, and he must have had partisans. Vahran I ruled for three years, and we hear of no military actions against Rome, but Mani met his death in the last year of Vahran's rule who, unlike his grandfather Shapur, was hostile to this founder of a new religion. The accession of Vahran II, son of Vahran I, brought to the fore unrest among those Persians opposed to the Vahrans. Sometime during the reign of Vahran II his brother, or more likely a cousin, called Hormizd, revolted in the east and issued coins calling himself *shahanshah*, 'king of kings'. This probably happened towards the end of Vahran II's rule, but problems must have beset the ruler from the outset, for the Roman emperor Carus took the opportunity to invade Sassanian territory. He advanced as far as Ctesiphon the capital in 283 when unexpectedly he died, and the Roman army retreated, leaving the situation between the two empires unclear since there is no evidence for a peace treaty between them. The revolt of Hormizd in the east probably was the reason why Vahran II sent presents to the new Roman emperor Diocletian in 288 and made some kind of an agreement with him. Definite information about this, however, is lacking, but Diocletian did restore king Tiridates, an Arsacid prince who had fled to Roman territory, over part of Armenia while Narses, a now elderly son of Shapur I, ruled most of Armenia on behalf of Vahran II. From the mention of Tiridates, king of Armenia, in the Paikuli inscription as a ruler who either came or sent an emissary to the accession of Narses in 293, one might tentatively conclude that some agreement had been made about rule over Armenia which enabled Narses to leave Armenia and secure his position as *shahanshah* of the Sassanian state. After consolidating his

rule, however, Narses invaded Armenia in 296 and again Tiridates fled to the Romans.

Since Diocletian was occupied in Egypt, he sent his Caesar Galerius against Narses who met the Romans and defeated them somewhere in upper Mesopotamia. Diocletian was not happy with the defeat of his Caesar, and he prepared for a counter-stroke. Galerius led one army into Armenia while Diocletian advanced into northern Mesopotamia. Narses, who had concentrated his army in Armenia, was surprised by Galerius and decisively defeated. Rich booty and prisoners, including Narses' queen Arsane, his sisters and children, fell into Galerius' hands although Narses himself escaped. How far the Romans pursued their defeated enemy is unknown, but Galerius, since he rejoined his Augustus Diocletian in Nisibis, and from an inscription on a triumphal arch in Thessalonica where he is called *Persicus Maximus*, *Armeniacus, Medicus* and *Adiabenicus*, might be assumed to have campaigned in Armenia and Media, as well as Adiabene which is next to the territory of Nisibis. In any case, according to the account given by Petrus Patricius,[4] after lengthy negotiations and the exchange of ambassadors, Narses had to cede to the Romans all lands to the west of the Tigris river which lay north of present-day Mosul, and the river was declared to be the boundary between the two empires. Armenia with a restored king, Tiridates also received land in Atropatene and Azerbaijan, probably south of lake Urmia, as part of the settlement. Finally the town of Nisibis was designated as the sole place where trade between the two states was allowed, which meant that Nisibis officially was the only town where tolls were collected and border control was exercised. In exchange for the losses to the Sassanian empire Narses received back his family from their captivity in Antioch where the Romans had kept them.

Diocletian remained in the east after the conclusion of the peace, probably early in 299. For several years afterwards Diocletian restored and extended the *limes* system, and built forts or camps, in the newly conquered areas, and the army and border troops were also reorganized. Both this activity, as well as the advanced age of Narses, followed by the quiet reign of his son Hormizd II (302–9), kept peace between the two empires. The reign of Hormizd was followed by a very short one of Adurnarseh, apparently his son, who was removed from the throne by the nobility because of his cruelty, according to several sources. Then followed the long reign of Shapur II (309–79) who was under the tutelage of the nobility and clergy during the first thirty years of his reign. So peace between the Romans and Sassanians lasted for forty years from the time of Narses and Diocletian, until Shapur II opened hostilities about 337, but this is a later story and is beyond this volume.

[4] Petrus Patricius, *fr.* 13 (*FHG* IV.188–9).

III. SASSANIAN RELATIONS WITH THE ROMANS

Although most scholars accept the assertions of several classical authors that Ardashir I and most of his successors sought to restore the Achaemenid empire in its fullest extent, as mentioned, there is no evidence that the Sassanians even knew about the Achaemenids. The Persians did have a mythological tradition of several ancient Iranian world empires, the last of which was brought to an end by Alexander the Great, but this 'history' had epic qualities. Even Seleucid and Parthian history was unclear, and it too was preserved in much the same epic style as the pre-Alexander period. Nonetheless, many institutions and features of Achaemenid rule were preserved or possibly even resuscitated by the Sassanians, who like the Achaemenids rose to power in Persis, modern Fars province. For example, the Achaemenid military institution of the élite corps called 'the immortals', seems to have been revived, if it did not continue in an attenuated form through the Parthian period, into Sassanian times.[5] If anything had been preserved throughout the span of more than half a millennium between Alexander and the Sassanians, it would have been in Persis more than elsewhere in the land.

The Sassanians respected and feared the mighty Roman empire and continued to designate the later Byzantine state by the same name, while they did not differentiate between Romans and Greeks, although they knew that different peoples lived in the enemy state and served in its armies. The Romans were the enemy *par excellence* for the Sassanians, although at times eastern and northern nomadic peoples were more of a threat and more dangerous than their western neighbours. The Romans too learned to respect the Sassanians more than they had the weaker Parthians, especially in the period of decline of the latter in the second century. Embassies between the two powers were considered as equals between two imperial states, perhaps more so by the Persian than by the Roman side.

Before the arrival of the Romans and the Sassanians in the fertile crescent this rich and important area was dominated by small merchant states or 'caravan cities' which engendered a flourishing trade and prosperity in the entire region. The absorption of the western group of these states by the Romans, the Nabataean kingdom under Trajan in 106, Edessa by Caracalla in 214 and finally Palmyra conquered by Aurelian in 272 was matched by Sassanian actions in the east. Spasinou Charax at the head of the Persian gulf was conquered by Ardashir early in his reign, and the last of the 'caravan cities' Hatra was taken by him at the end of his rule in 240. The result of both the Roman and the Sassanian elimination of the small trading states in the Near East was a decline in commerce and, from a military point

[5] Procopius, *Bella* 1.14.31.

of view, the dominance of a 'wall mentality' in both empires. The *limes* and the desert fortifications of Diocletian are well known but the Sassanian counterpart is less apparent. Just as the Romans, with their *limes* in Britain, on the Rhine and Danube, so the Sassanians constructed defensive walls on the edge of cultivated land facing the Syrian desert, in the Caucasus by Derbend, to the east of the Caspian Sea and in what is today western Afghanistan. The designation of Nisibis as the sole point of trade between the two empires was one fruit of this 'defensive' development. By the time of Constantine and Shapur II relations between the two states had settled into a stable pattern which was only interrupted by one side perceiving a weakness in the other and consequently attacking to add territory, usually in northern Mesopotamia or Armenia. The Persians for the most part were the aggressors since they considered much of the land added to the Roman empire in Parthian and early Sassanian times rightfully to belong to the Iranian sphere. Armenia, especially after its acceptance of Christianity, was continually an area of contention between the two great powers.

The military contests between the two led to changes in armament and tactics on both sides. Generally speaking, the growth in importance of heavily armed cavalry was a feature of the armies of both sides during the third and fourth centuries. Although much has been written about the *clibanarii* and *cataphracti* the history of the development of armoured horsemen, especially regarding the borrowings and influences between Romans and Persians, is unclear. From the Sassanian rock relief at Taq-e Bustan and archaeological finds of armour, it would seem that heavy cavalry was an important part of the army at the end of the sixth century, especially employed against the Romans. Central Asian nomads and the Arabs from the desert, however, with greater mobility proved more than a match later for the Sassanians.

The two empires had diplomatic and martial contacts as well as trade, but the most important contacts were between the peoples of the fertile crescent. By the third century the principal inhabitants of both the Sassanian and the Roman side of the 'crescent' were either Aramaic or rather Syriac speakers (including Palmyrene, Hatran and other dialects) or Arabic speakers, and the fastest growing religion in the entire area, of course, was Christianity. The history of migrations of Arab tribes into the land between the Tigris and Euphrates, as well as into Syria, is little known but it seems to have been an extended and slow process, and the later Arab buffer states of the Lakhmids on the Sassanian side and the Ghassanids on the Byzantine frontier were both heirs to the earlier 'caravan cities' as well as problems for the two empires. When Shapur II was still a child Arab tribesmen raided deep into Sassanian territory, and the king finally was obliged to mount a counter-attack deep into Arabia to punish the marauders, but when exactly this occurred and whether Arab lands were annexed is unknown.

The fourth and later centuries saw a growing 'nomadization' of the lowlands between the Mediterranean and the Iranian plateau. The disappearance of the 'caravan cities' surely contributed to this phenomenon and the growth of population among the bedouin tribes was another factor. Raids of Arab bedouin were a constant threat to the settled folk of the fertile crescent both on the Roman and on the Persian side, and the answer of both empires was to build walls and forts for defence against the attacks of the nomads. However, these measures only deterred but did not stop the Arabs. Finally, in the seventh century the Arabs, spurred by a new, militant religion, overthrew the Sassanian empire and the Near Eastern provinces of the Byzantine empire.

IV. RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS

Perhaps the most significant changes in outlook, culture and society in the third and fourth centuries of our era both in the Roman and the Sassanian worlds were the changes in religion which marked the end of the old 'pagan' religions and the flowering of 'universal' religions. Both Christianity and Talmudic Judaism were in the process of defining orthodoxy in the respective faiths while Zoroastrianism under the leadership of religious figures such as Kerdir (Kartîr) became more organized and centralized. Later Zoroastrianism in effect was to become the 'state church' of the Sassanian empire with a hierarchy parallel to the court hierarchy of the crown. At the top was the *mobadan mobad* or chief of priests similar to the *shahanshah* or 'king of kings' in the secular realm. It is interesting to see the swings from tolerance of other religions under Shapur I to the intolerance of the Vahrans and again apparently a return to the policy of Shapur under Narses and his successors until the reign of Shapur II. The persecution of Christians at that time was initiated by the conversion of Constantine which followed that of the Armenian king Tiridates about 301. Henceforth the lines were drawn that Christians in the Sassanian empire were subject to suspicion that they secretly were partisans of Roman interests because of the identity of religion. It was not until the fifth century that the suspicion and hostility somewhat changed when the Nestorian church broke with Antioch and became a Christian Persian church of the Sassanian empire. Nonetheless the identification of religion and state was solidified, and followers of other religions were relegated to the status of second-class citizens, a system which much later in the Near East came to be known as the *milet* or 'nationalities' system.

Before the third century in Iran as well as in the rest of the Near East in general the ancient view of religions still prevailed, although the many saviour and gnostic cults of the late hellenistic age had transformed peoples' outlooks. In the more ancient world deities were local or 'national'

in the sense of being the gods of a tribe or people or a region. When the Achaemenid kings conquered and ruled Egypt, for example, they did not seek to impose a Persian religion or worship of Persian deities on the local people. Rather, on a number of occasions, we learn that the foreign rulers honoured the local gods, either by acts of worship or by largesse to temples. As cults became organized religions, however, ideas of universality came to dominate religious thinking. In simple terms polytheism became henotheism which in turn, in many cases, led to monotheism and a belief that one's god was omnipotent and should be everyone's god. Both missionary zeal and an intolerance of, and competition with, other faiths developed. The third century can be regarded as the time when ancient beliefs were being replaced by organized religions with enthusiastic and often militant adherents. Jewish converts in Adiabene and Christian converts vied with Zoroastrian priests in making more converts. The new faith of Manichaeism, however, may have been a prime catalyst for unity and organization in other religions, for Manichaeism was certainly an important rival of both Zoroastrianism and Christianity.

Mani, the founder of the new religion, was born in southern Mesopotamia in 216 but of a Parthian father and mother. At first a member of a baptismal sect, the Elkesaites, Mani later broke with the followers of the baptismal sect because of visions he had telling him to leave them and preach a new message. His early converts, apart from his father and relatives, were Sassanian princes, and he won the favour of Shapur I which enabled him to send missionaries throughout the Sassanian empire. Although the lifetime of Augustine is later than the limits of this volume, his conversion to Manichaeism indicates the extent of missionary activity in the western part of the Roman empire. It is significant that both the Romans, especially the emperor Diocletian, and the Persians, under Vahran I and II and later, attacked Manichaeism as a menace to the established order, and it seems clear that the doctrines of this religion aroused intense opposition among adherents of other faiths. What were the differences in Manichaeism which seemed threatening to various other religions?

One feature of Manichaeism which strikes the outside observer was its adaptability to the religious environment in which it sought converts. Generally speaking Manichaean missionaries were prone to adopt features of Christianity in the west, Zoroastrianism in Iran and Buddhism in the farther east, but claiming that other religions were incomplete and had become corrupt from the time of their founders. His religion was to be recorded by him in various writings which would be translated under his supervision so that they would not be changed or diluted by succeeding generations. Furthermore, his religion was not to be limited to one area or even empire, but was to be a universal faith to be propagated all over the world as a duty by believers. Probably it was the missionary zeal combined

with a belief in the superiority of this new faith over the corrupted other religions which engendered such a great hostility against the Manichaeans. The division of believers into common folk *auditores* and the hierarchical, monkish *electi* seems to have attracted intellectuals to the religion, and because of the accommodation made by the Manichaeans to the various religions where they lived, they were everywhere regarded as arch-heretics and subjected to persecution. It may have been also the great emphasis on 'holy' books by the Manichaeans which influenced the Zoroastrians to codify and record in writing their scriptures, the Avesta with its commentary the *zand*. The third century is also the beginning of the process by which the Babylonian Talmud came into being, but in the third and fourth centuries the exilarchate was the supreme power in the Jewish communities of the east.

The origin of the exilarch or *resh galutha* (Aramaic) over the Jewish people in the Sassanian empire is unknown and subject to dispute, but the nomination of a Jewish leader from the Davidic line to be responsible for all Jews in the empire, as an institution of the state, fits well with the activities of the Zoroastrian priest Kerdir, who was influential and powerful under the reigns of the two Vahrans. Although a kind of exilarchate probably existed under the Parthians, it seems to have been formally institutionalized under the early Sassanian rulers. This did not mean more freedom from control and persecution; on the contrary the Zoroastrian priesthood at times led pogroms against the Jews as well as against Christians. Since on the whole, however, the Jews supported the Persians when at war with the Romans, they must have felt better under Sassanian than under Roman rule. Although Roman enmity towards the Jews continued after the two wars in Palestine (66–73 and 132–5) and many Jews, especially zealots, hoped for Persian victories against the Romans, there were no major revolts against the Romans in the third and early fourth centuries, and under Diocletian the Jews fared well. The patriarch of the Jews in Palestine (*Nassi* in Hebrew) held a position similar to the exilarch in the east, but how far his influence and authority extended to Jews of the diaspora in the Roman empire is unclear. After Diocletian, however, the tolerance of the Roman state began to change to enmity against Jews. This was especially true after the conversion of Constantine when religious antagonism was joined with political opposition, making the lot of the Jews in the west even more unfavourable than previously.

So in the domain of religions the third century saw the beginning of a polarization between the Roman empire with one state religion and a Sassanian state with another state religion. The Roman Christian church of the fourth century paralleled the Zoroastrian 'church' of the Sassanian empire. Minority faiths in the latter were organized in a *milet* system whereby the exilarch of the Jews or the patriarch of the Christians was responsible for his community in matters such as the collection of taxes and the

maintenance of law and order among his co-religionists. In the Roman empire, on the other hand, the few Zoroastrians, primarily in eastern Anatolia, survived for a time only in the hills before they vanished, as eventually did the many pagan cults which in the third and fourth centuries did continue but were constantly losing ground to the growing Christian missionary efforts.

Religion has been emphasized since it became more and more the distinguishing mark of identity of a person. While Roman citizenship in the western empire became a symbol of adherence to a state and government until the fall of the empire, in the Sassanian empire the hellenistic allegiance of a subject to his ruler continued, now reinforced by the religious sanction of a state faith, Zoroastrianism. There was no counterpart to Roman citizenship under the Sassanians, and the charismatic figure of a strong ruler was the focus of allegiance of people in the Sassanian empire. In this respect they were more akin to the Semitic-speaking and other peoples of the Near East than were the latter to the citizens of Rome. The seeds of the Middle Ages were laid in this period both in the Roman and in the Sassanian states, but the coming of the Arabs and Islam, although they changed much in the Near East, also continued the traditions of the Sassanian empire much more than those of the Romans, especially in state structure and in religion with the *milet* system.

Although religion becomes paramount in importance in this age, trade and commerce, although not so vibrant and active as under the Parthians, still continued to influence state policies. Conquests and booty provided both land and goods for the winner to exploit, and trade in luxuries as well as in spices, the substitutes for refrigerators in antiquity, was very important for both empires.

To turn to short-distance trade, an enumeration of the fruits and plants alone which came to the west from Iran in this period is suggestive of both contacts and the great debt of the west to Iran in this area. The name of the peach (*persika*), in Russian *persik*, is one of the most famous borrowings from Iran, but one could extend the list with pomegranates, almonds, pistachios and a host of more exotic fruits. Naturally one cannot say whether these products of the soil, bush or tree originated in Iran, but even if they came from the farther east, the road to the west led through Iran since the carrying of such plants and trees by sea was hazardous. It is impossible from the sources we have to determine the extent and importance of trade in edible products between the Sassanian and Roman empires, but by the time of the Arab conquests, when we do have sources, there were many merchants who engaged in extensive trading in spices, herbs and other edibles all over the Near East.

Long-distance trade in luxury objects is easier to determine since archaeological excavations have uncovered beautiful Sassanian textiles, silver ewers

and platters and other luxury objects as far afield as northern Russia and China. Brocades, woollen rugs and decorated cotton cloths from Iran were famous in antiquity as they still are almost to the present. Of course some came from central Asia, the Caucasus or northwest India, all within the greater Iranian cultural area. It is significant that silver not gold was the preferred precious metal of the Persians as well as the people of central Asia and the steppes, while the gold of the Roman empire went to India where the ratio of gold to silver always has been higher than elsewhere. There was no counterpart to the Roman *aureus* in the Sassanian state, and the quality of the silver fashioned there remained high throughout the Sassanian period.

Sassanian coinage maintained several features throughout history. First, it was primarily a silver coinage with some local coinage of smaller denominations in copper. Second, it was always a distinctive, very flat coinage which made it easy to carry and to stack. Finally, and most important, unlike Roman coinage where we find frequent debasement of the coinage, the Sassanian *dram* (New Persian *dirham* from Greek *drachme*) maintained a very high percentage of silver and a steady weight (*c.* 4 grammes) throughout their rule. This was not lost upon the nomadic and settled peoples of the Eurasian north, for few Roman and Byzantine silver plates and vessels have been found in Russia, for example, in comparison to the large quantity of Sassanian objects. It should be noted, however, that trade in such objects as furs, amber, and honey (the sweetener of antiquity) from northern peoples flowed more to Iran than to the west because of greater demand. Another feature of Sassanian coinage is the absence of political propaganda on the coins, contrasting with Roman coinage where, for example, victories were commemorated on the coins. For the Sassanians, coinage only held an economic importance, so later coinage is standardized with little aesthetic quality since what was significant was the weight and quality of the silver rather than the iconography of obverses and reverses. The only changing feature on the coins is the distinctive crown worn by each ruler (sometimes several different crowns) and the name of the ruler in the inscription, portrayed on silver objects and on rock carvings. The crowns are important for identifying rulers.

A few rulers struck gold coins (*dinar* from Latin, *denarius*) in imitation of the Roman *aureus*, but the purpose of such rare coins is unclear since they follow the same style and pattern as the usual silver coinage and reveal nothing about victories or the like. Another feature of the legends on Sassanian coins is the insertion of a pious or encouraging word, such as '*pzwn GDH* ('may splendour increase') and again these seem to follow some kind of canonical variation. The centralization of monetary policy is apparent from the standardization of coinage, and we may assume that the mints were few and strictly controlled, although the number of mint

sites increased considerably by the end of the dynasty. The great increase in the number of coins under Shapur II indicates that probably at that time payments in kind gave way to payments in coin, especially to troops and government functionaries. In short, from the coins, as well as from the luxury goods of the Sassanians, we may conclude that the Persians fared well in economic competition with the Roman empire, and if anything at least the economic prestige of the Sassanian empire rose as that of the Roman empire declined, as far as the peoples who were neither subjects of the one or the other were concerned.

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the above survey a picture of the Sassanian empire as a strong and worthy foe and competitor of the Roman empire emerges. The old Greek concept of everyone who did not speak Greek and was not imbued with Greek culture as a barbarian was not current in the Roman empire. The Romans had to fight against barbarians beyond the Rhine and Danube *limes*, but the Sassanians were in a different category; for their empire was a state similar to that of the Romans, and the *lex* of the Romans was matched by the *dad* of the Persians. We know much about Roman law, but both the Romans as well as the Sassanians were the descendants of the Achaemenids in the realm of law, only the Romans probably knew more about the Achaemenids than did the Sassanians. The Sassanians developed their laws in the same direction as western church law of the Middle Ages, whereas the secular bases of Roman law did not vanish in the west, as apparently the Achaemenid counterparts did in the east even before the Sassanians. In other words, Sassanian law became essentially religious law with *mobads* and *rads*, Zoroastrian priests, administering that law, which was also true of the Christian Middle Ages. The west, however, had a renaissance, and the reawakening of Roman law was part of that change, whereas in the east no renaissance came, partially because the past was lost. In the period with which we are concerned, however, the Roman and Sassanian empires were more alike than we hitherto have supposed, and even though they were more often enemies than friends, royal pretenders on either side, if they had to flee from their homeland, could and did take refuge in that state where they would receive the respect due an equal, if not actual support to gain or regain a position in their homeland. In the eyes of the Romans, the Persians were not in the same category as the Germans or Arabs, and Armenia was more than a buffer between the two since it was located on the flanks of both and subject to both conquest and conciliation as an ally. Furthermore, Armenian culture, especially among the upper classes, was overwhelmingly Iranian. Cultural influences of the Sassanians spread far and wide, whereas Roman civilization comparatively speaking seems to

have had less influence at the time on peoples living beyond the frontiers of the empire. Furthermore, whereas many people have considered Roman culture to be derivative from hellenic civilization, the Sassanians were seen by many as the continuation and adaption of the cultures of the ancient Near East. For just as the Jews, so do the surviving Zoroastrians today consider themselves the heirs of an ancient and rich culture as well as religion.

CHAPTER 15

ARMENIA AND THE EASTERN MARCHES

C. S. LIGHTFOOT

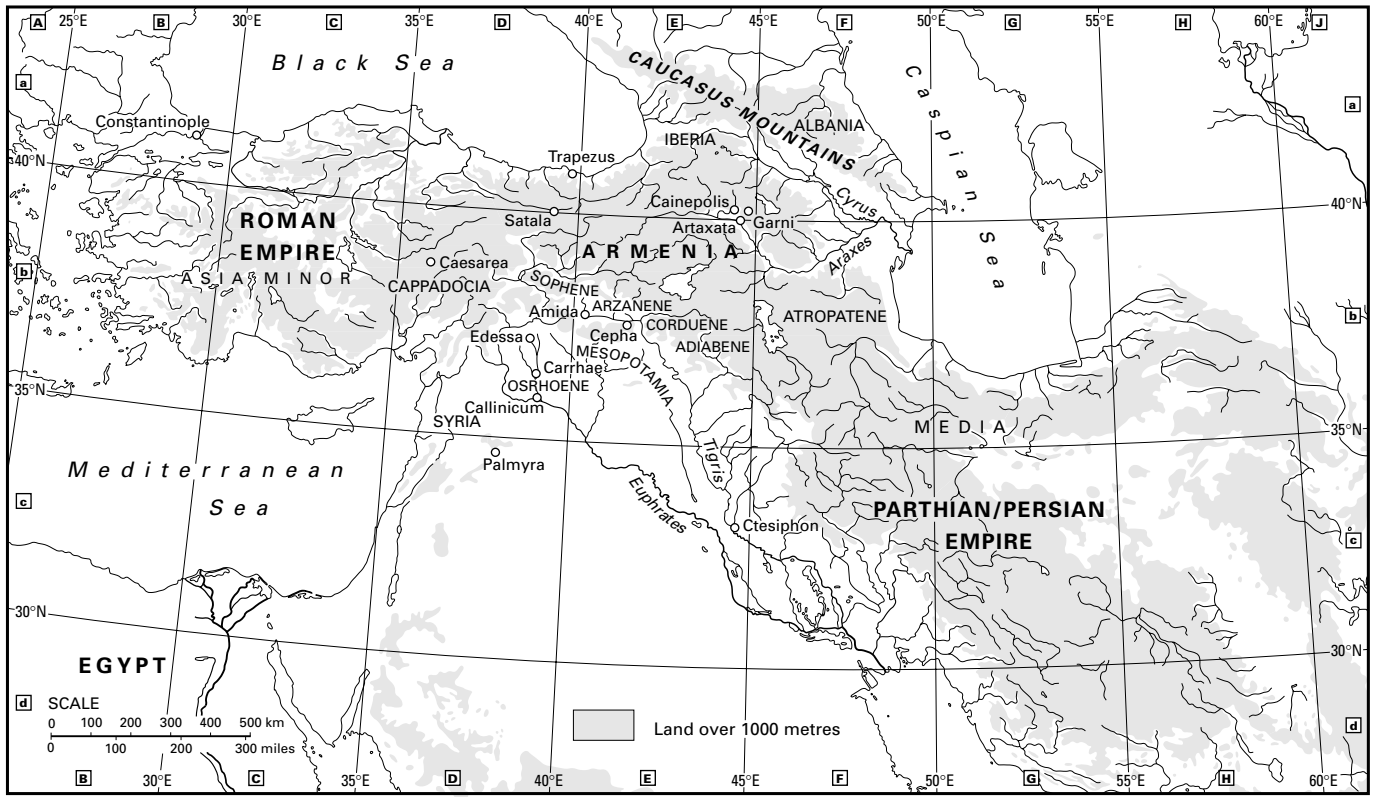
I. INTRODUCTION

Eastern Anatolia, to which the Romans first came during the campaigns of Lucullus in 70 B.C., is a land characterized by high mountain ranges, isolated but well-watered valleys, and bleak upland pastures or *yailas*.[1] Physical geography dictates that historically the region has supported only a small and scattered population. In much of eastern Anatolia the hard living conditions are aggravated by a severe climate. In winter deep snow covers the ground and temperatures stay well below zero for many months, while in summer the heat can be intense and water is scarce. These factors have always acted as a constraint on the development of agriculture and the growth of urban centres.[2] They have also hampered internal communications, so that communities have had a very local focus, remote from any central authority. The region was never fashioned into an effective and sustained political unit.

On the other hand, because it stands at the crossroads of various invasion and trade routes, eastern Anatolia has had a lasting strategic importance. To the west it provides access to the central Anatolian plateau and Asia Minor proper; to the north are the Caucasus passes, which brought invaders from the steppes of central Asia; to the east the valleys of the Araxes and Cyrus rivers lead to the Caspian Sea and Atropatene, while to the south lie the plains of Mesopotamia. Consequently, eastern Anatolia has frequently been the stage for wars between imperial powers wishing to extend their control to include this vital region. So it was in the struggles between Rome and her Iranian rivals, although other factors frequently overshadowed this basic reason. Whilst most campaigns were directed across the fertile crescent, the existence of major routes leading from eastern Anatolia to the plains of

[1] For concise descriptions of the physical geography: Erzen (1984) 51–5; Zimansky (1985) 12–31; Sinclair (1987) 55–62; Hewsen (2001), 15–19. Zimansky includes a set of Landsat photographs covering the whole of eastern Anatolia. Two maps of the region covering the relevant historical period have been published in the TAVO series: Kettenhofen (1982) and (1984a); see also Talbert (2000): Maps 88–9 (and Directories, 1255–91).

[2] The cities of Armenia are listed by Jones (1971) 539 (Table 24), 540 (Table 27), 542 (Table 32).



Map 7 Armenia and the eastern marches

Mesopotamia or across Armenia from Roman Cappadocia to Media called for both sides to recognize the need for a wider front of action.

I. SOURCES

Sources for the history of eastern Anatolia in the third and early fourth centuries A.D. do not present a clear and coherent picture of events. They comprise three distinct groups which reflect the views of the different sides that were involved in the struggle over the region at that time.

On the Roman side the works of Cassius Dio and Herodian provide a certain amount of information, covering the Severan dynasty and the reign of Maximinus Thrax, but thereafter we must resort to the *Historia Augusta*, which provides biographies of emperors and 'pretenders' until 284. Even at the end of our period, in the more stable and better documented times of the tetrarchs, we are poorly served, relying on the works of church historians and the brief entries of the fourth-century epitomists. In addition, later Byzantine compilations supply a number of valuable pieces of evidence; we are fortunate, for example, that one fragment of the sixth-century *De Legationibus* by Petrus Patricius has preserved details of the peace of 298.

The native, essentially Armenian, sources comprise much useful information, but this is so confused and intertwined with national legends that great care has to be taken in their use. These works were written in the native language between the fifth and eighth centuries A.D., and they are much influenced by the attitudes and prejudices of the clergymen who composed them.[3] They are, nevertheless, valuable documents, especially for the light they shed on the social and religious history of the period.

Finally, the relevant Iranian sources are limited to three important epigraphic documents. The first is a trilingual inscription (hereafter *RGDS*) in Parthian, Middle Persian and Greek, recording the exploits of the Sassanian king Shapur I, on the tower monument called the Kaᶜba of Zoroaster at Naqsh-i-Rustam in Fars.[4] The second, on the same tower, is a Middle Persian inscription set up by the high priest Kartir, while the third, in Parthian and Middle Persian, found at Paikuli in northwest Iran, commemorates Narses' seizure of the Persian throne in 293.[5]

II. THE ARMENIAN KINGDOM

In antiquity most of eastern Anatolia was contained within the kingdom of Armenia. Apart from a short period during the reign of Tigranes the Great (95–55 B.C.), this was not a strong and independent state but a country

[3] Toumanoff (1969) 234–5; Garsoïan (1971) 342–3.

[4] English translation: Frye, *Iran* app. 4, §§ 1–29, 371–3. For a general survey of Middle Persian documents: Gignoux (1983).

[5] English translation: Frye, *Iran* app. 5, §§ A–H, 375–7.

whose continued existence was only the result of the rivalry and conflict between its more powerful neighbours, Rome on the one hand and Parthia, later Sassanian Persia, on the other. As a consequence of the Armenian wars fought in the reign of the emperor Nero, a new dynasty was established on the Armenian throne, that of the Arsacids, a branch of the Parthian royal house. The first king of this line, Tiridates I, was nominated by his brother, the Parthian king Vologaeses I, but received his crown from Nero at a ceremony performed in Rome in 66.[6] This compromise formed the basis of the *status quo* that prevailed in Armenia until the dissolution of the monarchy in the fifth century A.D.

Both powers, however, took every opportunity to implement a more aggressive policy, one of gaining complete control over the kingdom. Hence during the second century the Romans tried to exploit their military ascendancy by installing their own nominee on the Armenian throne.[7] Likewise, after the overthrow of the Parthian Arsacids in the 220s, the new rulers of Iran, the Sassanians, made strenuous efforts to replace the Armenian Arsacid kings with members of their own house. This hostility naturally drove the Armenian kings to look more favourably on the Romans during the course of the third century, a feeling that was later reinforced by one of religious fraternity.

The Romans and their counterparts in Iran used very similar methods to exert control over Armenia. Both sides paid court to the king of Armenia when it suited their purpose, especially at such times as they were preparing military campaigns against each other. In the fourth century the offering of gifts and subsidies is well attested not only to the Armenian king, but also to the rulers of minor principalities in eastern Anatolia.[8] This was doubtless practised in the preceding century too.[9] On the other hand, the two imperial powers exploited the weakness and divisions within the Armenian kingdom to exact tribute and military assistance. There is evidence to suggest that both Rome and Persia levied taxes on Armenia.[10] Likewise, from the third century onwards one hears increasingly of Armenians serving in the Roman armies either in ethnic detachments or in an individual capacity.[11] The presence of Armenian archers serving in the army of Maximinus Thrax

[6] Chaumont (1976) 116–23. [7] Chaumont (1976) 130–9, 146–52; Mitford (1980) 1195–9, 1202–5.
[8] Julian, *Or.* 1 .21A; Amm. Marc. XXI.6.7–8. [9] Dio, LXXVIII.77.4.
[10] Tiridates IV is described by one source as a tribute-paying vassal of Rome: Agathangelos Va. 167. For the different versions of Agathangelos: van Esbroeck (1971) 14–19. Moses frequently refers to the payment of tribute by the Armenian king: Moses, III.10, 11, 21 and 75 (English translation: Thomson 1978).
[11] *SHA*, *Tyr. Trig.* 37.3–4; *Aurel.* 11.3. Later, Armenian horse archers are attested at the battle of Mursa in 353: Zos. II.51. Some of the most successful and famous of late Roman and Byzantine generals were of Armenian stock; see Charanis (1959) 31. Other Armenians came into Roman service as slaves; the most notable example is the eunuch Eutherius who had a distinguished career in the Constantinian household: Amm. Marc. XVI.7.5–6.

on the German frontier is clearly a legacy of the joint expedition against Persia in the reign of Severus Alexander.[12] Rome had also deployed her own troops in Armenia since the first century A.D.; their presence is attested by a small corpus of inscriptions, which includes references to vexillations of legions XV Apollinaris and XII Fulminata at Cainepolis (Valarshapat) from the late Antonine period.[13] Yet, by its very nature, the Armenian army had a great deal in common with that of the Parthians and Sassanians. Their formations, tactics, weapons and equipment were all very similar, and this must have lent ease to their mutual co-operation.[14]

Other ways in which an influence was exerted over the kingdom included exacting hostages and receiving fugitives. So, for example, the Armenian queen was held captive by Caracalla for eleven months and a prince of Corduene was taken hostage by the Romans in the mid-fourth century.[15] Fugitives are likewise attested. The young Tiridates fled to the Romans and was befriended by the future emperor Licinius.[16] Other Armenian princes, however, are said to have taken refuge at the Persian court.[17] In the last resort kings could be deposed, imprisoned and even put to death if they earned the displeasure of their Roman or Persian masters. Caracalla is said to have arrested and held prisoner Chosroes I (his fate thereafter is not recorded), while the Persian king is accused by Armenian historians of instigating the murder of the very same ruler.[18]

External cultural influences are much in evidence in Armenia, where little by way of native art can be discerned before the early Middle Ages.[19] The kingdom was in essence an oriental monarchy, and many of its customs and practices were based on Iranian models.[20] There was, however, also a veneer of Graeco-Roman culture pervading the royal court. Excavations at the site of the ancient capital, Artaxata, have revealed structures and artifacts that are firmly within the classical tradition,[21] but the most striking examples of Graeco-Roman architecture are found at Garni, the royal summer residence to the northeast of the capital. Here there is an Ionic temple-like building,

[12] Herod. VII.2.1; *SHA*, *Alex. Sev*. 61.8.

[13] *ILS* 394; 9117; *SEG* XV.839; see Crow (1986). Artaxata appears in the list of stations inscribed on the shield of a Palmyrene archer in the Roman garrison at Dura Europus; see Rebuffat (1986). For Roman military inscriptions in the Caucasus, see Braund (1991).

[14] The principal arm of the Armenian forces was the *nakharar* cavalry: Faustus, IV.20; see Adontz (1970) 218–27.

[15] Dio, LXXVIII.27.4; Amm. Marc. XVIII.6.20.

[16] Agathangelos Aa. 36–7; Ag. 16–17 (English translation: Thomson 1976). Both Tiridates and Licinius are said to have served under Galerius during the campaigns against Narses: Agathangelos Aa. 41–4; Aq. 18–20; Moses, II.79; Eutr. X.4; Lact. *DMP* 20.3; Zos. II.11.

[17] Zon. XII.21. [18] Dio, LXXVII.12.1[2]; Agathangelos Aq. 12–13; Vk. 18; Moses, II.74.

[19] For examples of art found in Armenia during the first to third centuries A.D., see Santrot (1996) 240–7, nos. 246–65.

[20] Garsoïan (1976) 207–8, 210–13; Lang (1983) 524–8.

[21] Arakelian (1984a) and (1984b); for a survey of other excavations in Armenia, see Zardarian and Akopyan (1994).

perhaps a royal mausoleum of the late second century, and Roman-style baths, complete with hypocaust and mosaic floors, dating to the late third century.[22]

Finally, religion plays a significant role in the struggle over Armenia. The indigenous polytheism had long been mixed with Iranian elements and, as in Parthia, pagan religion was essentially syncretic. However, when Armenia was temporarily brought under direct Persian control in the mid-third century, measures were taken on the initiative of the Zoroastrian clergy, especially the high priest Kartir, to purify Armenian religious beliefs.[23] At the same time there occurs the first reference to Christianity. Eusebius names as bishop of the Armenians a certain Meruzanes, who corresponded with bishop Dionysius of Alexandria (248–65).[24] Meruzanes' see has been identified with Sophene and so forms a link between the early diffusion of Christianity in the kingdom and its presence in northern Mesopotamia.[25] The evidence for early Syrian influence on the Armenian church is slight since it was later submerged in the more powerful current coming from Cappadocia with Gregory the Illuminator at the beginning of the fourth century. Armenian liturgical language, however, has preserved many Syriac terms, and primitive monasticism in Armenia, as depicted by Faustus, bears a very close resemblance to that practised by the ascetics of Syria and Mesopotamia.[26]

It is impossible to gain a clear insight into the nature of Christian beliefs in Armenia, since the surviving native histories, all of which were written by orthodox clergymen, have expunged all hint of the existence of different sects within the Armenian church. Yet it is highly likely that heretical Christian and quasi-Christian groups flourished in Armenia, just as they did in Mesopotamia and elsewhere.[27] The continuing strength of paganism in the kingdom however, should not be underestimated. Even after the conversion of the king Tiridates IV, and the evangelizing work of Gregory the Illuminator, a large proportion of the Armenian population stayed pagan at heart. The fact that in the fifth century St Mesrop could be credited with considerable missionary activity indicates that pagan cults and practices survived long after the formal adoption of Christianity.[28]

[22] Sahinian (1969); Lang (1970) 144–6; Kouymjian (1981) 264; Ter-Martirossov (1996) (who mentions the tradition that the temple was converted into a royal tomb in the first half of the fourth century); *contra* Wilkinson (1982) (who regarded the building as a mausoleum of the late second century).

[23] Moses, II.77; see Chaumont (1973) 692–701; Russell (1987) 119–28; (1990).

[24] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.46.2.

[25] Adontz (1970) 270–1. For possible Manichaean missionary activity in Armenia, also linked with Edessa, see Lieu (1992) 103–06.

[26] Faustus, VI.16; see Vööbus (1960) 358; Winkler (1980) 140 n. 96.

[27] It has been argued that the hostile accounts of two mid-fourth-century kings, Arsaces and Paps, are a reflection of the prejudices voiced against them as Arian sympathizers: Garsoïan (1967).

[28] Thomson (1976) lxxxviii–lxxxix.

The traditional date for the conversion of Armenia is 301. In recent years, however, convincing arguments have been produced in favour of 314.[29] It is clear that at first Tiridates persecuted Christians within his kingdom in accordance with the policy laid down by Diocletian and Galerius. His subservience to the Romans in this respect is amply shown by the content and tone of the letter which he is said to have sent to Diocletian.[30] Since the emperor was the religious as well as the secular head of state, loyal subjects and vassals such as Tiridates would have been obliged to mould their own political and religious outlook accordingly. His acceptance of the Christian faith was, therefore, probably a direct result of the conversion of Constantine and the Edict of Milan in 312–13.[31]

The conversion of Tiridates was not, however, universally welcomed in Armenia. The conflict between the king and nobles in the fourth century may be seen partly in terms of the reaction of conservative landowners to religious innovation. The rulers of the principalities and the great estates of the realm were probably aware of the benefit of local cults in focusing the loyalty of their vassals and serfs. Consequently, they may have seen the imposition of a uniform religion, patronized by the royal house, as a threat to their independent status. Yet it would be to oversimplify the situation beyond measure to divide Armenia into two opposing religious parties, the one Christian and pro-Roman, the other pagan and pro-Persian. In such times of change and instability there must have been as much fluctuation in people's religious convictions as there was in their political allegiances. Tiridates IV is himself a case in point.

The sequence, identity and chronology of Armenian kings in the third and fourth centuries are fraught with contradictions and difficulties. It has been demonstrated that the genealogy of father-to-son succession does not fit the timescales that are available and that the Armenian sources often indulge in reduplications and other anachronisms.[32] Yet modern scholars have still found it difficult to agree on a regnal list.[33] The task has not been made easier by the lack of a native coinage to act as a guide to the Arsacid dynasty. The resulting confusion about the dates and names of kings does, however, prove one important underlying fact: that Armenia was regularly disturbed by factional strife. In our period there is evidence for dissension within the Arsacid house on three separate occasions, first during the time

[29] Barnes, *CE* 258; Mahé (1996) 259; *contra* Braund (1994) 238–9.

[30] Agathangelos Ag. 40. The letter has been regarded as an early composition, if not an authentic document from the royal chancellery: Thomson (1976) xlviii–xlix.

[31] Agathangelos has been shown to contain two recensions concerning the conversion of Constantine and Tiridates, one of which contradicts the traditional view that Tiridates was first to embrace Christianity: Gulbekian (1977) 51–4.

[32] Hewsen (1978–9) 101–3.

[33] Compare Toumanoff (1969) 274–5; Hewsen (1978–9) 99; Frye, *Iran* 293 n. 27; Lang (1983) 517–18.

of Caracalla, again in 287 when a case of royal fratricide occurred, and finally in the 330s when one of the king's relatives rebelled against the throne.

Armenia was a feudal society, and in this lay the major cause of the kingdom's internal weakness. It was divided up into numerous separate districts, comprising isolated communities ruled over by hereditary noble families, called *nakharars* and *azats*.[34] The nobles were able to command affairs in their own district, remaining relatively undisturbed by and independent from central authority. They occupied imposing strongholds that dominated their estates in the river valleys and upland pastures. The very nature of the terrain greatly enhanced their security of tenure; hence the noble families survived long after the partition of the kingdom and the dissolution of the monarchy. Their lands were parcelled out as military fiefs, and the contingents thus raised, which made up the bulk of the Armenian army, owed their loyalty principally to the *nakharars* who commanded them.

The king depended heavily on the goodwill of the local magnates, since they had direct control over most of the land, the army and the peasant population. They remained loyal to him in return for certain hereditary and honorific offices at court. They were, however, obsessed with their own status and prerogatives, and the slightest infringement to the strict codes of rank and station could lead either to the withdrawal of their allegiance or to armed insurrection. Rivalry between the families was also intense.[35] Yet the sentiment of pride within the nobility was sometimes combined with one of unswerving loyalty to the king, and the native sources consistently identify the Armenian rulers with the Arsacid house. All this fits well with the rigid system of inherited position and precedence which appears to have been a corner-stone of Armenian society.

The urban population was small and, apparently, contained a large proportion of foreign traders and craftsmen, mainly Syrians and Jews.[36] There was little in the way of a central administration; for example, no evidence survives for a class of secretaries and notaries in the Armenian kingdom, although this may in part be due to the lack of a native script; until the fifth century Greek and Aramaic were the principle languages used in written transactions before the invention of the Armenian alphabet. Two rare examples of Greek inscriptions relating to the royal court are known; one records the gift of a village by the king to a dignitary, the other the construction of a building at Garni.[37] The Armenian Arsacids also lacked the ability to mint their own coins, despite the fact that the region was a rich source of minerals

[34] Manandian (1965) 69–72; Der Nersessian (1973) 292–4.

[35] Faustus recounts a feud in the reign of Chosroes III in which the Manawazian and Orduni houses were mutually exterminated: Faustus, III.4.

[36] Faustus, IV.55; see Manandian (1965) 64–5.

[37] *SEG* XV.837, 836. Chaumont dates the former to the second half of the first century A.D., but the latter is best taken as referring to Tiridates IV: Chaumont (1976) app. I, 185–8, figs. 4a–b; Toumanoff (1970) 477–8. For the use of Aramaic in the Arsacid period: Périkhanian (1971) 5–8.

throughout antiquity and there was a tradition of minting coinage from the Artaxiad dynasty. Money transactions were thus carried out in foreign coin, both Roman and Sassanian, reflecting the decentralized nature and dependent status of the kingdom.[38]

Rivalry, as we have seen, existed on many levels: between the two imperial powers, the members of the Arsacid royal house, the king and local lords, and between the noble families themselves. The Armenian sources, therefore, present a completely false picture when they portray the country as a unified and centralized state under the Arsacid monarchy.[39] The king was very much subject to circumstances beyond his control and to pressures both from outside the kingdom and from within.

III. THE MARCHES

Armenia proper was flanked by a number of minor states, which at various times and in varying degrees were bound to the kingdom. To the north lay the smaller kingdoms of Iberia and Albania, both of which played an important role in the defence of the Caucasus passes against tribes migrating west and southwards from the steppes of central Asia. Arsacid or Parthian dynasties ruled in Iberia from *c.* 180 until 284 and in Albania until the end of the fifth century.[40] The inscription of Kartir alludes to a Persian invasion of Iberia and Albania some time after 260, and in the *RGDS* both kingdoms are listed amongst Shapur's vassals.[41] Indeed, the king of Iberia, Hamazasp, was given a privileged position in the hierarchy of the Sassanian court.[42] In 284 the Iberian throne passed to Meribanes III, a member of the Iranian Mihranid family. As a Persian vassal, he gave military aid to Narses in 296–7. After Galerius' victory he was, nevertheless, allowed to retain his throne in return for his submission to Rome. The western orientation of the kingdom was further enhanced when in *c.* 335 Meribanes became a convert to Christianity.[43] The other marches were ruled over by hereditary princes called *bdeakhsh* or *vitaxae*.[44] On the eastern borders of Armenia lay the Median march, comprising lands in Atropatene and Adiabene that were wrested from the Persians in 298. To the south were the all-important Syrian and Arabian marches, themselves divided up into a number of autonomous principalities. The Syrian march, formerly the kingdom of Sophene, included the principalities of Ingilene, Anzitene, Lesser and Greater Sophene, each with its own local ruler. The

[38] For the distribution of Roman, Parthian and Sassanian coins in Armenia: Muselyan (1983); Akopyan (1984); Mousheghian *et al.* (2000).

[39] Garsoïan (1971) 342; Hewsen (1978–9) 95.

[40] Toumanoff (1959) 21–7 and (1963) 81–4.

[41] Sprengling, *Iran* 47 (ll. 12–13), 51–2; *RGDS* § 2 = Sprengling, *Iran* 7 (l. 2), 73 (l. 3).

[42] *RGDS* § 25 = Sprengling, *Iran* 9 (l. 25), 12 (l. 31), 76 (l. 60); see Toumanoff (1969) 252–6; Chaumont (1973) 701–7.

[43] Toumanoff (1963) 374–7.

[44] Toumanoff (1963) 154ff.; Adontz (1970) 222–3.

Arabian march, consisting of territories taken from the former kingdom of Corduene and from Mygdonia, was governed by the prince of Arsanene, whose vassals included the rulers of Moxsene, Corduene and Zabdicene.[45] In addition, there were further sub-divisions, so that within each march the princely realms were made up of a number of districts and cantons under the control of sub-vassals, the *azats*.[46] It is hardly surprising that with this multiplicity of regional names Roman authors failed to achieve a conformity of nomenclature. They refer in vague terms to *gentes*, *regiones* and *ethnē*, since they were unable to distinguish clearly between the major regions and their sub-divisions.[47] The five principalities that are listed by Petrus Patricius as having been ceded to Rome in 298 do not, therefore, correspond to the same number of *regiones Transtigritanae*, named by Ammianus Marcellinus, that were surrendered by Jovian in 363.

The principalities stood in a very special and ambiguous relationship to Armenia itself. The princes of the marches owed a certain degree of loyalty to the king and continued to play a role in Armenian affairs even after the settlement of 298. Documents of the Gregorian cycle mention the princes of Ingilene, Anzitene and Sophene in the entourage of Tiridates IV.[48] At least part of Ingilene appears to have remained as a royal domain in the fourth century, and an analogous situation can be seen in the way the Armenian royal house owned estates in Roman provincial territory.[49] Several of the local princes are also recorded in the service of Chosroes III during his troubled reign in the 330s.[50] But, despite their status as nominal vassals of the Armenian king, the rulers of the border marches enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. Indeed, Roman and Persian interference in Armenia contributed in large part to the lasting strength and independence of their principalities.

Under the Romans their lands were accredited with the status of *civitates foederatae liberae et immunes*.[51] On their accession they were probably invested with royal *insignia* by the emperor and were the recipients of imperial munificence.[52] All this confirms their importance in Roman eyes to the security of the eastern frontier. Initially, it seems, the principalities were exempt from imperial garrisons and administration, but Roman troops clearly operated in these lands when necessity arose and, at least in the fourth century, units were recruited locally.[53]

[45] Adontz (1970) 27–37. [46] Chaumont (1969) 123.
[47] Festus, *Brev*. 14; Amm. Marc. XXV.7.9; Zos. III.31.
[48] Agathangelos Aa. 795, 879–3; Aq. 135, 164.
[49] Faustus, V.7, compare Dio, LXXVIII.77.4; *CTh* XI.1.1. [50] Faustus, III.9. [51] *CTh* XII.3.6.
[52] Attested at a later date in Procopius, *Aed*. III.1.17–23; compare Faustus, V.38; Moses, II.7, 47.
[53] The *Notitia Dignitatum* lists three units with epithets that indicate they were recruited in the area: *ala quintadecima Flavia Carduenorum*, *cohors quartadecima Valeria Zabdenorum* and *equites sagittarii Cordueni*: *Not. Dig., Or*. XXXVI.34, 36, *Oc*. VI.83 = VII.209.

IV. OUTLINE HISTORY

During the civil war between Pescennius Niger and Septimius Severus the king of Armenia refrained from being drawn into the conflict, but observed a strict neutrality which enabled him, once Severus had gained the ascendancy in 194, to establish friendly relations with the new emperor.[54] Exactly which king this was remains in dispute, but Chosroes I is the most likely.[55] He was, of course, an Arsacid and a close relative of the Parthian king, Vologaeses V. It is, nevertheless, claimed that he took part in Septimius' campaign against Ctesiphon in 198.[56] The reason for his apparent defection to the Roman side is unrecorded, but the second century had seen a gradual decline in the power and unity of the Parthian empire, while Roman campaigns in the east had repeatedly proved successful. Perhaps, too, he resented his position as a Parthian vassal and wished to enjoy greater independence under the patronage of Rome.[57] It would appear that good relations between Armenia and Rome prevailed well into the third century. It is noteworthy that none of the Severan dynasty received the title of *Armeniacus maximus*, despite Caracalla's intervention in Armenian affairs in *c.* 215, probably as the result of dynastic quarrels.[58] Although an ill-defined expedition under the command of Theocritus was judged unsuccessful,[59] Caracalla tricked the Armenian king into coming to him and promptly deposed him. The most significant aspect of the episode, however, is the fact that Caracalla could summon Chosroes to him with a 'friendly letter' (φιλικοῖς γράμμασιν).[60] After a period of unrest in Armenia, Chosroes' son, Tiridates, was restored to the throne by Macrinus in 217/18.[61]

The demise of the Parthian royal house and the rise of the Persian Sassanians further strengthened the ties that bound the Armenian Arsacids to Rome. Soon after Ardashir had defeated the last Parthian king, Artabanus V, in *c.* 224, he embarked on a campaign to win control of Armenia and uproot the Arsacid dynasty there, which was seen as a nucleus of opposition to the Sassanian interlopers.[62] The invasion, however, was repulsed and it is claimed that the Armenian forces followed up this success with a counter-attack that took them as far as Ctesiphon. According to the native sources, Armenian resistance was supported by the fugitive sons of Artabanus and by certain of the great Parthian families.[63] The *RGDS*, on

[54] Herod. III.1.2–3. [55] Chaumont (1976) 153–4 n. 463.
[56] Dio, LXXV.9.3; see Herod. III.9.2. [57] Toumanoff (1969) 244–5.
[58] Dio, LXXVII.12.1[2]. In *CIL* VIII.10236 Armeniacus is regarded as a slip for Germanicus – *RE* II.1, col. 1186 *s.v. Armeniacus*.
[59] Dio, LXXVII.21.1. But there is also a reference to booty from Armenia captured by the Romans: Dio, LXXVIII.27.4.
[60] Dio, LXXVII.12.1[2]; see Toumanoff (1969) 245–8. [61] Dio, LXXVIII.27.4.
[62] Dio, LXXX.3.3; see Nöldeke (1879) 15. [63] Agathangelos Ag. 9b; Moses, II.73.

the other hand, makes it clear that many of the Parthian nobles quickly came to terms with the new ruling dynasty and abandoned their oath of allegiance to the Arsacids.[64] It is, therefore, necessary to acknowledge that the continued resistance of the Armenian Arsacids was largely dependent on Roman support.

The Romans themselves reacted swiftly to the Sassanian threat. Both Dio and Herodian mark the change of dynasty in Iran by stating that the Sassanians cherished an ambition to restore the Persian (Achaemenid) empire to its former glory.[65] In 232 Severus Alexander, in alliance with Armenia, launched a concerted attack on the Persians.[66] One column was sent under the command of Junius Palmatus to attack Media by way of Armenia, where it fell foul of the wintry conditions in the mountain passes as it was returning from the expedition.[67]

After the Persian victory at Misiche and the death of Gordian III in 244, the newly appointed emperor, Philip the Arabian, quickly made peace with his Persian adversary Shapur I.[68] The terms of the treaty included a prohibition on further Roman intervention in Armenia. Nevertheless the *RGDS* implies that an attempt was subsequently made by the Roman emperor to re-establish his influence in Armenia, and this contravention of the peace treaty is cited as the pretext for Shapur's second major campaign in the west.[69] The action may also explain why Shapur did not immediately follow up his success in 244, for it would seem that Armenia was not brought under Persian control until *c.* 252. During the intervening period, however, it is likely that the Armenian king found himself increasingly isolated and vulnerable to attack from Persia.[70] Thereafter a succession of crises and disasters that afflicted the empire effectively distracted Roman attention from the plight of the Armenian kingdom.

Armenian sources speak of the assassination of Chosroes at Shapur's instigation and the flight of his son Tiridates to Rome, events that have been placed in the context of Shapur's western campaigns. There is, however, little justification for believing these accounts.[71] Zonaras confirms that Tiridates II was already king of Armenia when he was forced to quit his throne, adding that it was his sons who went over to the Persians.[72] Certainly, during his campaigns in Syria and Cappadocia Shapur must

[64] *RGDS* § 23–4 = Sprengling, *Iran* 9 (ll. 23–4), 11 (l. 29), 76 (l. 57).

[65] Dio, LXXX.4.1; Herod. VI.2.7. It has been argued that their fears were not founded on an accurate assessment of Sassanian objectives: Frye, *Iran* 296–7; Kettenhofen (1984b). That is not to say that the Sassanians were unaware of their Iranian heritage; both they and their predecessors, the Parthians, claimed descent from the Achaemenid kings: Frye (1964).

[66] Herod. IV.5.1. [67] Herod. VI.5.5; 6.3; Zon. XII.14; see also *SHA, Sev. Alex.* 58.1.

[68] *RGDS* § 3–4 = Sprengling, *Iran* 7 (ll. 3–4), 73 (ll. 8–9).

[69] *RGDS* § 4 = Sprengling, *Iran* 7 (l. 4), 73 (l. 10); see *ibid.* 4, 84–5. [70] Chaumont (1976) 169.

[71] N. 18 above; see Toumanoff (1969) 252–3; *contra* Chaumont (1976) 172.

[72] Zon. XII.21; see Sprengling, *Iran* 88.

have been able to rely on Armenia's support or, at least, neutrality. The reign of a certain Artavazdes as a Sassanian 'puppet' ruler in Armenia may also be discounted as pure invention.[73] However, it cannot have been long after the flight of Tiridates that Shapur's son and heir apparent, Hormizd-Ardashir, became the first Sassanian prince to rule Armenia.[74] Certainly in the *RGDS* Armenia is spoken of as if it formed part of *Eranshahr*.[75]

During the troubled reigns of the emperors Valerian, Gallienus and Claudius, Rome was in no state to prise the kingdom from the Persians' grasp. Whatever were the relations of the Palmyrene dynasts, Odenathus and Zenobia, with Persia and Armenia, it was not until after Aurelian's defeat of the latter that a serious challenge could be made to Persian supremacy in the east.[76] Hormizd-Ardashir had, meanwhile, succeeded his father as Great King in 272, but it is uncertain whether another of Sapor's sons, Narses, immediately took his place in Armenia. The *Historia Augusta* implies that Narses had become king there by 279/80, when it is claimed that he made overtures to the emperor Probus.[77] It could well be that Narses was already at odds with his cousin, Vahran II, who had succeeded to the Persian throne in 274, and that his willingness to come to an agreement with Rome was prompted by a desire to have a free hand to pursue his claims for precedence. It is now difficult to reconstruct the precise sequence of events from the unreliable and conflicting accounts of the period. However, a strong case has been made for placing the reigns of two Armenian Arsacids in the years before 298, which overlapped to some extent with the period of Narses' tenure of the post of *Armenshah*.[78] The statement is found in Moses' work that Armenia was governed by a Persian prince for twenty-seven years, i.e. between 252 and 279–80.[79] It has been proposed, therefore, that Narses and Probus agreed to partition Armenia and install an Arsacid prince, Chosroes, as a Roman vassal in the western half of the kingdom.[80] Chosroes can probably be identified with one of the sons of Tiridates who had fled to the Persian side during the campaigns of Shapur. He may, therefore, have been regarded as a suitable candidate because, in accordance with the traditional settlement, he had the right credentials to be a Persian nominee as well as a Roman vassal. There is certainly evidence to suggest that Chosroes, the father of Tiridates IV, played some part in Carus' Persian expedition in

[73] Zon. XII.71; see Toumanoff (1969) 255; *contra* Frye, *Iran* 294 n. 27.

[74] *RGDS* § 18, 20 = Sprengling, *Iran* 8–9 (ll. 18, 20), 11 (ll. 23, 25), 75 (ll. 41, 48).

[75] *RGDS* § 1 = Sprengling, *Iran* 7 (l. 1), 73 (l. 3); see Garsoïan (1981) 31–5.

[76] Zenobia is said to have made alliances both with Persia and with Armenia during her short-lived supremacy of the east: *SHA*, *Aurel*. 27.5; *Tyr. Trig*. 30.7. According to the *Historia Augusta*, Aurelian bought off the Armenian squadrons that were sent to her aid: *SHA*, *Aurel*. 28.2. Chaumont finds cause to doubt any connection between Palmyra and Armenia: Chaumont (1976) 178–9.

[77] *SHA*, *Prob*. 17.4–6, 18.1; see Toumanoff (1969) 257–9; *contra* Seston, *Dioclétien* 145–6.

[78] Toumanoff (1969) 239, 261–3; Hewsen (1978–9) 103–11.

[79] Moses, II.77.

[80] Toumanoff (1969) 257–61; *contra* Chaumont (1976) 180–2.

283, an act which the *Armenshah* Narses may not have regarded in a wholly unfavourable light.[81] For, after the sudden collapse of the campaign, the pro-Roman king of Armenia was left unpunished. However, a few years later, in 287, it would appear that he was murdered by a brother called Tiridates, while his young son, the future Tiridates IV (the Great), fled to the Romans for safety.[82] In 293 Narses marched from Armenia in open revolt against his nephew with a host of supporters and allies, whose names are recorded on the Paikuli inscription. This list includes a king Tiridates, possibly of Armenia.[83] The inscription also shows that by this time Armenia was no longer regarded as part of *Eranshahr*, a view that is reinforced from the Roman side by a remark found in Ammianus Marcellinus.[84] Once he had established himself as the Great King, Narses is seen by Roman commentators to revert to the aggressive, neo-Achaemenid policies of his father and grandfather.[85] In 296 he invaded Roman Mesopotamia, where he encountered and defeated the Caesar Galerius between Carrhae and Callinicum. In the following year he turned his attention to Armenia. His action requires close examination, since it is generally accepted that when Narses left Armenia in 293 he appointed Tiridates as his successor.[86] Some valid reason must, therefore, be found for his hostility towards Tiridates in 297.[87] A solution may be that the Arsacid prince, having seized the throne in western Armenia in 287, proceeded to take control of the eastern half of the kingdom once Narses had quit the scene.[88] This would undoubtedly have been regarded as a provocative act by the Sassanians and so the invasion of 297 was presumably carried out with the intention of removing Tiridates and restoring the whole of Armenia to direct Persian control.

Galerius, meanwhile, had mustered a substantial field-army in order to launch a counter-offensive. He led these forces into Armenia and routed the Persian army in a surprise attack on its camp east of Satala. It was a complete and humiliating defeat for Narses. He was forced to sign a treaty which ceded the whole of northern Mesopotamia to Rome, with the frontier between the two empires marked by the river Tigris. Five *regiones Transtigritanae*, taken from the southern flank of Armenia, were also acknowledged as Roman vassals. In return, Armenia received additional territory to the east, with its frontier extended as far as the fortress of

[81] *SHA*, *Carus* 8.1–2; Synesius, *De Regno* 12, 16 (*PG* LXVI.1081).
[82] Agathangelos Aa. III.36; Aq. 16; Moses, II.76; see Toumanoff (1969) app. B, 278.
[83] *Paikuli* § H = Herzfeld (1924) 118–19 (l. 45).
[84] *Paikuli* § B, D = Herzfeld (1924) 97ff. (ll. 9, 10, 18). Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.11.
[85] Lact. *DMP* 9; compare remarks about Shapur II: Amm. Marc. XVII.5.5.
[86] Toumanoff (1969) 261–3.
[87] The theory proposed by MacDermott that Tiridates IV had already succeeded to the Armenian throne and embraced Christianity has not gained wide acceptance: MacDermott (1970).
[88] There is, perhaps, a faint hint of this in the story, told by Faustus, of discord between the Armenian king 'Tiran' and the Persian governor of Atropatene: Faustus, III.20.

Zintha in Atropatene.[89] Finally, suzerain rights over the kingdom of Iberia were ceded to Rome.[90] While the Iberian king, Meribanes III, retained his throne, it would seem that in Armenia Tiridates III was now supplanted by his nephew, Tiridates IV (the Great).[91]

The settlement of 298 and the ensuing peace heralded a complete reorganization of the Mesopotamian frontier, but there is scant evidence for a Diocletianic strengthening of the *limes* along the upper Euphrates. It cannot be proved that Roman troops were once again stationed in Armenia itself in support of the client king. The *Notitia Dignitatum*, compiled in *c.* 390, lists the units under the command of the *dux Armeniae*.[92] They show a marked difference to those in the other frontier provinces further south; there are no units of *equites Illyriciani* and instead the old-style *auxilia* predominate. While Armenia and Iberia remained client kingdoms, the Roman provinces bordering eastern Anatolia were largely protected from enemy incursions. The static *alae* and *cohortes*, therefore, were sufficient for policing the border along the upper Euphrates and the Black Sea coast east of Trabzon. In the *regiones*, however, a Roman military presence may date back to the settlement of 298. Legions I and II Armeniacae and legions IV, V, VI Parthicae can be included amongst the large number of new units that were raised by Diocletian.[93] They would, therefore, have served as the nucleus of the Roman garrisons in the newly acquired principalities.[94]

Very little can be said with certainty about relations between Rome and Armenia or about events in eastern Anatolia during the first quarter of the fourth century. The surviving Roman sources reflect the Constantinian version of history, which has carefully expunged all record of eastern affairs that were not directly relevant to the theme of Constantine's rise to power. It remains, therefore, unclear what part, if any, the Armenian king played in the struggles between the tetrarchs. Eusebius refers to a campaign in Armenia which he associates closely with the persecution of Christians initiated by Maximinus Daza in 312.[95] It has been argued that a secret treaty was concluded between Constantine and Tiridates in 314, which would account for Tiridates' coolness towards his old comrade Licinius.[96] The imperial titles also indicate some activity in Armenia at that time. One inscription from North Africa includes *Armeniacus maximus* among the titles assumed by Constantine before 318. The victory was presumably earned by his colleague Licinius.[97] An epigram of the elder Symmachus further suggests that a certain Verinus was the commander of troops in a

[89] Adontz (1970) 176. [90] Petrus Patricius, *fr.* 14 (*FHG* IV. 189).
[91] Toumanoff (1969) 265 esp. n. 164.
[92] *Not. Dig., Or.* XXXVIII. [93] Jones, *LRE* 57. [94] Lightfoot (1983) 189–90 and (1986) 518–21.
[95] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.8.2; see Toumanoff (1969) 271–2. [96] Honigmann (1953) 18–25.
[97] *ILS* 696; see Honigmann (1953) 26.

successful war against the Armenians, but the circumstances are completely unknown.[98]

Tiridates, nevertheless, remained on the Armenian throne, since his loyalty to Rome was assured and his ready acceptance of the Christian faith must have endeared him to Constantine. His long reign came to an end in *c.* 330. Objections have been raised to the existence of his successor, Chosroes III, but this would have left an interregnum of some eight or nine years between the death of Tiridates and the accession of Arsaces II.[99] Despite the turmoil of these years, it is difficult to believe that there was such a long hiatus, since both internal and external forces would have acted quickly to fill the vacant throne. It is clear, however, that neither Persian nor Roman interference in Armenia followed immediately on Tiridates' death. At first the succession must have been resolved internally, although the new king was soon faced with two major revolts, the one led by a certain Sanesan or Sanatruk, a member of the Arsacid family, the other by Bakur, the ruler of Arzanene.[100] Both rebels received help and support from the Persian king Shapur II, who was doubtless encouraged to meddle in the affairs of the region by Constantine's preoccupation elsewhere. According to the Armenian sources, a group of nobles loyal to Chosroes appealed for Roman aid.[101] The fate of the king remains uncertain, since it has been shown that Faustus' account confuses this episode with the events surrounding the defeat of the king Narses by Galerius.[102] The threat to Armenia, or more probably the defection of Arzanene, brought the Caesar Constantius to the eastern command from Constantinople, where he had been attending the celebrations for his father's *tricennalia* and his own wedding.[103] So, this can be securely dated to 335. Shapur, meanwhile, had dispatched Persian forces to Armenia under the command of his brother Narses. They captured Amida, thereby provoking Constantius to lead the eastern field-army out to offer battle.[104] At Narrara on the north bank of the Tigris between Amida and Cepha the young Caesar gained a notable victory, killing the prince Narses in the process.[105] This action may have given rise to the establishment of permanent Roman garrisons in the *regiones*, for Constantius as Caesar is credited with the fortification of Amida and other fortresses.[106] Towards the end of the same year the title of *Rex Regum et Ponticarum Gentium* was conferred

[98] Symm. *Ep.* 1.2.7; *PLRE* I. 950–2. [99] Hewsen (1978–9) 109–10.

[100] Faustus, III.7, 9; Moses, III.3–4, 6–7. Sanesan's activities are also described by an Albanian source, while Bakur's revolt is alluded to by Julian: Movsës Dasxuranci 1.12; Julian, *Or.* 1.18D–19A.

[101] Faustus, III.21; Moses, III.10. [102] Hewsen (1978–9) 104.

[103] Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.49.

[104] For a discussion of the date of Constantius' title *Persicus maximus*: Arce (1982); *contra* Barnes (1983).

[105] Ensslin (1936) 106; *contra* Peeters (1931) 44.

[106] Amm. Marc. XVIII.9.1; *Life of Jacob the Recluse*: Nau (1915–17) 7.

on Hannibalianus the son of Constantine's half-brother Dalmatius.[107] This has been taken by some scholars to indicate that Constantine wished to place a member of his own family on the Armenian throne, possibly as a counter-measure to Shapur's attempt to install a Persian prince.[108] Such an move, however, would have been quite unacceptable not only to the Sassanians but also to the majority of Armenians. There is, indeed, no evidence to show that Hannibalianus was actually installed as king or that he even entered Armenia. According to the *Chronicon Paschale*, he set up his headquarters at Caesarea in Cappadocia, and the phrase used by Aurelius Victor suggests the real extent of his appointment: *Armeniam nationesque circumsocias habuit*.[109] Explicit claim is made to Roman suzerainty over Armenia and the eastern marches in the face of renewed Persian attempts to gain control there. The title of *Rex Regum* is thus a wholly appropriate one for Hannibalianus, whose role was to safeguard all of the kingdoms and principalities of eastern Anatolia that were bound to Rome by treaty and, to a certain extent, by religion, while it also served as an effective slight on the majesty of the Persian 'king of kings'. This may, however, have only been a holding operation. For, if at the end of his reign Constantine really was planning to carry out the conquest of Persia, Hannibalianus may have been his choice as the Roman 'puppet' whom he intended to install on the Persian throne.[110] Constantine's death in the spring of 337, however, precluded such an expedition and left unresolved the dispute with Persia over the mastery of both Mesopotamia and Armenia – a legacy inherited by his son Constantius II.[111]

Chronological Table of Armenian Arsacid Kings

Chosroes I	191–*c.* 215
Tiridates II	217–*c.* 252
[Persian interregnum	252–79]
Chosroes II	279–87
Tiridates III	287–97
Tiridates IV	298–330
Chosroes III	330–(?)337

[107] *Origo* VI.35; Amm. Marc. XIV.1.2. [108] Eadie (1967) 149; Hewsen (1978–9) 109–10.
[109] *Chron. Pasch. s.a.* 335; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* XLI.20.
[110] Barnes (1985) 132. An alternative candidate would have been Hormizd, a brother of Shapur II, who had fled to the Romans in A.D. 324: Zos. II.27; Amm. Marc. XVI.10.16; see Lieu (1986) 494.
[111] Lib. *Or.* LIX.60.

CHAPTER 16

THE ARABS AND THE DESERT PEOPLES

MAURICE SARTRE

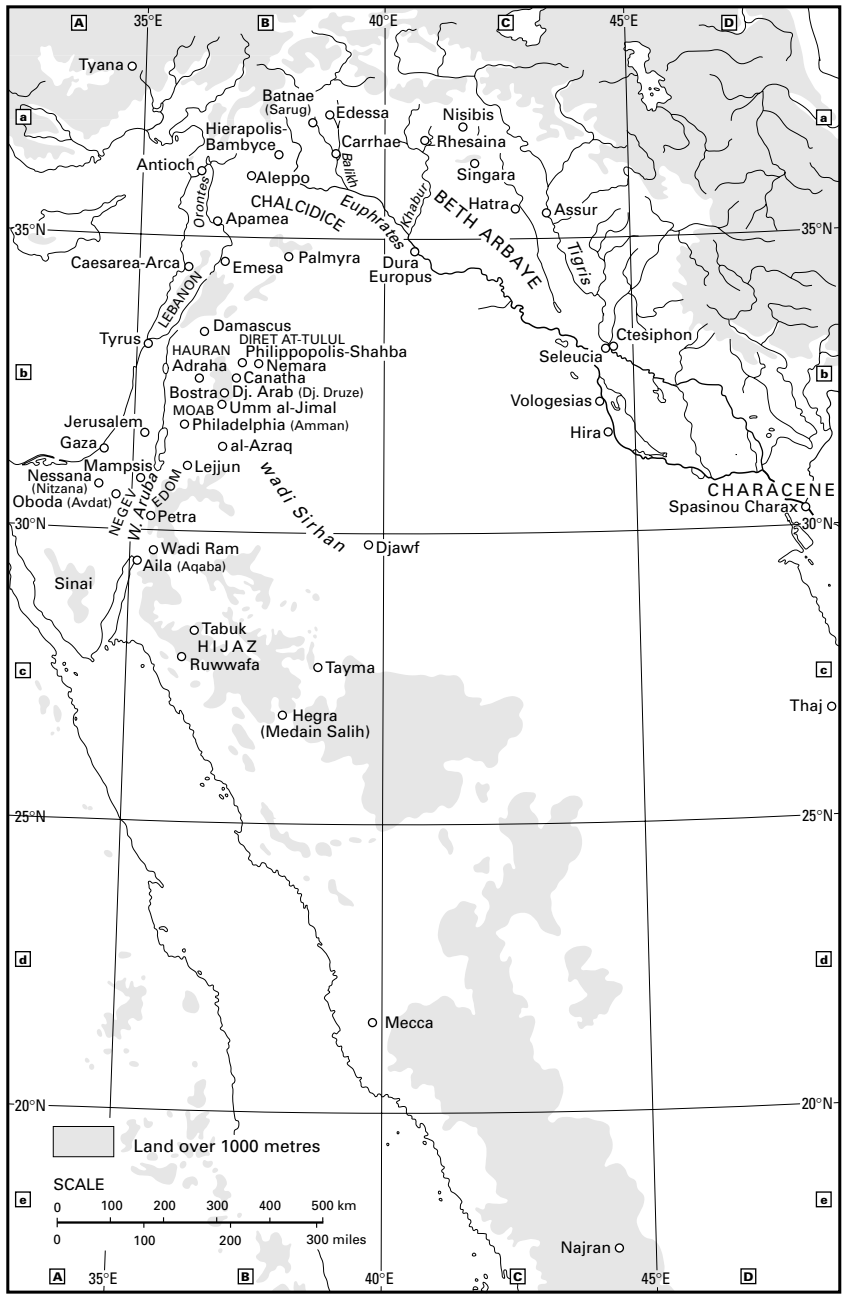
I. THE UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF ARAB SOCIETY

In modern times the Arabs are identified solely by means of a linguistic criterion. Their way of life is not important, since an Arab may be a sedentary agriculturalist, a herdsman, a craftsman or a caravan leader. For the ancients on the other hand, their way of life took priority over their language, and the name Arab designated above all the man who was capable of living in the desert, as a nomad or an inhabitant of an oasis. With this lifestyle was associated a social and political organization, in which the group, the tribe and the family played a crucial role. In these circumstances, *Arabia* was the name applied to any desert region, and *Arab* to any inhabitant of the desert, regardless of his actual ethnic origin. The Arabs for the ancients were those whom we today call Bedouins.

At the end of the second century the majority of the groups inhabiting the desert between the Antitaurus and the Red Sea were in fact Arabs in the modern sense. South of the Euphrates they were almost the only inhabitants, though some of the population of the oases may have been Aramaic (at Palmyra). On the other hand, north of the Euphrates at Edessa, Hatra or Assur, the Arabs were in a minority. Although they were distributed throughout the area, the dominant culture there was clearly Aramaic: the language, writing and a significant proportion of the names and cults are northern Aramaic (Edessene). Nevertheless the region was called *Arbayestan* by the Persians, *Beth Arbaye* by the Aramaeans, and *Arabia* by the Roman historians.[1] Despite certain differences due to their long occupation of the edge of the fertile crescent, the groups living in the deserts on the eastern fringes of the Roman empire formed a homogeneous whole.

They did not all live in the desert, however. A proportion of the Arabs – in the ethnic or linguistic sense of the term – became sedentarized. Sometimes these people occupied towns and villages on their own, as in Nabataea and Idumaea. In other cases a mingling of Aramaeans and Arabs took place: this was the case both in the towns on the edge of the Syro-Mesopotamian

[1] *SHA*, *Aurel.* 26; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* xxxv.3 (e.g.).



Map 8 The Arabs and the desert peoples

desert (Edessa, Hatra, Dura, Palmyra or Emesa) and in the countryside of the steppic border, such as the Hauran or Chalcidice. The effects of these varying environments must be borne in mind while we proceed to describe the different Arab groups to be found in the Middle East in the third and fourth centuries.

To the east and north of the Euphrates, in the steppe which extends south of the plains beyond the Taurus and to the west of the Tigris, Strabo mentions that already in the first century there were Scenite Arabs called *Malioi*,[2] but indicates that Armenians, Syrians and Arabs intermingled very frequently.[3] Pliny was aware of the *Orroei* Arabs,[4] in which the Syriac name of the Edessenes may be recognized, and the *Praetavi* Arabs[5] as well. It is thus not without reason that ancient writers called this region *Arabia*, and that the rulers of Hatra styled themselves 'kings of the Arabs' from the time of Sanatruq I (*c.* 175/177).

Moreover, Arab elements are not lacking in the inscriptions and cults of upper Mesopotamia. At Hatra, alongside the Aramaic, Iranian or Greek names, are found names which are unquestionably Arab. At Edessa, the Abgarid dynasty was Arab. Arab cults are attested at Hatra (the eagle god Nasr) and at Edessa (the twins Monimos and Azizos).

Nevertheless the cultural setting was fundamentally Aramaic, more precisely northern Aramaic, i.e. Syriac. Edessene Aramaic, with its individual script, established itself in all upper Syria and upper Mesopotamia as far as Hatra and Assur in the course of the second century, although the oldest inscription dates from A.D. 6. A remarkable flourishing of Syriac culture occurred at Edessa in the Severan period in the heyday of Bardaisan.[6] It would hence be absurd to regard Edessa as solely an Arab city, for its culture clearly owed very little to the nomadic Arabs of the region.

On the other hand the Arabs adopted not only the language and script, but also the majority of the cults of the Aramaic population of the region. All Semitic texts are in Aramaic, while none are in Arabic. The great triad of Hatra was composed of Hadad, Atargatis (the Lady) and Simios, and it is known that the Arabs frequented the sanctuary of Hierapolis-Bambyce in great numbers to venerate the Syrian goddess Atargatis there.[7] There is nothing specifically Arab about the presence of Shamash at Hatra (which was called the city of Shamash on some coins), and the presence of Baalshamin is more reminiscent of inner Syria. Thus this rather composite Hatran civilization, grafting Iranian, Greek and Arab elements onto a flourishing Aramaic substratum, appears to have been the particular creation of the Arabs of Hatra.

[2] Strabo, XVI.1.27 (C748). [3] Strabo, I.2.34 (C41). [4] Pliny, *HN* V.24.20.
[5] Pliny, *HN* V.24.21. [6] Drijvers (1966). [7] Lucian, *De Dea Syria* 10.

The names of the Arab groups who roamed over the area are not known to us. Strabo's precise and vivid description of the tent-dwelling Arabs organizing themselves into independent groups, and ransoming travellers for a modest fee, cannot be applied to the third century.[8] In fact, right from the Severan period, all the groups were placed under the authority either of the Abgarids of Edessa or of the rulers of Hatra.

The wealth to be observed at Hatra and Edessa cannot be explained by stock-breeding and local agriculture alone. Trade routes between Babylonia, north Syria and Anatolia followed either the valley of the Euphrates in the south or the route through the plains of the northern Antitaurus; alternatively the middle route through Hatra was employed, various branches of which gave access to the northern cities such as Nisibis and Edessa.[9]

Only the nomads, however, could provide the means of transport, and ensure the safety (or lack of it) of the routes. Neither at Hatra nor Edessa have helpful caravan inscriptions been found, like those which inform us about the trade of Palmyra. Nevertheless, at least two texts [H.336 and H.343] associate the Arabs ('*arby*') – i.e. the Bedouin – with the Hatrans and other residents in official documents, showing that they did form a group at the heart of Hatran society. Did this apply only to pastoralists? It is difficult to imagine that the nomads did not play some role in the city's trade, as caravaners or providers of transport. The phenomenal development of the city, in evidence from the mid-second century, can hardly be accounted for save by the importance of revenues acquired through the passage of goods.

South of the Euphrates as far as the latitude of Damascus, Palmyra[10] controlled the sweep of the desert and the steppe. The former haunt of the nomadic Aramaeans of the second millenium had become deeply 'arabized'. It is true that Aramaic remained the only written language, the indispensable tool of trade and exchanges in general. But onomastic studies reveal a strong Arab presence even within the governing elements. Moreover, alongside the local cults (Bêl), or those of Mesopotamia (Nabu) or Syria (Baalshamin), the Arab gods enjoyed considerable success: Allat, Manat, Azizos, Arsu, the Ginnaye and the Gad.

The prosperity of Palmyra during the first and second centuries attracted other Arabs, and helped to establish certain groups in the Palmyra region. Permanent encampments developed around water sources in northwest Palmyrena. These camel breeders were an essential element in the organization of the caravan trade, while the shepherds provided meat for the city's consumption; others still supplied the auxiliary troops in case of need.

[8] Strabo, XVI.1.27–8 (c748). [9] Dillemann (1962) 176–88.

[10] Cf. the inscriptions of Palmyra in Cantineau *et al.* (1930–75) (cited here as *Inv. Pal.*). This is not a corpus, and it is also necessary to refer to numerous scattered publications. Among the main ones are Cantineau (1933), (1936) and (1938); Dunant (1971); Gawlikowski (1975). But see now Hillers and Cussini (1996) (without translations).

The social organization of Palmyra and its commercial activities have been described in the previous volume. The peace which prevailed in the desert and the growing need for agricultural products of a city with poor land (despite Pliny's assertion)[11] helped to accelerate the sedentarization process. This is true as much in the steppe zones to the northwest of Palmyra as in Chalcidice, where the Roman forts were at the centre of the new villages.

Sedentary Arabs, living in cities or villages, had long been established in agricultural areas as well. This is the case with the Ituraeans who installed themselves around Caesarea Arca in north Lebanon, and who are still identifiable as Arabs through certain cults. Emesa in particular has the appearance of an Arab city. Its prosperity was certainly a recent event, and quite probably its foundation too. The base of the sedentary population was Aramaic, but the dynasty which governed the city until the Flavian period, and which continued to administer the sanctuary, was Arab. The great god of the city, Helios-Elahagabal, sun god and mountain god,[12] successfully preserved Arab characteristics both in his names and in his representations, as did his acolyte Arsu. The fame of the temple as well as the richness of the soil, well watered and irrigated thanks to the barrage lake constructed on the Orontes (doubtless in the Roman period) explain the development of the city in the second century. Its prosperity and its decline were, however, linked to those of Palmyra, whose caravans most often stopped at Emesa before reaching the Syrian ports. This solidarity between the two cities was strengthened when, some time after 212, their inhabitants took the double *gentilicium* of Iulii Aurelii, thus associating Julia Domna with Caracalla.

Deprived of the glories that had once brought the presence of the Syrian princesses at the head of the *domus divina*, Emesa became an insignificant city once it lost its role as a staging-post on the way from Palmyra to the sea. Libanius wrote at the end of the fourth century that it had ceased to be a 'city',[13] and that it 'still sent embassies and crowns to the emperors, aware of its own poverty, but ashamed to fall from among the ranks of the cities'.[14]

The so-called Safaites[15] did not possess their own urban centre, unlike the Arabs with whom we have so far been concerned. They frequented the neighbouring cities, such as Bostra, Canatha and Umm al-Jimal, but they were primarily pastoralists and only occasionally cultivators. They ranged over the steppe between the Diret al-Tulul in the north and the ravine of the Wadi Sirhan in the south, although isolated traces of their presence have been found in Palmyrena, the Anti-Lebanon range and on the Euphrates.

[11] Will (1985). [12] Starcky (1975–6).
[13] Lib. *Or.* XXVII, p. 42 (ed. Foerster). [14] Lib. *Ep.* 846.
[15] The main collections of Safaitic inscriptions are: *CIS* V; Harding (1953); Winnett (1957); Oxtoby (1968); Winnett and Harding (1976). An explanation: Milik (1985). For the name 'Safaitic', see MacDonald (1993); Sartre (2001) 780–5.

The thousands of graffiti which they have left, in Arabic and written in a south Arabic alphabet, give few sure chronological indicators by which to date their presence in the area. Allusions to a Nabataean king and to the Roman presence establish with certainty that they were there in the first and second centuries, and it is possible that some graffiti refer to the Romano-Persian wars of the third century.

They thus still occupied a portion of the Syro-Mesopotamian desert and southern Syria in the third and fourth centuries, whether or not they had been absorbed by or affiliated to other tribal groups. Some in the Hauran became sedentarized and hellenized; indeed in the eastern part of the Hauran, substantial quantities of Arab names are found, generally belonging to so-called Safaites. Several tribal names and toponyms are also Safaitic. It may therefore be deduced that certain groups established themselves in the towns and villages, and there started to use (written) Greek.

The 'Safaite' economy continued to be based on pastoralism, nomadism in the desert. The breeding of sheep and goats, and principally of horses and camels, formed the mainstay of their resources. Pillaging raids took place, but should not be exaggerated: the 'Safaite' Arab was far from the major thoroughfares and Rome was vigilant. Razzias could only be undertaken when other 'Safaitic groups' were encountered, in order to rob them of their livestock. The numerous invocations of the gods (Lat and Ruda in particular, i.e. Allat and Arsu) in order that their devotees might obtain *ghnm* (profit) should be viewed as requests for prosperity in general (even if merely through the increase of herds) rather than exclusively as a hope for booty.

'Safaitic' society was centred around the family, whose antiquity the pastoralists recalled through long genealogies.[16] The discovery of a sign left by an ancestor or the sight of his tomb occasioned fresh graffiti to mark his memory. The absence of any higher authority is shown up by the fragmentation of the numerous clans. Only a few groups, like that of the Awidh, appear more powerful, perhaps because of a privileged alliance with Rome. But the hypothesis can be inverted: might not their power be the reason that Rome chose them as allies?

From the Hauran as far as the oasis of Jawf, at Hegra and in the Sinai, the Nabataeans[17] had for a long time been one of the most powerful and cohesive Arab groups. The disappearance of the Nabataean kingdom in 106 and the decline of the caravan trade passing through Petra brought about important changes in Nabataean society, but these are difficult to assess in the period under consideration.

[16] Cf. *CIS* v.2646.

[17] In the absence of a recent corpus of Nabataean inscriptions, it is necessary to refer to *CIS* II.2. Explanation for the Hauran: Starcky (1985).

The Nabataeans were not the only inhabitants of the former kingdom which became the Provincia Arabia. While the Arab element – among whom the Nabataeans dominated for the most part – constituted the majority of the inhabitants, or indeed the only inhabitants, in the Sinai, the Hijaz and Arabia Petraea, elsewhere it was mixed in with the sedentary populations, either Aramaic or Aramaicized. In the Hauran, the Nabataeans had always formed a minority: they had controlled the area politically, but had not colonized it in large numbers.[18]

The Arab character of the Nabataeans is clearly attested: for although they wrote in Aramaic in a script derived from the Aramaic of the empire, they continued to speak Arabic, which doubtless explains how their written language became arabicized as time progressed,[19] up to the final stage represented by the Nemara inscription – an Arabic text in Nabataean script. The onomastics of the south are exclusively Arab, and that of the sedentary populations of the north are heavily arabized, as much in the cities such as Bostra and Philadelphia as in the villages.[20] At the same time ancestral cults were still held in honour throughout the area, even if the trend for the *interpretatio graeca* (which coincided with the decline of written Aramaic) led Doushara to be called Zeus and Allat Athena.[21]

Throughout the Provincia Arabia the sedentarization of the Arab groups advanced between the second and fourth centuries. The development of the villages of the southern Hauran (the Bostra plain and the area around Umm al-Jimal)[22] entailed the fixing of populations, perhaps in part around the Roman military posts, but above all around major centres of rural development. At Umm al-Jimal, whose Arab character is clearly attested onomastically, the oldest inscriptions date from the end of the reign of Marcus Aurelius,[23] and the period of the Severi,[24] but an important native settlement had existed there for a long time previously.[25] In the same way large numbers of Arab names are found on epitaphs in all the villages of the Bostra plain and in the arid plateau of Trachonitis, the majority of which date from the third and fourth centuries. In the villages in the mountains (the Jebel Druze and Jebel Arab) Arab clans settled alongside native populations of greater antiquity, while still retaining their own organization. The peace guaranteed by Rome from the first century suffices to explain the remarkable expansion of the villages throughout the region, but current studies do not allow the stages of rural development to be dated precisely. It is, however, certain that from the third century most of the villages of the Hauran, which included a substantial Arab

[18] Sartre (2001) 785–7. [19] Cantineau (1934–5). [20] Sartre (1985b). [21] Sourdel (1952).
[22] Cf. Dentzer and Villeneuve (1985); Villeneuve (1985); Sartre (1987).
[23] *PAES* III.A, no.232, from 177–80.
[24] *PAES* III.A, no.274, from 195; no. 275, from 208; no. 276, from 223. [25] De Vries (1986).

or arabized population, evolved and possessed their own autonomous institutions.[26]

The process of sedentarization was not confined to the Hauran, but also took place in the whole steppic zone of the Provincia Arabia, from the Hauran to the Negev. The villages and small towns of the Transjordan underwent a substantial expansion by the third century at the latest. Large numbers of sites on the Edomite and Moabite plateaux were occupied during this period, having previously been either desert or abandoned settlements. In the Negev, the main cities founded during the last century of the Nabataean kingdom (Oboda, Mampsis, Nessana), which had survived the decline of trade movements between Petra and Gaza, enjoyed a revival from the fourth century. Throughout the area the Arab element, to judge from onomastic studies, was almost totally predominant. This phenomenon is starting to be observed even in the northern Hijaz, especially on the eastern bank of the gulf of Aila.[27]

The political overlordship of the Nabataeans did not bring the autonomy of other Arab groups, like the so-called Thamudaeans, to an end. Thamudaean graffiti are attested throughout the northern Hijaz, from Jawf to Hegra, and as far as the Wadi Ram, at Risqueh; they are never precisely dated, but many belong to the first five centuries A.D.[28]

All the Arabs situated between the Taurus and the Sinai displayed common characteristics. While it is customary to stress their role in long-distance trade, on account of Palmyra and the Nabataeans, such activity was in fact limited and confined to only a few tribes.

The most characteristic activity of these societies remained sheep farming. This stock breeding, practised in the semi-arid zone next to the fertile crescent, rendered long migrations impossible. The association of pastoralists and cultivators appears as one of the foundations of the Arab societies, and it is wrong to emphasize their antagonism, which was only infrequent.[29] However, most of the time the relationship was fairly weak. The *tribus* of the *harra* (the 'Safaites') seem to have spent all their time in the desert like true nomads, rather than transhumants.

On account of their camel-based pastoralism, the Arabs were induced to play a part in the trade of the Near East; but in the third century neither Palmyra nor Petra had a decisive role in this field. It may be supposed, however, that the camel-owning Arabs of upper Mesopotamia had ensured the prosperity of Hatra before its destruction, and continued to lead the caravans bound for Edessa, Nisibis or Batnae.

In Palmyra the caravan trade is reckoned to have reached its peak in the period of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius; in fact texts become more

[26] Sartre (2001) 773–9. [27] Ingraham (1981). [28] Sartre (2001) 785–6.
[29] Rowton (1976) and (1977); Rowton (1973); Banning (1986).

sparse after 160. Important caravan inscriptions do not disappear completely, however: they are still found in April 193, January 199, then in April 247, in 257/8 and in April 266 excluding a text not precisely dated, but which belongs after 212–14. This evidence is enough to demonstrate that Palmyrene merchants continued to frequent Vologaesias[30] and the trading-posts of Mesopotamia, despite the difficulties of the time: the texts make precise references to Bedouin incursions[31] and the lack of security.[32]

In Nabataea the decline of the passage of trade is attested by Strabo from the start of the first century.[33] The maintenance of caravans originating in the Arabian peninsula, and bound for Transjordanian and Syrian markets, was not enough to arrest this decline, but from the third or fourth centuries there may have been an export trade of wheat, wine, and textile and metallurgic products destined for the peninsula, like that which is attested a little later between Bostra and Mecca.

Moreover, the Arabs succeeded in finding employment elsewhere. In the Arabian desert east of the Nile, numerous Nabataean graffiti attest the passage of caravaneers:[34] evidently the Nabataeans followed the displacement of the caravan routes. Others took part in the mining developments in the Sinai (Nabataean graffiti from the third century in the Wadi Mukatteb and Wadi Haggag), and in the Wadi Araba, where the penal colony of Phaino was active at the end of the third century and beginning of the fourth.

Absent from this overview are the tribes of the Arabian peninsula proper, whose way of life in this period is but poorly known, though it is highly probable that they depended on stock breeding, like the other Arabs. It should be stressed that the Arab character of these desert peoples is everywhere firmly in evidence, even when they borrowed their language, their script and indeed certain cults, from their Aramaic neighbours. These borrowings decrease in importance from north to south and from west to east: they are negligible or non-existent among the Arabs who remained far from urban centres, such as the so-called Safaites and Thamudaeans. Furthermore, far from progressing, Aramaization actually declined, and a rise in arabization is evident, both among the non-Arab sedentary peoples (in the Hauran) and among the Arabs themselves; such was the case among the Nabataeans, whose written language became arabicized. The most important development was the emergence, for the first time, of the Arabs from domination by neighbouring civilizations to make their own mark on the population of the fertile crescent. This was only possible because their links with the more distant desert and Arabia (and the numerous tribes which inhabited it) had never been broken: on account of the necessary transhumant movements or through commercial exchanges, all the peoples of

[30] *Inv. Pal.* III.21. [31] *Inv. Pal.* X.44.
[32] *Inv. Pal.* III.28; free passage cost the caravan nearly 300 gold *denarii*.
[33] Strabo, XVI.4.24 (C757). [34] Littmann and Meredith (1953) and (1954).

the steppe and desert were in constant contact, despite the apparent disintegration of political organization. The major political transformations observable over the course of the third century would be incomprehensible in the absence of this social and cultural background.

II. THE APOGEE AND RUIN OF THE CLIENT STATES

The control of the Bedouin population of the Syro-Mesopotamian desert and the northern part of the Arabian peninsula presented a two-fold problem: on the one hand, how to keep watch over their movements and maintain order among them, and on the other, how to ensure that the power acquired by certain tribes was not directed against the empire and did not redound to the enemy's advantage. This matter became vital once the Arsacid dynasty was replaced by the more enterprising Sassanids.

To the north of the Euphrates, the principalities of Edessa and Hatra ensured the security of the surrounding desert. Having for a long time been within the Parthian orbit, they both turned their allegiance to Rome in the Severan period. Before the middle of the third century, the Sassanid reconquest brought about their disappearance.

South of the Euphrates, at Palmyra, a princedom developed from the mid-third century which for a long time took on the role of policeman and guardian of the eastern frontier alone. The revolt of Zenobia and the destruction of the city gave the Bedouin free range after 272, however, and forced Rome to develop other systems of relations with the Arabs of the desert.

1. Edessa and the province of Osrhoene

The Arab principality of Edessa was one of the most ancient of those on the far side of the Euphrates, originating when an Arab dynasty took control of the Greek city of Edessa (Semitic Orrhai) and the surrounding area. From the time of Avidius Cassius' siege in 165, Edessa had been in alliance with Rome: Ma'nu VIII officially held the title *Philorhomaios*. The dynasty controlled not only the city and the villages, but also the Bedouin of the region placed under the charge of an *arabarchos*.[35]

The simultaneous usurpations of Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger put the Edessenes in an awkward position. Edessa, like the Hatraeans, wisely sided with the man who was closest, the governor of Syria, Niger. After his elimination, Severus turned against those who had supported his rival and who had perhaps taken advantage of the troubles to embark on a rapprochement with the Parthians.

[35] Segal (1970) 19.

Edessa was Severus' first target. In 195 the city was besieged and captured by the Roman troops. Severus did not suppress the client state, however; he created the province of Osrhoene, entrusted to a *procurator*, with the small principalities of Batnae and Carrhae, while he left Abgar in charge of his kingdom.[36] After Severus' next campaign in Mesopotamia, in 197–8, Abgar kept his privileged status as a client prince, and Severus bestowed on him the title 'king of kings'. A splendid reception in Rome sealed this reconciliation.[37]

On the death of Abgar VIII the Great in 212, his son Abgar IX Severus succeeded him. As early as 213/14, however, Caracalla deprived him of his functions on the pretext of having mistreated his fellow citizens, and elevated Edessa to the status of a Roman *colonia* (January 214): such was the end of the Arab principality of Edessa. Yet the *Chronicon* of Dionysius of Tell Mahre mentions a Ma'nu IX ibn Abgar, who reigned from 214 to 240, and coins attest the existence of an Abgar X Frahad in 240–2. New parchments and papyri from the middle Euphrates testify that Ma'nu was only *pasgriba*, heir to the throne, but not king. But his son, L. Septimius Abgar (X), became king in 239 until spring 243. Abgar X was loyal to Gordian III, and sought refuge in Rome in 244 after the peace imposed on Philip the Arabian by Shapur I.[38] Following the temporary Sassanid conquest of 242 and the reconquest by Gordian III, Edessa recovered (by May 243 at the latest) its rank of *colonia*, in the hands of two *strategoi* under the authority of a resident Roman. Control of the city eluded the Arabs for a long time.

2. *Hatra and Mesopotamian Arabia*[39]

The formation of an Arab principality in Upper Mesopotamia around Hatra certainly ranks among the most important events of the region in the second century. The peak of this principality was in the first half of the third century, however, before the Persians destroyed it in 240–241.

(a) Hatra's opposition to Severan aggression

Right at the outset of Pescennius Niger's usurpation, the king of Hatra Barsemias provided him with a contingent of archers. Consequently Severus laid siege to the city in 198 on account of this assistance given to his rival, and it was for a long time thought that it was on this occasion that Barsemias

[36] Wagner (1983); corrected by Gawlikowski (1998). [37] Dio, LXXIX.16.2.

[38] Loriot (1975) 768 nn. 822–3; cf. Sartre (2001) 961–2.

[39] The Hatran inscriptions (H.), numbered continuously since the start of their publication, have been collected from H.1 to H.341 by Vattioni (1981). Later, H.343–4 were published by Khalil (1982); cf. Segal (1982) and H.345–87 by Al-Nagafi (1983); cf. Aggoula (1981), (1983a, b, c), (1985), (1986), (1987) and (1991), and Beyer (1998).

was replaced by Abdsamya [H.79, 223, 277]; the latter is named on several undated inscriptions, and known to be the father of Sanatruk II [H.195]. A more recent discovery [H.290], however, shows that Abdsamya was already king of Hatra in 192/3, and that he is therefore identical with Barsemias.

There does not seem to have been a dynastic tie with the family of Sanatruk I, the first ruler of Hatra to assume the royal title towards 175–7, though the re-emergence of the name Sanatruk in the heir of Abdsamya may indicate a blood relationship of some sort; but Abdsamya never indicates the name of his father, which may well reflect a disruption in the rightful line of succession. At the same time, sons of Sanatruk I, Nyhr' [H.198], Nsryhb [H.139, 198] and a grandson of the same name [H.139] do not bear any title. If there was a change of dynasty, it took place without violence: the statues in honour of members of the former ruling family stayed in place. Moreover, this dynastic change was unconnected with the Roman intervention, since it preceded it.

Although the king of Hatra had given concrete aid to Niger, while others had contented themselves with only vague promises, Severus did not consider the city as his primary objective. Our two sources give conflicting accounts, however. According to Herodian,[40] Severus besieged Hatra after having received the submission of the king of Armenia, and before marching against Ctesiphon. On the other hand, Cassius Dio places the first siege of Hatra after the taking of Ctesiphon,[41] which fell on 28 January 198 according to the *Feriale Duranum* [I.14–16]; and he puts the second siege somewhat later,[42] prior to Severus' arrival in Egypt at the opening of 199. It is hardly possible to reconcile these pieces of evidence, but about one thing they are in agreement: the siege, or sieges, were without success.

Despite this failure, Severus represented the siege of Hatra as one of the successes of his reign: panel IV of Septimius Severus' arch at Rome depicts the siege of Hatra.[43] The military failure described by Herodian and Cassius Dio had a positive political and diplomatic outcome which they pass over in silence: the entry of Hatra into an alliance with Rome.

(b) The alliance with Rome and the ruin of Hatra

Three Latin dedications from Hatra bear witness to the presence of Roman detachments at Hatra in 235 and under Gordian III. Sir Aurel Stein pointed out the numerous Roman *castella* to the east of the city, facing the Persian enemy. A milestone of Severus Alexander, dated to 231/32, 5 kilometres from Singara, favours the dating of the reinforcement works carried out on the *limes* to this period. Around this time (perhaps as early as the siege of 198 unless we delay the date to the campaign of Caracalla in 217), Hatra entered into the empire, while still preserving its autonomous royal government

[40] Herod. III.9.2–7. [41] Dio, LXXV.10–11. [42] Dio, LXXV.11–12. [43] Rabin (1975).

(on the model of what is observable at Edessa), and became allied to Rome against the Parthians. This alliance is attested by the coinage of Hatra, which was henceforth minted with the symbol *SC* surrounded by an eagle with outspread wings. Furthermore, a statue of Sanatruk II bears a breastplate decorated with Hercules, protector of the imperial family, beside a young god identifiable with *brmryn*, the dynastic god of Hatra.[44]

This period of Roman presence coincides with the reign of Sanatruk II, the last king of Hatra, attested in October 231 [H.229] and in 237/8 [H.36], but who could have come to power earlier. His son and heir bore the name of his grandfather [H.28, 36, 287]. A second son, M'n' [H.79, 201], seems to have wielded authority around 235 over 'Arabia of W'l' [H.79], which refers to the region of Sumatar Arabesi, to the southeast of Edessa. The kings of Hatra had thus extended their authority to this area, which in the second and third centuries had been under local dynasts (*slyṭ'*) controlled by Edessa, and which through the disappearance of the Abgarids had been delivered into their hands.

It is difficult to work out the precise extent of Sanatruk II's authority. The Arab writer 'Adi ibn Zayd, quoted by Tha'libi (A.D. 1035), referring to the power of the kings of Hatra, exclaimed: 'Where is the man of Hadr (Hatra), he who built this citadel and who received the tribute of the lands washed by the Tigris and the Khabur?' May we infer from this that he was the only ruler of this whole area, defined thus? This is doubtful, for the provincial authorities of Mesopotamia must be borne in mind. Nevertheless, the presence of a son of Sanatruk as governor of Sumatar shows that the power of the king of Hatra was able to reach far to the west. In fact, we should not attempt to define administrative boundaries; Sanatruk II reigned over Hatra and probably over the nomadic Arabs of the region, his son deputizing among the Arabs of W'l. The Roman administration, for its part, oversaw the sedentary peoples of the north (Nisibis and Carrhae) and south (Dura Europus), as well as the roads and a certain number of military posts (Singara, Rhesaina).

This power structure need not indicate a weakening of Sanatruk's power: in exchange for his alliance with the Romans, he found himself at the head of all the Roman Arabs of the Euphrates and upper Mesopotamia. His power and prestige were reinforced among the people of the desert: hence the Arab legends which make him the builder of Hatra (Hadr) arose. For it is equally he, the last and most powerful of the kings of Hatra, as much as Sanatruk I, the first bearer of the royal title, who is designated by the name Satirun, the legendary hero.

The alliance between Hatra and Rome brought about the fall of the city. Shortly after 227, it suffered its first Persian attack, proof that from this

[44] Safar (1961) 10.

time it was Rome's ally. It was during the course of another campaign, between 12 April 240 and 1 April 241 that Hatra was taken. After that, it was quickly abandoned: no inscription dated after 240 survives. When Ammianus Marcellinus passed by Hatra in 364, he saw only abandoned ruins.[45]

The fall of Hatra, following in the wake of the capture of Nisibis and Carrhae in 238, marked a vital stage in Persia's gaining control of Mesopotamian Arabia. One of the guardians of the desert had disappeared, facilitating the movements of the tribes who were beginning to emerge, and who would soon afterwards bring about a very different organization of the Syro-Mesopotamian desert.

3. Palmyra

Unlike Hatra or Edessa, Palmyra had been part of the Roman empire from the start of the first century. The city was a peregrine city, a *polis*, of the Roman province of Syria, which had enjoyed great economic prosperity in the second century, as well as remarkable urban and architectural development.

During the Severan period decisive changes for Palmyra took place. The economic and monetary crisis which struck the empire may have caused a reduction in demand for the luxury products that had made the city's fortune. Not all long-distance trade disappeared in the third century, however, which accounts for a certain amount of prosperity in Syria during this period. The revival of war affected trading contacts far more: first the civil war between Niger and Septimius Severus, then between Severus and the Parthians and later their allies. In Mesopotamia, in the valley of the Euphrates and the desert, a sense of insecurity once more prevailed everywhere. The weakening of the empires left the roads unguarded. Severus' campaigns against Edessa and Hatra, then those of Caracalla and Macrinus, followed by the Parthian counter-offensive, only further aggravated the situation. Moreover, the financial burden for these campaigns fell for the most part on the nobles of the cities of the east, natural clients for the products imported by Palmyra.

The disappearance of the Arsacids and the emergence of the Sassanids added to the problems. It is open to doubt whether the Sassanids intended right from the start to reconquer the whole of the Achaemenid empire, as Herodian claims;[46] but the immediate attack launched by the Persians against Rome is incontrovertible, and could have been viewed as inaugurating a long period of confrontation. On a more concrete level, in 226 Ardashir annexed Characene, which could well have had an impact on Palmyrene trade: the merchants of Palmyra had regularly frequented Spasinou Charax

[45] Amm. Marc. xxv.8. [46] Herod. vi.2.2; Kettenhofen (1984b).

during the second century, but its name disappears from inscriptions of the following century.

(a) From city to principality

In this less favourable economic climate, the political situation at Palmyra changed. Having long been endowed with the institutions of a Greek city of the east, Palmyra received from Caracalla the title of *colonia* with the *ius italicum*[47] between 213 and 216, proof that the city had not ceased to belong to the empire. These civic institutions continued to function until the destruction of the city. Before the middle of the century, however, one family acquired the ascendancy to such an extent that Palmyra took on the appearance more of an Arab princedom than a city state.

An inscription recently discovered at Palmyra has necessitated a reconsideration of the origins of the Palmyrene dynasty.[48] Previously it was believed that the founder of the dynasty was a Septimius Odenathus (I), who was the builder of the family tomb [*Inv. Pal.* VIII.55] and whose son was Septimius Hairan, *exarchos* of the Palmyrenes in 251. It was thus not until 257–8 that Odenathus (II), brother or son of Hairan – he never indicates his relationship – appeared in charge of Palmyra with the title of *consularis*. But the new text shows that Odenathus (II) also held the title of *exarchos* of the Palmyrenes as early as April 252 and that the genealogy – son of Hairan, son of Wahballat, son of Nasor – which was thought to be that of Odenathus (I) actually belongs to him. It is therefore certain now that Odenathus, father of the *exarchos* Septimius Hairan, is none other than king Odenathus, and that the *exarchos* Hairan is identical with Hairan-Herodian-Herod, eldest son of Odenathus, associated with his father as *exarchos* and as king of kings. This simple solution has the advantage of taking into account all the available documents without difficulty.

Odenathus was the descendant of a family which acquired the Roman citizenship under Septimius Severus, and his father or grandfather was the first to benefit, if it is accepted that Odenathus was born about 220 or a little before. This privilege does not seem to have been linked to any particular powers in Palmyra, however, and merely testifies to the distinction of the family.

It is only from 251 that dated documents commence, which allow a history of the princes of Palmyra to be reconstructed, albeit with substantial gaps. In October 251 at the latest, Septimius Odenathus and his son Septimius Hairan – whom the *Historia Augusta* calls Herod, and many Greek texts of Palmyra call Herodian (the identification of the three remains controversial) – together hold the title *ras Tadmor*, *'exarchos* of the Palmyrenes'. The title is first attested for the son (*Inv. Pal.* III.16), then

[47] *D* L.15.1.5. [48] Gawlikowski (1985); Sartre (2001) 971–9.

in April 252 for the father (a new text), but this chronological order is only due to the randomness of finds. It is not known what event gave rise to such a promotion. If the promotion is dated to 251, it may have been a first attempt at semi-independence which took advantage of the troubles following the death of Decius in June 251. The title was ephemeral, however, and does not reappear in any later text.

In 257–8 many texts accord Odenathus the title *ho lamprotatos hypatikos*,[49] while Hairan is only *ho lamprotatos*. Other undated texts employ the same titles, and almost certainly belong to the same years.[50] Unlike the title *ras Tadmor*, which Odenathus and his son bestowed on themselves, that of *consularis* – borne only by the father – could only have been granted by the emperor; but this title need not imply that Odenathus received charge of Syria–Phoenicia.[51]

Odenathus, concerned for his city's interests, made offers of an alliance to Shapur at an unknown date,[52] perhaps in the wake of one of the occasions when Dura Europus was captured, the indispensable trading-post of Palmyrene commerce. At the time of the revival in the Romano-Persian war in 259, however, he fought in Babylonia, and after the capture of Valerian at Edessa (in 259 or 260) he attacked and defeated the Persian troops on their way home. It was doubtless on this occasion that Odenathus took the title 'king of kings', to which he quickly associated his son Hairan–Herodian (*Inv. Pal.* III.31). The following year he defeated the usurpers Quietus and Ballista at Emesa.

Defender of Syria against the Persians and victor against usurpers detrimental to the stability and prosperity of the provinces, Odenathus appeared as a loyal defender of the empire's interests. Yet relations between Gallienus and Odenathus were by no means straightforward.

On the one hand, Gallienus, occupied in Italy and on the Danube, had no means of intervening in the east in the early 260s. Odenathus took on the role of an indispensable auxiliary, and Gallienus treated him as such: after the Palmyrene's victory, Gallienus became *Persicus Maximus.* In exchange, he may have confirmed Odenathus in the titles he had usurped, which, being non-Roman, could not cause offence to the emperor. Following the new victories of Odenathus outside Ctesiphon in 262, and then in 267 or 268, Gallienus was even able to bestow on him the title *mtqnn' dy mdhnh' klh* (*Inv. Pal.* III.19, dated August 271, and therefore posthumous), in Greek *epanorthōtēs* (rather inaccurately translated into Latin as *Corrector Totius Orientis*). This has the appearance more of a triumphal epithet than of a name of a specific command.[53] Gallienus did not, however, concede to any

[49] *Inv. Pal.* III.17 (April 258); XII.37 (257/8); Seyrig (1963) 161 (a dedication of curriers) (257/8); Dunant (1971) 66 no. 52.

[50] Seyrig (1963) 161 (dedication of Wôrod).

[51] *Contra*: Gawlikowski (1985) 261.

[52] Petrus Patricius, *fr.* 10 (*FHG* IV. 187).

[53] Swain (1993).

sharing of his power, and it is certain that Odenathus never held the title of Augustus, which Gallienus supposedly conferred on him[54] or which he is alleged to have assumed after his victory over Quietus and Ballista.[55]

On the other hand, Odenathus behaved as a sovereign prince. He had no compunction about sending an embassy to Shapur, who was at war against Rome, in order to look after Palmyra's interests. He also challenged Shapur by conferring on himself and his son the title 'king of kings'. Furthermore, he behaved in a quasi-imperial way in authorizing the nobles of his entourage – the generals and the governor of the city – to add the *gentilicium* Septimius to their name, thus creating a veritable court. Gallienus was doubtless not unaware of the significance of this gesture. In fact the assassination of Odenathus and Hairan at Edessa between 30 August 267 and 29 August 268, though shrouded in uncertainty (several different versions are known), may well have been the product of a plot involving a Roman official, Rufinus, and the complicity, or at any rate the tacit approval, of Gallienus himself.[56] Moreover, shortly after this assassination, an expedition officially launched against the Persians was cut to pieces by the Palmyrenes, who were under no illusions as to the real destination of the expeditionary corps. The death of Odenathus provided the opportunity for taking over an important frontier zone, profiting from the (at any rate apparent) power vacuum, since the eldest of Odenathus' surviving sons was scarcely more than ten years old.

(b) The Palmyrene east[57]

The accession of Zenobia and her son Vaballathus marked not so much a change in the policies of the princes of Palmyra as a further decline in Romano-Palmyrene relations. The ambiguity survived for a time: Vaballathus contented himself initially with the titles inherited from his father, *illustrissimus rex regum*, *epanorthōtēs.* He had milestones erected in his name, without the imperial title. Upon the death of Claudius II in the summer of 270, however, he refused to recognize Quintillus, and took the titles of *consul*, *dux Romanorum* and *imperator*, while still holding back from proclaiming himself Augustus, his Alexandrine coinage displays his name, but the image is that of Aurelian. What was intended as a gesture of conciliation by Zenobia was already viewed as an outright usurpation by Aurelian (Vaballathus is absent from the consular *Fasti*). The conquest of Syria in 270, and that of Arabia and Egypt in the winter of 270/1, as well as a part of Anatolia at the same time, clearly transformed the princes of Palmyra into open rivals of Aurelian. In the summer or winter of 271 Vaballathus finally took the title of Augustus and Zenobia that of Augusta.

[54] *SHA*, *Gall.* 12.4. [55] *SHA*, *Tyr. Trig.* 15.5.
[56] Gawlikowski (1985) 259. [57] Cf. ch. 2 above.

Vaballathus was not the first Arab to assume the purple. Apart from Philip the Arabian, who was a native of the village of Shahba in the Hauran, the adventurer Uranius Antoninus[58] should be remembered: he constitutes an almost exact precursor of the princes of Palmyra, albeit on a rather smaller scale. This native of Emesa, related to the ancient dynasty of the Sampsigerami, and perhaps a priest of al-Uzza/Aphrodite, scored a victory over Shapur in autumn 253 (if *IGLS* IV.1799–1801 refers to this battle), and then proclaimed himself Augustus (coinage attested 253–4). In the confusion which confronted the troops of the various imperial pretenders, it may have seemed to Antoninus that this was the best means to mobilize all the Roman forces of Syria against the Persian invader, and to confer legitimacy on his own actions. The conclusion of this adventure is unknown, save that Antoninus disappeared; but it may be supposed quite plausibly that the same sequence of events was repeated with Vaballathus. De facto placed at the head of the imperial troops, he usurped the imperial title when it appeared to have fallen through lack of heirs to Quintillus, then tried to have himself associated as Aurelian's deputy (Egyptian documents dated to Vaballathus and Aurelian). While the role of personal ambition should not be overlooked, the political and strategic motives behind this usurpation must also be considered; but Aurelian rejected all compromise.

Without delay, he embarked on the reconquest of the area. After an initial defeat at Tyana, then at Immae near Antioch, and finally at Emesa, the Palmyrene troops sought refuge in Palmyra itself. Zenobia, fleeing eastwards, was soon captured, while the city fell bloodlessly to the Roman army in spring 272. It was only a few months (?) later that Aurelian had the city razed to the ground, as a result of the revolt of Aspaeus; although the city survived as a small town for many centuries.[59] For unlike Hatra, Palmyra was not abandoned. Diocletian installed a legion there, in the western part of the city, and new baths were constructed. In 328 columns were once again erected in the main street. A few late Christian *stelae* and the presence of a bishop from the start of the fourth century confirm the survival of a modest settlement. But the city which had once been the focus of the eastern trade routes, the capital of the desert, was long dead.

III. PHYLARCHS AND ALLIED NOMAD KINGS

The disappearance of the sedentary Arab states and dynasties which had controlled the nomadic Arabs of the Syro-Mesopotamian desert forced Rome to find new means to guarantee the safety of the empire along the frontiers. Other tribes or groups of tribes were now offered the opportunity to fill the space left vacant by the collapse of the ancient princedoms.

[58] Baldus (1971). [59] Will (1966).

Direct relations between Rome and the allied nomad tribes had existed for a long time. Indeed, on the frontier of the Provincia Arabia, no native administrative units had been retained or left in place, apart from a few regroupings of tribes. At first Rome directly watched over the desert as far as the distant oases of Jawf and Hegra; but towards the end of the third century, a withdrawal from the most advanced posts took place at the same time as a reinforcing of the defensive line on the edge of the sedentary lands. In this new set-up, the allied Arab tribes were induced to replace the Roman troops of the desert.

1. Allied tribes and confederations

Two sectors have furnished documents concerning direct relations between Rome and the nomad tribes: the eastern Hauran, where the 'Safaites' lived, and the north of the Hijaz, where Rome held control over the Thamudic groups.

In the eastern Hauran the so-called 'Safaites' had preserved a strong tribal organization. Several Greek inscriptions, found in the villages of the northern Jebel Druze, which were visited by the pastoralists, show that the nomads provided contingents commanded by their own chiefs; these were accorded the titles '*strategos* of the nomads', '*strategos* of the nomad encampments', 'ethnarch' or 'phylarch' by the Romans.[60] These texts are dated to the second half of the second century and the third century. Onomastics allow us to be certain that these were indeed 'Safaites', and one text confirms this explicitly: an Odenathus, son of Sawad, is termed 'phylarch' and '*strategos* of the Awidh', a well-attested tribe from the *harra*.[61]

It is thus likely that in this region far from the Parthian, and later Persian, invasion routes, Rome had cemented privileged alliances with the heads of the most powerful tribes, in order that they might control, perhaps in conjunction with the Roman garrisons, the nomadic tribes or those practising transhumance in the region.

In the north of the Hijaz, the situation is parallel. Rome felt no threat in this sector throughout the second century: there were few Roman military posts in the steppic zone crossed by the *Via Nova Traiana* between Philadelphia, Petra and Aila, at least until the period of the Severi. On the other hand, there were garrisons stationed in far-flung oases such as Hegra and Dumat al-Jandal/Jawf or in the centres where the nomads assembled, like the Nabataean sanctuary of the Wadi Ram. The only means of controlling the movements of tribes was to negotiate with their chiefs and, in response to excessive fragmentation, Rome was able to encourage regroupments in order to create federations, such as that attested at Ruwwafa in the north of

[60] Sartre (1982) 122–8. [61] Harding (1969).

the Hijaz, around 166–9: the Roman governors of the province of Arabia are thanked for having re-established harmony among the nomads, who marked their gratitude by building a sanctuary of the imperial cult to serve as the rallying point of the confederation (Greek *ethnos*, Nabataean *sherkat*); but, maybe, these were only Roman troops recruited from the Arab tribes.

Similar alliances may have existed elsewhere. They worked well as long as the political situation was stable, i.e. as long as the allied tribes were not put under pressure by more powerful groups eager to plant themselves on the borders of the empire. They did not always prevent the incursions of looters, however: in 190/1 the Sinai fell prey to plundering Arabs.

2. *The rise of Tanukh*[62]

Reliable Arab traditions state that the Arabs allied to Rome were successively Gadhima, the princes of Palmyra, Lakhm, Tanukh, Salih and Ghassan. While the last two are well attested in the fifth and sixth centuries, the first four belong to the third and fourth. The difficulties in interpreting and making use of the Arab sources have long prompted historians either to dismiss or to ignore these traditions. Epigraphic and archaeological discoveries now demand that greater attention be paid to this information and they confirm the picture handed down by the Arab authors, at least with regard to the order of succession.

The authenticity of one of these kings has been confirmed by an inscription of Umm al-Jimal which mentions the '*tropheus* of Gadhima, king of Tanukh'.[63] This was a nomadic tribe of the northeast part of the Arabian peninsula, before it established itself in Syria, perhaps to the southeast of Aleppo, in Chalcidice. It is not possible, solely on the basis of these pieces of information (the funeral *stele* of a *praeceptor* and a list of sites occupied by the tribe around 630–5), to determine where Gadhima wielded power in the mid-third century. Archaeological confirmation of the struggle between the Palmyrenes and Tanukh, mentioned by the Arab traditions, may have been found, however. For it appears that an important native settlement at Umm al-Jimal, to the southeast of the late Roman city, was utterly destroyed in the course of the third century. It is tempting to see in this the vengeance of the Palmyrenes against one of the bases, or even one of the places of residence, of their Tanukhid adversaries.[64]

The disappearance of the Banu-Odenathus of Palmyra left the Syrian desert free. The need for an efficient policing force was felt, since insecurity was on the rise even before the fall of Palmyra. The Arabian frontier, which had remained almost untouched by military installations through the second century, underwent a period of active construction of fortlets

[62] Shahid (1984) 349–417; Caskel (1966). [63] *PAES* IV.A no. 41. [64] De Vries (1986) 237–8.

and watchtowers under the Severi, especially in the sector to the north of the Transjordan,[65] while the cities (e.g. Bostra and Adraha) set about rebuilding their ramparts.[66] These measures were not directed solely against Palmyra (which could hardly have been viewed as an enemy before the end of the 260s) and were surely intended rather to counter possible raids of Arab nomads, whether of those living in the Arabian desert hoping to take advantage of the troubles in Syria or primarily of tribes in the pay of the Persians. Indeed, at quite an early stage, a descendant of the Edessene dynasty, 'Amr ibn 'Adi, had come to establish himself in lower Mesopotamia, at Hira, and had entered the service of the Sassanids.

The power of Gadhima could thus be employed as a bulwark against these threats. On account of the lack of official Roman documents, the exact status of the king of Tanukh is unknown. He was doubtless a *foederatus*, like the barbarians on the Rhine and Danube frontiers. His title of 'king' marked his pre-eminence over the other Arab sheikhs. The structure of the tribal group of which he had charge is unclear, but it may be conjectured that Tanukh must be the name of the dominant tribe among a larger group, that of the Quda'a, to which other less powerful tribes attached themselves. The nebulous Tanukh could thus have an impact on areas some distance from each other, though there is no evidence to support the notion that they dominated all the Arab tribes of the region. Other groups may have benefited from a similar status in other sectors of the Syro-Mesopotamian and Arabian deserts, as also in the area beyond the Euphrates and the Hijaz and Sinai.

Moreover, the Arabs contributed to the defence of the frontier by providing the bulk of the men for the numerous native units mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum.* Several are specifically designated as Arab: the *equites Saraceni Thamudeni* and the *cohors secunda Ituraeorum*; but the majority of the *equites sagittarii indigenae*, the *equites promoti indigenae* and *dromedarii* were quite likely Arab as well.

Diocletian's reorganization of the frontier defences had to take into consideration these new relations with the nomad Arabs. The distant posts (Hegra, Dumat al-Jandal) seem to have been abandoned by their Roman units, which by no means implies a loss of sovereignty. But the guarding of the desert regions was entrusted to the nomad allies nonetheless. On the other hand, a substantial reinforcing of the defensive works on the edges of the steppe may be observed in the *strata Diocletiana* between the Euphrates, Palmyra, Damascus and the eastern Hauran, and in the line of forts and camps discovered between the oasis of Azraq and Aila as well as in the north of the Sinai; the legion X Fretensis was also transferred to Aila, and the IV Martia stationed at Lejjun (Moab). All these measures were part of

[65] Parker (1986) 130–1. [66] Pflaum (1952); *IGLS* XIII.9105–6 and 9108–9.

the attempt to set up a defence next to the non-desert zones of the Syrian provinces, while the steppe and the desert were entrusted to the Arab allies alone.

3. *The supremacy of Imru' al-Qays*

In 328 Imru' al-Qays b. 'Amr, 'king of all the Arabs', died. His epitaph, written in Arabic in Nabataean script, presents serious problems of interpretation not only on account of the variant readings, but also because the classical sources are silent on the events recorded by it.[67] In contrast to the Arab traditions, it nevertheless provides first-hand information of primary importance.

Imru' al-Qays was the son of the Lakhmid 'Amr ibn 'Adi, the founder of Hira. At the time of his death he was in Roman service, since his tomb is situated at Nemara, in the steppic zone which lies on the border of the Roman province of Arabia, a site which was the post of a Roman garrison. He in any case declares that his authority came from Rome. Yet at the same time he prides himself on governing certain communities under Persian control. Did he change his allegiance during his reign? This is quite possible, even though the motives for this shift of camp are not known: he may have converted to Christianity, or have had a disagreement with Shapur II. Alternatively, during the period of peace between the Persians and Romans, Imru' al-Qays may have succeeded in extending his authority over tribes to the east as well as the west of the Syro-Mesopotamian desert. He is at any rate proud to have subjugated tribes living a long distance apart from one another: the two groups of Azdites and the Nizar of northeastern Arabia (he campaigned against the powerful city of Thaj), the Madhhig, beaten at the oasis of Najran in the southwest of the peninsula, and the Ma'add in the Hijaz.[68] Did he do this for his own ends, or for the Persians (e.g. in the context of Shapur II's expedition against Arabia), or for the Romans? It is a matter only for hypotheses, though these successes certainly justify his title of 'king of all the Arabs'. Imru' al-Qays thus headed not only Lakhm, but also numerous other tribes, including the sedentary communities, whom he placed in the charge of his sons.

Despite the power of Imru' al-Qays, there may have been other groups allied to Rome, not subordinated to his authority. Regarding Tanukh, the Arab traditions make Gadhima the maternal uncle of 'Amr ibn 'Adi, and therefore the great-uncle of Imru' al-Qays. The mother of this last, Mawiyya, was an Azdite, as was his wife, Hind; this was a clan which was affiliated to Tanukh and subjugated by Imru' al-Qays. Hence Imru' al-Qays could legitimately take up the inheritance of Gadhima in the same way;

[67] Beeston (1979). [68] Zwettler (2000).

following his death, other Tanukhids could have taken his place without this entailing a confrontation or a split. At any rate, the Arab sources date the start of the Tanukhid domination over the Arab *foederati* from the death of Imru' al-Qays; this was to last throughout the fourth century, until they too were replaced by the Salih at the end of the century.

By 337 the political, social and economic situation of the Arabs of the Syro-Mesopotamian desert had changed markedly. Pastoralist activities were of far greater importance than their role as intermediaries for trade. The former sedentarized clans, while not having altogether disappeared, no longer had the same predominance as before and left the reins of government in the hands of the newcomers: these had emerged from the peninsula more recently, and were without the links to the Graeco-Roman and Aramaic cultures which had distinguished their predecessors. On the other hand, the policy of protection by means of client states, inherited from the Julio-Claudian period, gave way to agreements with groups which had remained essentially nomadic, whose military power was used as well as their network of alliances, in order to secure the safety of the frontiers. This system was backed up, moreover, by a considerable strengthening of the fortifications. It allowed Roman influence to extend right to the heart of the peninsula, with the disadvantage that it relied exclusively on the loyalty of the allies (which was expensive) and demanded a constant re-evaluation of their might. As soon as an allied tribe lost its influence, or suffered a serious reverse, its privileged position was jeopardized, since it was no longer able to fulfil the function which justified its privileges. These advantages (especially the *annona*) were judged sufficiently desirable to give rise to constant feuds and to numerous attempts on the part of poorer tribes to unseat the group in charge. The risk of instability, aggravated by Sassanid diplomacy, thus became endemic.

CHAPTER 17

LATE POLYTHEISM

CHAPTER 17A

THE WORLD-VIEW[1]

GARTH FOWDEN

'Paganism' was first invented towards the end of its existence, during the period covered by this volume. Previously there had been 'religion', or 'piety', evoked by the many gods of many peoples. The monotheistic religions – Judaism, and its recent offspring Christianity – were aberrations. But as Christianity's fortunes improved, it felt the need to define, as diminishingly as possible, 'the other'. Hence – in the Latin-speaking world and, with any frequency, only from the mid-fourth century onward – 'paganism', from *paganus*, meaning originally either a rustic or a civilian (non-soldier), in other words 'not one of ours'. In the Greek-speaking world, adherents of the old religion came in the fourth century to be referred to as 'Hellenes', a different sort of limitation, but still a limitation, which had however the virtue of drawing attention to Greek culture's role as a common frame of reference for the various local polytheisms of the eastern Mediterranean. The convenience of 'paganism', in particular, was that, as a single cultural hypostasis, undifferentiated either spatially or chronologically, it could *in*

[1] This was submitted in 1988 and its bibliography has been revised to 1999. The main historical sources are Cassius Dio, Herodian and the *Historia Augusta* (available in the Loeb Classical Library); Aur. Vict. *Caes.* (Budé, ed. Dufraigne, Paris 1975); and Zosimus (Budé, ed. Paschoud, Paris 1971–2000). The vast literature on the *Historia Augusta* does not dispense the reader from deciding for himself, more or less subjectively, what is likely to be true, and what fabricated to serve the obscure purposes of the late fourth-century author(s). But progress in the study of late polytheism is coming more from archaeology, epigraphy and papyrology than from re-evaluation of literary sources: see the studies of particular cults and regions published in *EPRO* and *ANRW*, esp. II.16–18. For the coins, see *RIC* and *BMC*; Kent (1978). Among modern surveys that take a thematic approach to the description of Roman polytheism, Nilsson (1974) is by far the sanest and most comprehensive. MacMullen (1987) is strenuously idiosyncratic, though its notes are a mine of references. Liebeschuetz's survey of the more prominent individual cults in *CAH* XI² is here taken as read. It has been found easiest to write an *histoire événementielle* of late polytheism from the time when it begins to interact continuously and documentably with Christianity – roughly from the Diocletianic persecution onwards. Geffcken's dated *Last Days of Greco-Roman Paganism* (1978) provides a preliminary sketch within such a chronological framework, concentrating on the third to fifth centuries. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, has shown to what extent that sketch can now be filled out, at least down to the 320s, and has in particular used the mass of newly discovered inscriptions and papyri to attempt a somewhat more chronologically differentiated view of third-century polytheism than was previously available.

toto be credited with whatever infamy had at any time in the past attached to alleged cultic abuses, however isolated. Because of the pejorative connotations of 'paganism', and in order to underline that the cult of the many gods, whether in the ancient Mediterranean world or anywhere else, does not have to be seen through Christian eyes, we shall speak of 'polytheism'. Admittedly, 'polytheism' too is a clumsy and implicitly monotheist category, since it attaches a single label to a range of religions whose most obvious common denominator is apparent only from a monotheist perspective; but it is a less nakedly offensive formulation than 'paganism'.

By using the term 'polytheist' we also underline how the henotheist and even monotheist tendencies observable within this ancient religious tradition,[2] and which have so impressed some scholars as to impel them to assert that 'paganism' and polytheism cannot be equated, were additives, a superstructure that demoted but never denied the many gods. Any deity with a sufficiently large and vocal clientele, however circumscribed socially or topographically, could make a claim to sovereignty and omnipotence. But he or she did so by assimilating other gods, who might likewise be regarded as sovereign in other milieux. On the Aventine at Rome Jupiter Dolichenus, a Syrian god favoured mostly by soldiers, took under his syncretist wing Isis, Serapis, Mithras and other divinities.[3] There is no fundamental divergence between this point of view and that of Plotinus when he writes that:

> one should praise the intelligible gods and then, above all, the great king of that other world, most especially by displaying his greatness in the multitude of the gods. It is not contracting the divine into one but showing it in that multiplicity in which God himself has shown it, which is proper to those who know the power (*dynamis*) of God, in as much as, abiding who he is, he makes many [gods], all depending upon himself and existing through him and from him.
>
> (II.9[33].9.32–9, tr. Armstrong)

Even the most exalted philosophical minds remained polytheist; there was no such thing as 'pagan monotheism'.[4]

Unlike Christianity or Islam, polytheism was not a religion whose beginning could be located at a single point in time. Rather, it accumulated out of people's experience of life and nature. If ever there was a religion comprehensible only in terms of *la plus longue durée*, this was it. Hence the difficulty of communicating a sense of movement or process to a description

[2] Nilsson (1974) 569–78; Habicht (1969) 12–14; Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.43–51; Liebeschuetz (2000) (*CAH* XI[2]).

[3] Le Glay (1987) esp. 554–6. Note Le Glay's reflections on the diverse phenomena and diachronic mutations disguised by categories such as 'syncretism' and 'Oriental cults', umbrella concepts no less ubiquitous or dangerous than 'paganism'/'polytheism'. See also Le Glay (1991), and Alföldy (1989) 75–8.

[4] Beard, North and Price (1998) I.286 assert that some adepts of Isis or Mithras 'were, in the very strictest sense, monotheists', but offer no evidence. At I.307 they painstakingly document the proposition that 'an individual could support (*sic*) more than one cult'.

of polytheism during one particular period – in the present instance, of only a century and a half. Hence, too, polytheism's lack of dogmatic framework; for dogma implies major revelation, and revelations such as form religions are events which, theoretically at least, can be fixed in time. Polytheism was, in short, a very diverse religion – so diverse, indeed, that it is tendentious to regard it as a single religion at all.

Within its many separate ethnic traditions, polytheism also embraced widely differing mentalities. These variations of belief cannot be fitted neatly into the two-tier analysis – rational and irrational, popular and élite – that is sometimes offered. The two-tier analysis is crude, not because in late antiquity everybody had become 'irrational' and 'superstitious', but because, in any age, individuals are a mixture of experiences, not always consciously absorbed, let alone formulated. If this first of three chapters on late polytheism sets about describing the polytheist world-view from the educated end of the social spectrum, that is thanks mainly to the possibility of generalization offered by the synthesizing or at least systematizing patterns of thought found in some representatives of the educated class. It is not intended to suggest that the educated were representative, or that the chapter title's allusion to a polytheist 'world-view', in the singular, is other than a flag of convenience. But it does also happen to be the case that, at the eleventh hour, some polytheist intellectuals were anyway trying to make sense of the extraordinarily incoherent tradition they had inherited. They could not avoid considering polytheism in all its aspects, from mysticism to magic, even if they so misliked what they saw that they were at times driven to their own version of the two-tier analysis.[5]

1. PROBLEMS AROUND PLOTINUS

The only late polytheist thinker considered worthy of serious study by historians of philosophy was, until recently, Plotinus. Although influenced 'more by the theologians' Plato than the philosophers' (in the modern sense of those terms), and despite the fact that ultimate reality was for him beyond thought, Plotinus' view that the sage must tread the overwhelmingly greater part of the road to the divine by his own unaided effort, without invoking supernatural assistance, ensured a hearing from modern students of the classical intellectual tradition. This tradition, in a mixed form dominated by Platonism but drawing also (not without friction) on the teachings of the Peripatos and Stoa, had continued to be cultivated in the philosophical schools of the Antonine and Severan periods, though for the most part in an

[5] Iambl. *Myst.* v.5, 15 (τῆς θρησκείας ὁ διπλοῦς τρόπος); Fowden (1993c) 34. For a general introduction to philosophy and philosophers from Plotinus to Iamblichus, see Wallis (1972) 1–137. Philosophy's concerns were by definition religious; but the present chapter touches on doctrine only in relation to the broader polytheist world-view.

uninspiringly scholastic spirit. When, in the year 232, the Egyptian provincial Plotinus arrived at Alexandria to study philosophy,[6] he was depressed by the sterile atmosphere of the schools. It was some time before he heard about Ammonius Saccas. But Ammonius made a deep impression on Plotinus, for he was an 'enthusiast', 'divinely possessed with longing for the true goal of philosophy', determined not to waste time picking over differences between Plato and Aristotle, but to reconcile them and the other major philosophers 'into one and the same spirit' (Hierocl. *Prov.* ap. Phot. *Bibl.* 251.461a). This was indeed the only alternative to the academic bickering Lucian had satirized in the previous century. And even by the standards of an age that esteemed the individual teacher immensely more than the written tradition, Ammonius was revered by his pupils, some of whom refused to disclose, during his lifetime, what he had taught them. If, as his own pupil Porphyry (234–*c.* 301–5) asserted, Plotinus adhered closely to this inherited doctrine when he started teaching on his own account, then clearly Ammonius was no ordinary scholar, but an accomplished spiritual guide.

After Ammonius died, Plotinus moved to Rome (244). For some ten years, his teaching remained as strictly oral as his teacher's; but from 253 until his death in 270 he produced a body of writing which Porphyry later edited as fifty-four treatises arranged into six *Enneads*. These texts are not a formal statement of a doctrinal system, but records of Plotinus' discourse as he sat amidst his pupils. In the *Enneads* we can hear him expounding Plato and Aristotle, commenting on the commentators, answering questions. If he criticizes Aristotle, he does so constructively, without departing from the spirit of Ammonius' teaching. He always speaks densely, in an inspired tone, and never loses sight of the sage's central concern, the bringing back of 'the god in us' to 'the God who is over all things' (Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 2, 23). Though our individual soul has fallen away from universal Soul and become enmeshed in matter, it may aspire to purification and escape; and the route of that escape, the philosophical life exemplified by Plotinus, must combine an ascetic but not abusive regime, the 'taking away' of all superfluous concerns (Plot. v.3[49].17), with pursuit of virtue, application to study and unflagging concentration on the divine core of our being. In this way, with the help of divine grace,[7] we may attain, as Plotinus did on four occasions while Porphyry was with him, to the experience of total, self-forgetting absorption into the transcendent One, the Good. Falling away from this state, the philosopher will regret bitterly his return to the human world; but his duty is to give others too, through his teaching, the possibility

[6] For Porphyry's valuable *Life*, we now have the edition and monumental commentary by Brisson *et al.* (1982–92).

[7] Plot. vi.7[38].22.

of following him. That he and he alone can do; and it is a task of such sensitivity, even danger, that it can be accomplished only in the deeply personal day-to-day interaction of teacher and pupil. Neither metaphysical system-making nor literary composition, but the experience of the teacher in person, lies at the heart of late Platonism.

Since Plotinus' attitude to conventional religion was misunderstood no less by his contemporaries than by modern scholars, it must be emphasized that he was recognized to be a focus of holiness, a 'holy man'. Plotinus' place in the history of religion is no less central than his place in the history of philosophy, because the distinction was for him inessential. And in general the late polytheist holy man combines, unselfconsciously, these two attributes of holiness and learning, which Christianity has often separated or even placed in antithesis.[8] The holy man was more characteristic of late polytheism than of any other period since the pre-Socratics, not, as some suppose, because of anxieties brought on by the 'third-century crisis', but thanks to a reaction – always present, but now intensifying – against the rationalist current within the Greek philosophical tradition. By the second century people were tiring more easily of the same old arguments and were turning either to alternatives that had been there all the time, like Pythagoreanism, or to other philosophies and religions whose doctrines were presented by divine or mythical beings, such as Zoroaster or Hermes Trismegistus, or by men who 'taught with authority, unlike their own scribes'. It was this crucial need to establish his master's authority beyond doubt, but also to prove there was still life in the classical tradition, that prompted Porphyry to preface the *Enneads* with a biographical introduction, which drew attention to Plotinus' careful exposition of his predecessor's works, but culminated in a spectacular Apolline oracle on the master's soul. A century later the Sardian rhetor Eunapius filled his *Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists* from Plotinus onward with the wonders they had worked, with almost no allusion to matters of doctrine. The ascetic, pious philosophical life had become a focus of aspiration for many educated people, and its individual exemplars were the means by which their followers encountered the divine.

The figure of Pythagoras, in particular, was central to this venture.[9] The Pythagorean ideal was widely popular in Plotinus' lifetime, as witness Philostratus' biography of the first-century thaumaturge Apollonius of Tyana, commissioned by the empress Julia Domna. And the works of recent Pythagoreans influenced Plotinus so much that he was accused of plagiarizing one of them, Numenius.[10] The Pythagoras known to late antiquity had been an inspired and authoritative teacher, whose philosophy was a revelation of divine truth. He had placed great emphasis on the role of

[8] Fowden (1982). [9] Dillon (1977) 341–83; O'Meara (1989); Kingsley (1995).
[10] Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 14, 17, 20.

mathematical studies in accustoming the aspiring philosopher to confidence in the existence of the immaterial. And he had taught the general principle of the 'friendship' (*philia*) of different doctrines, Greek and barbarian, towards each other, so that his own philosophy was a 'compound' which drew on the teachings of the Egyptians, the Chaldaeans and the magi as well as on Orphism and the Greek mystery cults (Iamb. *Vit. Pyth.* 151, 229). Ammonius Saccas' enthusiasm for reconciling the various school-traditions 'into one and the same spirit' was authentically Pythagorean – surely he must have been the intermediary between Numenius and Plotinus. Pythagoras had underlined also the sage's duty to reverence the gods and to lead a life of piety and asceticism. In general, Pythagorism was understood less as a doctrine than as a way of life. Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* was implicitly universalized in Iamblichus' *Pythagorean Life*; and much later, Marinus gave his *Life of Proclus* the subtitle *On Happiness*.

No less than their model, the Pythagorean holy men of late antiquity were hard for even their disciples to understand, and stirred serious tensions in their immediate environment. Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* is shot through with criticisms of and by competitors, and the mutual jealousies of imitators. Particular ambiguity surrounded the sage's relationship with conventional religion. In their writings and those of their followers we often read that the man who has 'sanctified his own soul through his thoughts' has no need of temples, statues and altars (Julian, *Or.* IX.199B; and cf. Lucian, *Demon.* 11). When one of Plotinus' followers, Amelius, once invited his teacher to accompany him to the temples, Plotinus refused, on the grounds that 'they [the gods] ought to come to me, not I to them' (Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 10). Porphyry remarks that Amelius 'had become a lover of sacrifices', so apparently he had not always been: Plotinus was reacting, intemperately perhaps, to what he saw as excess in a favoured pupil. He himself warns elsewhere against the arrogance of setting ourselves without good reason above the gods (Plot. II.9[33].9). The context of such assertions is always, though, that of controversy. That 'all things without exception are connected with each other' by a hierarchy of divine powers at work in both the intelligible and the visible worlds, including the statues of the gods (Plot. II.3[52].14; cf. III.4[15].6, IV.3[27].11), was common ground in these milieux; but where, on this register, was one to place the holy man? Hence Porphyry's story about how Plotinus had submitted to the magical invocation of his guardian spirit by an Egyptian priest, who had been forced to admit that this guardian was a god, and no mere subordinate spirit as in the case of ordinary people. More generally, the question of how to envisage, locate and handle the working of divine power (*dynamis*) in the world was endemic in late polytheism. The answers ranged from the contemplative philosopher's austere optimism to the common astrologer's grinding determinism.

Knowledge of even elementary religious doctrine is rare in all societies. The force of tradition and habit was considerable in late polytheism too. Making all due allowances, though, it can still be said that the polytheist understanding of divinity, of what it meant to be a 'god', had become heavily impregnated with a somewhat impersonal notion of 'power'.[11] The advent of philosophy, and later the spread of cultic syncretism, had produced an alternative, though not a replacement,[12] for Homer's gods with their known personalities and their predilection for anthropomorphic disguise. At Rome, gods had always been more like powers than personifications. And this idea was in wide circulation by later antiquity: gods had come to be conceived also as impersonal 'powers' or 'energies' that radiated from the sun, the planets and the stars, and might be envisaged as daemons. These forces constituted a universal network of 'sympathy', or what the Pythagoreans called 'friendship', which bound together the divine and material realms, penetrated humans, animals, plants and even minerals, and linked them through sympathetic 'chains' to particular planets or gods. Hence the direct control exercised over all creation, according to some, by the heavenly bodies, and the obsession of late polytheists with the doctrine of fate and the often purely mechanistic conceptions of the astrologers. Hence too the belief of magicians that formulae correctly pronounced and accompanied by appropriate actions, if directed towards materials low in the sympathetic 'chain', might influence the divine powers to whom those chains were linked. And all these powers had to be learnt and (if possible) controlled, not just by the magician, but by every pious person, so that appropriate honour might be done them, and the retribution consequent on neglect or offence avoided. It was anxieties such as these that lay behind the magician's cagily generalized addresses to the divine realm ('I call upon you, gods of heaven and gods of earth, gods aerial and gods terrestrial': *PGM* XII.67), and the endless queries to oracles about the identity of particular gods ('Who are you?': Lucian, *Alex.* 43), and what temples, statues, altars, sacrifices, prayers, priesthoods and so on were appropriate to them.

The ritual purity of the worshipper was likewise an important concern; and besides physical purity that might include being 'pure in mind' (*LSCG* no. 139, from Lindos) before and during actual worship. At least in certain places and contexts, public confession of sins was practised (see chapter 17*b*, p. 544). But it would be wrong to imagine that moral purity was widely regarded as a prerequisite for worship – that a known malefactor should be prevented from sacrificing was a thought that might occur to a philosopher more easily than to a priest.[13] Still less did the average polytheist aspire to

[11] On 'power' in late polytheism see Nock (1972) 34–45; Nilsson (1974) 534–43; Fowden (1993b) 75–94.

[12] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 102–67.

[13] Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* 1.10–11.

imitate the gods, as Christians aspired to imitate Christ. It was not just that the gods' individual identities were less clear-cut than had once been the case, and in danger among the educated of submergence in a colourless deism. The traditional myths were anyway marred by an immoral element that had never been intended for imitation. To most polytheists, 'religious experience' meant experience of and adjustment to the activity of the gods – of divine power – in the world of men. The measure of contact with the supernatural was not its own 'intensity', but the fruit it bore, in terms both of understanding (knowledge) and of achievement (power).[14]

In polytheism, then, the pursuit of virtue and the spiritual life (which goes beyond the religious emotion one perforce feels in the presence of the gods) were primarily the domain of the philosophers, who were not necessarily noted for their commitment to either traditional beliefs or public cult – in this, Plotinus was provocative but not untypical. Especially in the face of the challenge presented by Christianity, this separation of conventional religion from ethics and spirituality seemed increasingly unsatisfactory. The effect on the broad polytheist community of hearing the street-corner preaching of a wandering Cynic, or perhaps reading a florilegium of edifying philosophical quotations, was scarcely to be compared with the regular instruction received by the Christian community from its bishop during the weekly house-church liturgy.[15] As we shall see, certain remedies for this situation were initiated in the philosophical milieu. Circumstances outside these narrow circles were in some ways favourable. Thanks to the influence of the philosophers, the tendency to syncretize related deities into single composites, and the habit of envisaging gods as impersonal powers, henotheist and even monotheist ideas were widespread. Although honouring 'all the gods (and goddesses)', as the Apolline oracles of Didyma and Claros commanded, was nothing new,[16] the force of the formula was widely felt in this period: one ensured that one's prayer would be heard, while expressing also, more or less consciously, belief in the underlying oneness of divinity. Not that the old gods were lost sight of: with Asclepius, in particular, even the most intellectual could feel perfect intimacy (see chapter 17*b*, pp. 545–6). In fact, Asclepius was the henotheists' ideal – a powerful saviour, to honour whom was nonetheless fully compatible with the invocation of other gods as taste or need suggested. In short, there was no lack of potential common ground on which philosophers and ordinary polytheists might stand together. Henotheism in particular avoided one of the main drawbacks of monotheism, whether philosophical or otherwise, namely the apparent difficulty of communication, the urgent need for a mediator between Man and God. Perhaps it might, after all, be possible to

[14] Hence the self-satisfied tone of the well-known rules (*LSCG* no. 51, *c.* A.D. 175) of the Athenian Iobacchi (cult-association of Dionysus), accused by Moretti (1986) 253 of deficient 'religiosità'.

[15] On late polytheist ethics, see Dihle (1966) 666–88.

[16] Burkert (1985) 170, 216–17, 272. Didyma: Parke (1985) 100. Claros: Granino Cecere (1986) 281–8.

escape from the caprice of the daemons and the realm of fate. Might one perhaps find a divinely revealed 'way', by which the soul could be purified, and freed from the bonds of matter?

II. HERMETISM AND THEURGY

This convergence of religion and philosophy provided fertile ground for the doctrine of theurgy, which taught the soul's purification from the pollution of matter and return to its source through a combination of rituals and sacred formulae. But this doctrine, adumbrated as far as the élite Platonist milieu was concerned by Porphyry and developed by Iamblichus, was not the eleventh-hour aberration that historians of philosophy have supposed, on the basis of a view of their subject confined to the writings of the second-century scholastic establishment, plus Plotinus. Perhaps precisely because he was not a professional philosopher, Philostratus could take for granted that philosophy's proper concerns embraced not only cosmology, medicine (including healing techniques we would call magical), astronomy and general natural and ethnological observation, but also divination, sacrifice and 'all sorts of lore both profane and mysterious' (Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* III.34–50; cf. Amm. Marc. XXI.1.7–14). Fortunately we possess, in the shape of the Hermetica, an important body of texts whose variety and lack of polish suggest that they may be a slightly better guide to the general condition of the late polytheist mind than the so-called 'Middle Platonists', or their Aristotelian opponents. The writings of these men – such as Severus, Gaius, Atticus, Alexander of Aphrodisias – were constantly at hand in Plotinus' circle. Of the Hermetica, the Egyptian sage never breathed a word.

Since Hermes Trismegistus was really the learned Egyptian god Thoth, and the writings attributed to him not only a product of the fused Graeco-Egyptian culture of the Nile valley, but also by this time increasingly known outside Egypt too, Plotinus' silence is significant.[17] Clearly these writings were not for the élite. What we call the *Corpus Hermeticum* is a body of philosophical works in Greek on God, the World, Man and the history of the soul. The lost *Perfect Discourse* survives in a Latin translation called the *Asclepius*; and the Nag Hammadi codices have recently added Coptic versions of parts of the same book, and of a previously unknown work, *The Ogdoad reveals the Ennead*. As well as these philosophical works, written between the first and third centuries A.D., there are also numerous texts on magic, astrology, alchemy and other branches of what scholars call 'pseudo-science', that were attributed to or associated with Hermes. These 'technical' treatises concerned areas of knowledge that were covered in the earlier stages of initiation into Hermetic wisdom; but Hermetic teaching was of course primarily oral, passed on by teachers to their disciples in the

[17] The points made in this paragraph are documented in Fowden (1993b).

context of small circles very like those of Ammonius and Plotinus. This personal relationship of spiritual 'father' and 'son' increased in importance as the adept approached the more exalted doctrines about the nature of the divine realm. The texts which describe this progressive ethical purification and philosophical initiation emphasize its spiritual nature, an aspect of Hermetism which was to appeal to both Byzantine Christians and modern historians of philosophy; yet there are signs that this spiritual emphasis did not exclude the use of semi-liturgical prayer, hymns and even certain ritual actions, including sacrifice, in the earlier stages of spiritual ascent. As for the culminating vision of the One, it is accessible only with and through the master, usually represented in the treatises as Hermes himself. To Iamblichus we owe the information that, in a treatise now lost, Hermes described the ascent of the soul in explicitly theurgical terms. To his contemporary, the alchemist Zosimus of Panopolis, there seemed nothing incongruous in drawing on the philosophical Hermetica in order to explain the spiritual purification that could be attained through alchemical art.

The common ground between the Hermetica and the theurgists' sacred texts, the *Chaldaean Oracles*, lies not just in their Graeco-Oriental character, but also in their acceptance that humans may attain to the divine by many routes, in which cultic practices as well as philosophical intellection have a part. The *Chaldaean Oracles* were produced during the second century, and are now preserved only in fragments.[18] They deal with theological matters such as the structure of the divine hierarchy, whose grades they (like the Gnostics) multiply in an attempt to scale the heights that separate humans from the transcendent Father. The *Oracles* reveal little about the practical application of theurgy in the philosophical life, but probably this was a later development.[19] Porphyry reflected at length on their exhortation to 'seek out the channel of the soul, whence it descended in a certain order to serve the body, and how thou, joining action to sacred word, shalt lead her again upwards to her ordered place' (*Orac. Chald. fr.* 110). In his *Letter to Anebo*, Plotinus' pupil attacked theurgy on the grounds of its irreconcilability with the fundamentally intellectual character of Greek philosophy. Elsewhere (*Regr. fr.* 2 Bidez, 290 Smith) he conceded that it was a possible means of purifying the 'spiritual soul', but denied that it has any effect on the higher or 'intellectual soul', and hence that it is able to lead the soul 'to behold its God and to perceive the things that truly exist'. Indeed, Porphyry asserts that the intellectual soul is capable of attaining this vision of the unity that lies beyond plurality even without the prior operation of theurgy on the spiritual soul. Theurgy is, in other words, no more than a possible first step

[18] See the edition with introduction and commentary by Majercik (1989).

[19] For general discussions of theurgy see Wallis (1972) 105–10, 120–3; Shaw (1995); van Liefferinge (1999).

in the soul's return to its source, a partial, inadequate alternative to virtue and philosophy, because it involves a technique almost as independent of the moral qualities of its practitioner as are the spells of the vulgar magician.

Plotinus' awesome example on the one hand, and the powerful pull of religious cult on the other, confused Porphyry and no doubt contributed to the nervous crisis that caused his departure from Plotinus' circle.[20] By contrast Iamblichus (d. *c.* 320–5) was a self-confident, original and inspiring thinker, who through his teaching and writing (including a considerable body of commentary on Plato and Aristotle) provided his numerous followers with a sound philosophical education, but also pushed to their logical conclusion the theurgical speculations that had lately been surfacing in Platonist circles. Establishing himself in Syrian Apamea, which had been a centre of Pythagorean teaching since at least the time of Numenius (*fl. c.*150), Iamblichus set about formulating a fresh view of the philosophical life that would transcend the conflicting categories which had dominated Porphyry's thought.

Iamblichus' 'new song', as a critic called it (Them. *Or.* XXIII.295B), was a synthesis of 'Chaldaean', 'Egyptian' – that is Hermetic – and Greek philosophical doctrines; and it was expounded in direct answer to Porphyry's *Letter to Anebo*, in a treatise which Renaissance scholarship entitled *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians*. The most notable respect in which the theurgist differed from the conventional philosopher was in his dependence on what Iamblichus calls:

> the perfective operation of the ineffable acts correctly performed, acts which are beyond all understanding; and on the power of the unutterable symbols which are intelligible only to the gods.
>
> (*Myst.* II.11.96–7)

The purpose of these acts and symbols was to invoke the power of the gods, in order to liberate the soul from the body and the bonds of sympathy, and bring about its 'theurgical union' with the divine. For Iamblichus, in other words, the theurgist's field of action, confined by Porphyry to the lower soul, had come to embrace the very highest levels of mystical union. The philosopher, for Plotinus an autonomous agent in the pursuit of perfection, his soul divine enough to attain union with the transcendent One almost by its own efforts (see p. 524), was transformed by Iamblichus into an operative dependent on the help of, and constantly in communion with, a glittering celestial hierarchy composed of gods, archangels, angels, daemons, *archontes*, heroes and souls – the divine ladder by which the theurgist sought to scale the heights of heaven.

[20] Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 10 (esp. ll. 36–8), 11.

In the vivid anecdotes that make up Eunapius' *Life* of the 'divine' Iamblichus, we see for the first time fully formed, in the historical record rather than the imagination of Pythagoras' or Apollonius' biographers, the figure of the late polytheist holy man, the representative of that 'holy race' of Platonist philosophers (Hierocl. *Prov. ap*. Phot. *Bibl*. 214.173a), whose successive generations spanned the last two centuries of hellenic religion and thought. Eunapius presents Iamblichus as a thaumaturge who soared aloft in the air and was transfigured with light as he prayed, enjoyed supernatural gifts of foresight, and conjured spirits from hot springs to satisfy his pupils' craving for miracles, thereby making visible the 'friendship' that linked him to the guardians of the material world. Philosophical discussion there undoubtedly was in his circle; but what struck the wider public was the Pythagorean *ipse dixit*, the conclusiveness of the 'oracles' that the holy man uttered, rather than the subtlety of his reasoning. Apollo himself was said to have delivered an oracle in which he contrasted Porphyry the 'polymath' with the 'divinely inspired' Iamblichus (David, *In Porph*. 4, p. 92.2–7).

Inevitably, their enemies accused the theurgists of being just magicians – after all, theurgy and magic manipulate the same network of universal sympathy by closely parallel techniques. But the theurgists' objective remains that of Plotinian philosophy – the purification and salvation of the soul; and indeed Iamblichus says much less about the part played by ritual acts in describing the culmination of the soul's ascent than when discussing the earlier stages. By ritualizing these initial stages, Iamblichus made them more accessible than the stern and lonely way of the contemplative philosopher. But mystical union remained, as it had been for Plotinus, an intuitive leap that only a few would dare to make, and an experience to the description of which the vocabulary of the philosopher was less inadequate than that of the theurgist. Though it seems likely that Iamblichus had wanted, by fusing elements of cult and philosophy, to make polytheism more coherent and better able to resist Christian attack, in practice theurgy remained the preoccupation of an élite.

Hermetism too can hardly have penetrated much beyond the milieu of those who read books. To do so, it would have had to become an organized religion, with all that that implies in terms of dilution of the central message. It was perhaps in part through its institution of seven formal grades of initiation, which seem to have allowed progressive access to teachings of personal, ethical and even mystical implication, that Mithraism managed to propagate itself successfully (chapter 17*c*, pp. 549–50). It offered its adepts, not just the one-off initiation characteristic of other mysteries, but a coherent Mithraic 'way', not unlike the 'way' of Hermes – a context, in short, for a whole life. Some such sense was needed of how to progress – προκόπτειν, *procedere*, *proficere*, *progredi*, verbs that diviners, doctors and

philosophers used, but not the ordinarily pious – if polytheism was to compete seriously with Christianity.[21] Yet the overwhelming majority of Mithraists never embarked on the grades, and contented themselves with a simple initiation. As for the philosophers, Plotinus was indeed read and reflected on by a select few, including some educated Christians. Though certain of his doctrines were not uncontroversial, and his method and style lax by the standards of later, more scholastic generations, he did set the tone of the whole of the last phase of antique philosophical debate, ensuring its purificatory and contemplative orientation. His remained one of the best examples of how the philosophical life should be conducted. Theurgy lacked his blessing; but Iamblichus' successful integration of its doctrines into the framework of philosophy deeply influenced those who traced their intellectual descent from Plotinus. In the focusing, though, of many of the best minds on the contemplative life, and in their distaste for the social and even political involvement which their master, Plato, had sought and recommended, we may see one of the reasons why public polytheism seemed at the last to lack the will to adjust, to fight and to live.

III. MAGIC AND ASTROLOGY

Students of late polytheism now increasingly recognize that there is no more an absolute distinction between philosophy and magic than between religion and magic. Though the communication of philosophical doctrine presupposed a trained audience, whereas the results of the magician's or astrologer's activities might be purchased and 'consumed' without further ado, the educated did not automatically assume that magic and astrology were of no validity. There were dyed-in-the-wool rationalists, but there were also the followers of Iamblichus, even among the most rarefied intellectuals. Indeed, it is difficult to find theoretical statements about magic and astrology *except* among those who had the intellectual's length of perspective. Even the magical papyri,[22] though they emanate from an essentially anonymous milieu, are often compendia, library editions that lack the wear and stains one would expect had they ever been used alongside the messy procedures they describe.

Not that we lack evidence for down-market magic. With the briefer papyrus spells, and the horoscopes preserved in the same medium,[23] we often reach a reassuring level of illiteracy; even more so with the magical gems and other types of amulet that protected the individual in daily life,[24]

[21] Cf. *Ep. Gal.* 1.14: προέκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ; Aug. *Conf.* v.10.18: *desperans in ea falsa doctrina* [sc. Manichaeism] *me posse proficere*.

[22] *PGM*, plus translation by Betz (1992). See also Daniel and Maltomini (1990–2).

[23] Neugebauer and van Hoesen (1959). [24] Philipp (1986) 5–26.

or the curse tablets (*defixiones*) by which some sought to force others to act against their will – to fall in love, fail in some way, be stricken with sickness or die.[25] 'Causing disease' is indeed included in a list of the parts of magical knowledge to be found in one of the magical papyri (*PGM* 1.328–31). The others are 'the art of prophecy, divination with epic verses, the sending of dreams, obtaining revelations in dreams, interpretations of dreams'. It comes then as no surprise to discover that, at least in Egypt with its professional clergy, priests were highly regarded experts in magic. But for those who felt intimidated by the temple milieu, there were alternatives. Women – above all, old women who lived alone – were no less respected for their occult powers than in other ages and cultures. And every marketplace and local festival attracted its share of itinerant magicians, fortune-tellers and dream-interpreters, who were also given to calling door-to-door.[26] In life's crises and anxieties they were often the first resort – for the adolescent whose erotic imagination had outstripped his pocket or his luck;[27] for the charioteer scheming to trip his rivals in the circus; for the philosopher or sophist who wanted to eliminate a competitor – even Plotinus was once assaulted in this way.[28]

The many surviving magical texts used to be little regarded by historians, partly because they are not descriptions of actual consultations, but mere formulae, in need ideally of the anthropologist to flesh out their dry bones. Horoscopes, though, tied by their very nature to a specific time and place, are more accessible to the historian. There is one, preserved in a manuscript written in 1388, but originally given on 16 July 475 to an anxious merchant awaiting at Athens the arrival of a cargo of luxury fabrics, furniture and camels from Alexandria.[29] It is a late text, but unusually circumstantial, and anyway occult techniques changed little, being respected in proportion to their (alleged) antiquity. First the astrologer took his astrolabe and Tables, and drew up a chart of the heavens as they were at the moment of consultation. Then he listened to (or, as here, anticipated) his client's enquiry, before consulting the standard authorities, whom he quoted verbatim in his written reply. In this particular case the astrologer described both the contents of the cargo and the problems of the voyage, and predicted when the boat would arrive safely at Piraeus.

This example illustrates well the functional aspect of astrology – occult wisdom as a technique which was expounded in books and valid whether or not the individual practitioner was competent. If the horoscope was wrong or the spell ineffective, one did not stop believing in astrology or magic. One looked for a better practitioner. 'It is not the

[25] Gager (1992). [26] *CTh* IX.16.1–2.

[27] *PGM* XVIIa (a particularly overheated text); Robert (1990) 497 n. 1 (a *defixio* to win four women for one man).

[28] Porph. *Vit. Plot.* 10. [29] Dagron and Rougé (1982).

science that is to be blamed, but the deceit and reckless ignorance of the man involved' (Firm. Mat. *Math*. 1.3.8; cf. Amm. Marc. XXI.1.12–14). As for the intellectual validity of occult techniques, that depended of course on acceptance of a sophisticated cosmology centred, as already noted, on the concept of universal sympathy; and practitioners who were sufficiently educated to understand the intellectual context of their trade might advance beyond its derivative and repetitive aspect to an awareness of connections with other areas of knowledge about the divine world.

Such an awareness is certainly implicit in the important collection of papyri discovered at Egyptian Thebes in the 1820s.[30] To this 'Thebes cache' belong several of our most important and compendious magical papyri, and the early alchemical papyri now at Leiden and Stockholm, all dated to the third century or the earlier half of the fourth, and sharing both a tendency towards bilingualism (Greek and demotic/Coptic), and various scribal affinities. The collection seems to have been designed for study rather than the practical use envisaged by the texts' original authors; but in the fourth century even the mere possession of such books could result in criminal charges, and it was perhaps out of some such fear that our unknown Theban occultist hid his collection away, and so bequeathed us an insight into the workings of an anonymous and provincial late polytheist mind.

The alchemical books in the Thebes cache represent the early, materialist stage in the art's development, when the emphasis was still on imitating the appearance and colour of precious substances. They show no sign of the shift effected by Zosimus of Panopolis, around the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, towards the idea that, since the material and spiritual realms are linked by universal sympathy, a correct alchemical understanding of the properties of matter is indispensable if the soul is to be liberated from its bondage in the body. By contrast, the magical books in the Thebes cache contain an enormous variety of material, from simple spells to the *apathanatismos* in the famous Paris magical papyrus (*PGM* IV), a rite for obtaining a divine revelation by means of a spiritual initiation, a 'mystery'. The eliciting of oracles was one of the magicians' common concerns; and, like all magic, the rite in *PGM* IV was in principle valid for any user, who had only to purify himself by a period of asceticism and abstinence, and then insert his name and the subject of his enquiry at the appropriate points in the rite. But the experience envisaged, during the rite, is one of ascent, rebirth, vision and (oracular) communication. The rebirth is a noetic experience, conferring immortality (*apathanatismos*); and the vision is of the supreme god Aion, the presence of whose overwhelming power brings the enquirer to the point of death. We are reminded both of the mystery religions, and

[30] Fowden (1993b) 168–72; also 89–91, 120–6 (alchemy).

of the Hermetic initiation. Indeed, another item from the Thebes cache, *PGM* XIII, alludes explicitly to Hermetic texts; while *PGM* III, which may belong to the same library, includes a prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the gift of divine knowledge that is also found in Latin at the end of the Hermetic *Asclepius*, and in Coptic among the Hermetic texts included in Nag Hammadi Codex VI. The late antique magician was of course a natural opportunist, who no more hesitated to purloin a philosophical text if he thought it would serve his purpose, than to invoke the powerful name of 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' (Origen, *c. Cels*. IV.33), the jealous god who brooked no competition. But this approach had a vigour and open-mindedness about it that made the occult sciences one of the more dynamic aspects of late polytheism, destined to influence deeply both Christian and Muslim civilization. One can well understand why they became so suspect to authority, whatever its religious allegiance.

Authority's objection to the occult sciences would have been milder were it not for authority's own belief that they were highly effective. A papyrus of 198/9 contains a ban by the then prefect of Egypt on any type of oracular consultation, issued no doubt at Septimius Severus' instance.[31] Yet Septimius was the first to resort to diviners when he wanted to know what fate held in store.[32] He was said to have married Julia Domna because her horoscope stated that she would wed an emperor; and Julia was herself a characteristic product of her native Syria, where astrology had long been an organic part of, for example, the various local cults of the world-ruler and creator Bel. Though the influence of these Syrian cults on third-century polytheism has at times been exaggerated, the sight of Septimius and Julia, 'Assyrian Cythereia, the uneclipsed Moon' (Oppian, *Cyneg*. I.7; cf. Ghedini (1984) 148–51), holding court beneath palace ceilings painted with the imperial horoscope (including deliberate mistakes), can only have encouraged their contemporaries' mania for astrology.[33]

We see the same mingling of formal cult and the occult arts in Egypt – indeed, the student of Egyptian religion and magic soon discovers that the distinction does not exist. For their part, Greeks and Romans knew that no magician was more potent than a Memphite priest; but in their own tradition the distinction between religion and magic was ingrained. Philostratus illustrates this well with his story about how the Eleusinian hierophant refused to initiate Apollonius of Tyana because he was a magician – to which Apollonius replied that the real reason was that, 'knowing, as I do, more about the rite than you, still I come to be initiated, as if you

[31] Rea (1977). [32] *SHA*, *Sev*. 2.8–9, 3.9, 4.3 etc.

[33] Dio, LXXVI.11. Cf. Turcan (1978) 1031–5, on Septimius' successors' use of astrology to legitimate their power.

were wiser than me' (Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* IV.18). Philostratus' *Life*, which lays great emphasis on Apollonius' supernatural powers, yet pretends to absolve him of the charge that he was just a magician, is symptomatic of the ever more widespread indecision in educated minds – Porphyry was another example – between the safety of traditional intellectual discourse, and indeed of traditional cult, and the opportunities of the occult. At his trial (under Antoninus Pius) on charges of practising magic, Apuleius played on this same ambiguity. If the prosecution accepts the common belief that a magician is one who, 'holding commerce with the immortal gods, has the power to bring about whatever he wishes by the extraordinary force of certain spells' (Apul. *Apol.* 26), how do they dare attack such a person? Since they have attacked him, clearly they do not believe the charge – and their double standard is exposed.

The only convincing late polytheist thinkers were those who addressed themselves seriously to this problem, either by offering, as Plotinus, a philosophy that so far transcended conventional cult, astrology and magic as to make the problems they presented seem trivial,[34] or by accepting, as Iamblichus, that the magician, the diviner, the pious worshipper of the gods, and the philosopher are all in possession of parts of the truth, which when put together form that 'universal way for the soul's liberation' which, according to Augustine, Porphyry had sought in vain (*Regr. fr.* 12 Bidez, 302 Smith).

[34] E.g. Plot. II.3[52].15.

CHAPTER 17

LATE POLYTHEISM

CHAPTER 17B

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GODS

GARTH FOWDEN

The late polytheist world-view, as formulated by intellectuals, affords the historian a first orientation amidst an exceptionally complex body of evidence. But daily contact with the gods came to most people not, of course, through philosophy or theurgy, nor even the occult sciences, but through public and domestic cult, dreams, the rites of the dead, and so on. Here, too, the central problem is always how to deal correctly with, and exploit, divine power, in order to maintain personal and communal identity. It is only secondarily, if at all, the pursuit of what we call 'religious experience', or of ethical progress. Immersion in the details of cultic practice provides evidence to support these generalizations about mentality, and allows others to emerge.

1. SHRINES AND CULTS

The building of temples was among the most fundamental human social acts. Temples were at once the distinction (or 'eyes') and the essence (or 'soul') of any settlement, whether town or village (Lib. *Or*. xxx.9, 42). As the sixth-century historian John of Ephesus wrote of the mighty 'house of idols' at Heliopolis (Baalbek), 'the adornments of that house were so wonderful that, when the misguided pagans [considered] the strength of that house, they glorified even more in their misguidedness' (*ap*. ps.-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre, *Chronicle* (Chabot (1933) = CSCO 104) 130; tr. A. Palmer). Besides making public statements about the power of the gods and the role of religion in the community, the temples also said something about the structure of the society that made them. By proclaiming themselves, as they often did, the fruit of individual generosity, they averted the envy that might be the downfall of the wealthy. They stood for the public, integrated aspect of society – hence also the privilege of asylum they sometimes enjoyed.[1] The major temples often clustered around the noisy marketplace,

[1] Brown (1978) 35–6; Drijvers (1982).

or else, especially if they were oracles (as at Didyma by Miletus) or healing places (as at Pergamum), kept *extra muros* a deliberate distance from the intrusiveness of city life. But there were less conspicuous side-street temples too, with a more defined clientele; while Mithras' adepts often met in subterranean shrines, 'plunged in the concealing squalor of darkness', as a Christian critic put it (Firm. Mat. *De Errore Prof. Rel.* v.2). The situation and appearance of temples reflected varieties of piety, and evoked various responses.

The man in the street most easily and frequently participated in public religion in large cities that could support elaborate daily rites. A probably third-century sacred law from Ephesus sets the scene:

> The Prytanis [i.e. the senior magistrate] must kindle fire on all the altars and offer up incense and sacred herbs; on the customary days he brings animals to be sacrificed to the gods, 365 altogether . . ., at his own expense. The public hierophant shows and teaches him how each (sacrifice) is customarily (offered) to the gods. He must have hymns sung during the sacrifices, processions and nocturnal ceremonies which are prescribed by custom; and he must pray for the sacred (Roman) senate, the people of Rome and the people of Ephesus.
>
> (*I. Eph.* 10)

During the major festivals of Artemis, the emperor too was honoured – it was on such occasions that the imperial cult came closest to everyday life.[2] But when the novelist Xenophon the Ephesian describes one of these festivals (1.2–3), it is the seeing and being seen, the sociable aspect of religion, that most strikes us. Watched by a great crowd of local people and strangers, all the young men and women of Ephesus set off in procession along the sacred way that led from the city to its great sanctuary without the walls. Amidst clouds of incense and bearing aloft the sacred objects, the procession moves towards the entrance to the temples of Artemis, where sacrifice is offered. And sacrifice, as Xenophon did not need to add, was an occasion for feasting, drinking, music and dancing. No wonder this was the customary time for the choosing of brides – Xenophon's hero and heroine duly meet and fall in love. And it was precisely the enjoyability of such celebrations that also induced, for a space, a sense of common identity among citizens who were all too often at each other's throat. At a time when the plague was raging in Ephesus, Philostratus represents Apollonius of Tyana as using processions and ritual and even the communal slaying of a scapegoat, to focus energies on what united rather than what divided (*Vit. Apoll.* IV.10).

Worshippers came to the city from the countryside too: an edict composed in idiosyncratic and colourful style, apparently by the emperor

[2] Price (1984) 103–4.

Caracalla personally, and preserved on a papyrus at Giessen, mentions approvingly the Egyptian peasants who flocked into Alexandria, driving their sacrificial beasts before them, for the festivals of the great god Serapis.[3] Villagers also had their own strictly local feasts: a recently published inscription from the borderlands of Bithynia and Phrygia records how, in June/July 210, Chrestus, son of Glycon, set up a statue on an altar in honour of Zeus Bennios, for the salvation of Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta, and for the sake of his village and its crops. An ox was sacrificed, and some 200 litres of wine were provided too, along with a large bronze wine-vessel.[4] In these villages along the edge of the dry central Anatolian plateau, such summer festivities will have been major annual events.

But our sources' understandable interest in festivals should not mislead us into assuming that everyday worship was most characteristically communal, as in mainstream Christianity and Islam. Apuleius, describing a man whom he wishes to depict as an exemplar of religious indifference, redresses the balance:

> He has never prayed to any god, nor attended any temple. When he passes by some shrine, he thinks it sacrilege to put hand to lips in a gesture of reverence. Not even to the gods of country life, who nourish and clothe him, does he offer first-fruits from his crops, his vines or his flocks. On his estate there is no sanctuary, no consecrated place or sacred grove . . . Those who have visited him say they have not seen so much as an anointed stone or a branch wreathed with garlands.
>
> (Apul. *Apol.* 56)

In sharp contrast is the pious traveller, who never fails to notice by the wayside:

> an altar garlanded with flowers, a leaf-shaded grotto, an oak loaded with horns [from a sacrificial animal], a beech crowned with animal-skins, a sacred hillock within an enclosure, a tree-trunk with an image carved in it, a turf altar moistened with a libation, or a stone smeared with oil.
>
> (Apul. *Flor.* 1)

and who does not omit, when he comes upon some such sacred grove or holy place, 'to make a vow, to place an offering of fruit, to sit a little' (Apul. *Flor.* 1; cf. Lucian, *Alex.* 30). In short, Apuleius takes for granted that the most characteristic, everyday piety is voluntary, individual and non-liturgical, if not necessarily private, and certainly not secret (a Christian perversion).[5]

As Apuleius notes, even the mere passer-by made some gesture of reverence to the gods' shrines; but to enter the sacred area one had to be in a state of purity. What purity meant – assuming it was not, as in the native

[3] *P. Giss.* 40 II = *P. Giss. Lit.* 6.2. [4] Sahin (1978).

[5] Cf. Porph. *Abst.* II.16, esp. 4–5; Maximus of Madauros *ap.* Aug. *Ep.* 16.3; Veyne (1989). Apuleius is a second-century source, but such practices did not go out of fashion: Arnob. *Adv. Nat.* I.39.

Egyptian cults, a priestly prerogative – might be spelled out by an inscription, whose requirement that, for example, one should not have had recent contact with a corpse or a woman might at the one extreme be flouted, at the other treated as the outward expression of an inner, ascetic ideal.[6] Many made a point of visiting a temple at the start of their day. Prayer offered to the rising or setting sun was thought especially appropriate, and might, again, be interpreted on various levels, even as a simile for the philosopher's encounter with the One.[7] In many temples the very stones of which they were made, and the polished surfaces of the cult-statues, were covered with texts, sometimes public or priestly records formally inscribed, sometimes the scribbled or scratched prayers of ordinary worshippers.[8] One might also leave a lamp, a statuette or other offering, accompanied perhaps by a votive inscription; or one could burn some incense. Special occasions called for animal sacrifice, repeated prohibitions of which prove its continued popularity through the fourth century. The number of victims might be recorded with pride in an inscription,[9] though by now some intellectuals found it hard to justify blood offerings, and preferred (as the Hermetists) 'spiritual sacrifice'. That Marcus Aurelius as well as Julian was criticized for his extravagant hecatombs, and the mindless feasting that ensued,[10] shows that some polytheists had doubts, even before Christians began to make their voice widely heard.

The increasing controversiality of sacrifice proves that polytheism had no more ceased to evolve than mankind had tired of life, or stopped wondering what lay beyond it. The austere old Roman Jupiter, for example, may have been around a long time by 'late' antiquity, but each generation recast the gods in its own image, and Jupiter was still the object of individual as well as official veneration,[11] while even his public cult was given a new twist by Diocletian (see p. 558). If the statues and paintings seen by temple visitors looked, and were interpreted by their guardians, much as always, their power to mould the way gods were envisaged and dreamed of had not diminished.[12] In non-Graeco-Roman traditions, native gods were increasingly depicted in Roman guise, while anthropomorphic statues had for some time been progressively replacing older, aniconic cult-objects.[13] The value of regular, daily temple services, deeply ingrained anyway in Egypt and other parts of the east, was now widely recognized in the Graeco-Roman world too,[14] and received official reinforcement in Maximin Daza's and later Julian's attempts at reform (see pp. 559–60; *CAH* XIII.543–8).

[6] *LSCG* no.139 (Lindos, second century) requires purity of mind as well as body; and see Porph. *Abst.* II.19.
[7] Fowden (1993b) 127. [8] Apul. *Apol.* 54; Beard (1991).
[9] E.g. Brogan and Smith (1984) 262 (no. 6). [10] Amm. Marc. XXII.12.6; XXV.4.17.
[11] Alföldy (1989) 84–9. [12] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 102–67.
[13] E.g. Harl (1987) 79–81; Le Glay (1966) 61–95, 499–502. [14] Nilsson (1974) 381–3.

Sensitivity to the divine energies that infused the cult-statues, and the wish to exploit them as fully as possible, doubtless contributed to this development.

It has been suggested that individuals' piety too was evolving, towards greater warmth and intimacy with the gods.[15] Though subjective, this is not an inherently improbable judgement. Late antique polytheists do seem to have felt a particular affection for gods like Heracles, Dionysus, Asclepius and Mithras who understood the struggle of mortal existence. The gods were expected to be *epēkooi*, good listeners; and that was easier if they could move around with their clients. To this end many carried on their person small images, sometimes in silver or gold, of a favoured divinity.[16] Since one did not lightly build temples or set up cult-statues to new gods, these small images are a surer guide to fashion: it is likely for example that those which depict the serpent Glycon went into circulation soon after Alexander of Abonouteichos invented his oracle, in the mid-second century (Lucian, *Alex.*). Statuettes of Tyche (Fortune), in all her guises, were especially common, and warn against the easy assumption that divine personifications seemed less real than gods who had personalities and histories of their own. One of the accusations against Apuleius at his trial on charges of practising magic was that he carried with him a wooden statuette of Mercury. His defence contains a fine account of the different levels (excepting the magical, which the prosecution had already drawn attention to) at which such an image might be worshipped, and underlines again the individualism of polytheist piety. The Mercury-statuette, Apuleius explains, is both a substitute for the public cult-statues, and an object for philosophical reflection. On feast days he offers it incense, a libation or even a victim, as well as prayer; while as a Platonist he is in the habit of addressing it as 'the King', the supreme Sovereign of all creation. Such statuettes might also be placed at the foot of a cult-statue, and reverenced in the public temples. Rumour told that it was by leaving behind burning candles after offering prayer in precisely such circumstances that in 362 the philosopher Asclepiades started the fire which destroyed the temple of Apollo at Daphne (Antioch).[17] A few years later, the theurgist Nestorius saved Athens from an earthquake by praying to a statuette of Achilles which he placed before the image of Athena in the Parthenon.[18] The interplay in this incident of ancient public context and secret theurgical ritual is highly characteristic of late polytheism.

There is, it will be noticed, abundant evidence for spiritual interpretations of the everyday rites of religion. This encourages a false perspective: our literary sources, the only ones which express such nuances, are written by the only people likely to take the trouble to analyse them. Religious

[15] Veyne (1986) and (1989). [16] Giammarco Razzano (1988) 340–1.
[17] Amm. Marc. XXII.13. [18] Zos. IV.18.

emotion, though, is probably another matter, though again the sources are inevitably literary. Emotion is often attributed to 'warm' oriental cults rather than 'frigid' Greek or, worse still, Roman ones; but statues generally stirred more than merely aesthetic reverence. An image of Asclepius Paean could be described by an onlooker as infused by the god's own powers, a manifestation of the indwelling god himself (Callistr. *Stat.* 10); while Eunapius recalls how, after a particularly brilliant performance by the rhetor Prohaeresius, 'all who were present licked the sophist's chest as though it were some inspired statue; some kissed his feet, some his hands' (Eunap. *Vit. Soph.* x.5.4). This comparison of learned and holy men to statues occurs frequently in late polytheist literature, and would strike us as less odd, if we ourselves were capable of a more vivid appreciation of statues. Not that late polytheists necessarily let themselves get carried away in temples. There are some amusing stories about sharp exchanges between worshippers and their gods. Asclepius' customers, forced to sleep in his temples in order to receive a dream-oracle, were particularly tetchy. An arrogant second-century sophist, informed that he might get over his arthritis if he refrained from cold drinks, enquired whether the prescription would have been the same for a cow similarly afflicted; while Proclus' teacher Plutarch, told to eat pork, wanted to know whether the god would have said the same to a Jew. Caught off guard by such impertinence, Asclepius altered the prescription.[19]

II. SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS

With Asclepius' cures, though, we reach a type of relationship with the gods that was out of the ordinary, not just a matter of the everyday paying of respect. The need for such special relationships arose either from some objective problem, such as illness, or, less commonly, from what one might call intellectual or spiritual curiosity. The former might well, of course, stimulate the latter. Yet it is not easy to enter into the private thoughts in public sanctuaries of the less educated classes.

A dim beginning can be made with the North African 'Saturn steles', erected in cult-places to record sacrifices and mark buried votive desposits offered to the Africans' supreme god, the Punic Baal and Latin Saturn.[20] Though by the third century the Saturn cult had been heavily Romanized, and even in the countryside was usually conducted in Romano-African temples rather than the traditional open-air enclosures, still it retained important local and Semitic elements. The steles depict the god and his

[19] Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* 535; Damasc. *Isid. fr.* 218. The priggish Libanius knew better, of course: *Or.* 1.143.

[20] Le Glay (1966) and (1988).

cult as seen by ordinary people, mainly indigenous peasants; and they describe in symbolic language Saturn's activity as lord of the heavens, the fertile earth and the world beyond the tomb. Worshipped in association with numerous other divinities, Saturn touched on every conceivable aspect of human life. The warm piety he evoked is expressed by a dedication put up near Carthage in the summer of 283, by C. Manius Felix Fortunatianus, 'priest, warned in dreams, commanded by the divine power (*numen*) of Saturn. I, Manius,' the inscription continues, 'have discharged my vow and dedicated a sacrificial victim, for the sake of my faith assured and my health (*salus*) preserved' (*AE* 1975.874).

The conflicts assuaged – and sometimes even generated – by religious belief are thrown into particularly sharp relief by the 'confession steles' that emanate from the indigenous temples of rural northeast Lydia and neighbouring parts of Phrygia, a region noted in the ancient sources for its austere morality.[21] These are votive inscriptions, recording offerings made by afflicted individuals in return for healing effected by a particular god. The affliction is understood as a punishment, and the misdeed – a theft perhaps, or an illicit liaison – is identified, or at least alluded to, often after the god has appeared in a dream. Thus a woman, Claudia Bassa, dedicated a stele dated 253/4 to Zeus of the Twin Oaks, 'having been tormented for four years, and not believing in the god. But finding out for what I suffered, and giving thanks, I put up the stele' (Petzl (1994) 20–1 no. 12).

The two inscriptions just quoted are untypical of their genres in that they allude to misfortune's toll on faith. In most people, vague but persistent anxieties about family, property, health and salvation intensified awareness of dependence on the gods and longing to communicate with them. We see this clearly in the second- and early third-century inscriptions which tell us all we know about the cult of the 'Holy and Righteous' God(s),[22] some of whose ordinary, rural worshippers in Phrygia and neighbouring regions conceived of them as angels rather than gods, and in doing so recognized a higher divinity with whom it was less easy to communicate, but who expected ethical standards from human kind. The implied problem of mediation was of some concern; but for most it was subordinate to the more direct question of how, precisely, one made contact with an angel or a god, if he did not take the trouble to appear to one in a dream. Or how did one set about ensuring that such a dream would come?

Of the services offered by magicians and astrologers, something has already been said. They were handy and relatively cheap, but not always successful. Alternatively, there were numerous *healing-shrines*, a specialized form of what we more generally classify as *oracles*. The *mysteries* must also be considered, mixing as they did public pomp with secret initiation; and

[21] Mitchell, *Anatolia* 1.189–95. [22] Ricl (1991), (1992a) and (1992b).

all these cults gave rise to the phenomenon of *pilgrimage*. These themes can be tied to a firm third-century context through the person of the emperor Caracalla, who is usually treated as a regrettable ruler, but was also a tormented individual. Soon after he murdered his brother Geta, Caracalla, oppressed by guilt, fell ill in body and mind, and began to have dreams in which he was pursued by his father and brother, carrying swords. These dreams Caracalla understood, as any other contemporary would have done, as direct divine punishment and warning. Thenceforth and until he died, his constant travels were motivated no less by his search for a cure than by considerations of state or his other fixation, the imitation of Alexander. He conjured spirits and importuned the gods both in person and by messenger, with 'prayers, sacrifices and votive offerings'; but 'he received help neither from Apollo Grannus nor from Asclepius nor from Serapis'. Cassius Dio's observation (LXXVII.15.6) shows that Caracalla invoked the most potent divinities of the age. Indeed, Caracalla's experiences provide an insight into what seemed most dynamic in late polytheism to one of the few people able to take an overall view of the empire's religious traditions.

We may begin with Asclepius the Saviour, *philanthrōpos* and healer *par excellence*, and one of Christianity's firmest opponents. On his way east in the winter of 214–15, Caracalla visited the god's shrine at Pergamum. This was the Roman world's most respected healing-centre, and *ipso facto* one of its greatest holy places,[23] for the act of healing established a particularly intense personal relationship with the divine. The sanctuary had been much extended during the second century, but had retained the special atmosphere of all Asclepius' temples, where people stayed night after night, sleeping in the sacred area, longing for the god to come in their dreams and prescribe a cure. At Epidaurus,[24] the centuries-long accumulation of inscriptions and votives displayed today in the museum is eloquent of the durable, vital piety of Asclepius' adepts. And it was often a reflective piety too, for remarkable cures gave pause for thought. In the long hours of waiting, conversation centered on the shrine and its patron, or even strayed into the wider realms of theology and philosophy.[25] At Pergamum, literary men and philosophers held forth to the captive audience, while the sanctuary's dedication to Zeus–Asclepius, and the various altars set up there and elsewhere in the town 'to all the gods and goddesses', suggest that the élite of worshippers was much given to syncretistic ways of envisaging the gods. There is no sign, though, that such ideas (also attested at Epidaurus) caught on with the average visitor, who continued to address his prayers to the old-fashioned Asclepius.

[23] Habicht (1969) 6–18; Le Glay (1976). Caracalla's visit: Habicht (1969) esp. 18, 33–8; Price (1984) 152–3, 253; Harl (1987) 55–7; Kampmann (1992–3).
[24] Nilsson (1974) 336–7. [25] Cf. Philostr. *Vit. Soph.* 568.

Caracalla too behaved very traditionally. 'He had his fill of dreams [*sc*. incubation treatment]' (Herod. IV.8.3), he made Pergamum 'Thrice Temple-Warden' (a privilege connected with the cult of the emperor), a temple was dedicated to him on the theatre-terrace (and others probably restored), and he was depicted in a statue as a priest, and on coins in the act of sacrificing to Asclepius. His visit was the last major event in the history of a shrine about which we hear nothing more after the mid-third century. But Epidaurus flourished well into the fourth century. So too did Asclepius' sanctuary at Aegeae in Cilicia.[26] This temple was said to have been lived in by the young Apollonius of Tyana, whose native town was adorned with a shrine for his cult by Caracalla, and whose biography was commissioned from Philostratus by Caracalla's mother. Apollonius turned Aegeae into a veritable school of philosophers, and took every opportunity to draw out publicly, before the ordinary faithful, those terrible connections between conduct, conscience and affliction of which the authors of the 'confession steles' had been made so painfully aware.[27] No doubt Apollonius' Aegeae was little changed in Philostratus' day. Caracalla may well have visited it shortly before he arrived at Antioch; and indeed it remained a major centre of healing and piety into the reign of Constantine, who tried to close the temple for that reason.

There was, though, room for more than one healer-god. Of the other two Cassius Dio mentions in connection with Caracalla, Apollo Grannus was renowned among the Celts. His cult is especially well attested in the frontier regions, and was often associated with springs.[28] Recent archaeological discoveries suggest that the shrine Caracalla visited, during the German campaigns of (probably) 212 and (certainly) 213, was at Faimingen on the upper Danube. The god seems to have profited from the occasion more than the emperor. His temple was rebuilt in stone, in the Roman manner. And Caracalla's patronage undoubtedly gave a wider impetus to the cult, which had been little known before the second century, but from then on had spread throughout the west. A Dacian inscription from the 230s calls Apollo Grannus 'the one who always and everywhere listens to prayer' (*epēkoos*) (*SEG* XXXIII.589) – except, it seems, Caracalla's.

As for Serapis, Caracalla was able to invoke him when, turning briefly aside from the fateful road to Persia, he visited Alexandria in 215. This visit was noted for the bloody massacre it occasioned, but also for the reverence Caracalla accorded the city's famous god, in whose temple he resided and insistently sacrificed.[29] The 'philoserapis' emperor also built Serapis (and Isis?) a sanctuary on the Quirinal in Rome itself.[30] The Serapis

[26] Ziegler (1994). [27] Philostr. *Vit. Apoll.* I.10–11.
[28] Weisgerber (1975) 108, 115–21; Dietz (1985). [29] Malaise (1972) 439–42.
[30] Beard, North and Price (1998) I.254.

cult was popular throughout the empire, often in association with that of Isis, as on a Spanish dedication of this period, which also names Kore, Apollo Grannus and the similarly Celtic Mars Sagatus (*AE* 1968.230). At Timgad, in the largest religious complex ever discovered in North Africa, Serapis was worshipped, uniquely, alongside Asclepius and Dea Africa. An inscription records an elaborate redecoration of the temple completed under Caracalla.[31] Despite the fact that the Severans' personal contribution to the process may have been less decisive than was once thought, it is clear that the Roman pantheon was ever more open to the gods of the orient, though some, notably Mithras and Jupiter Dolichenus, remained aloof, while those who entered were expected to conform to Roman norms.

That Caracalla, who 'made full use of every oracle' (Herod. IV.12.3), took up residence in the Alexandrian Serapeum strongly suggests that he was hoping for a dream-oracle. Indeed, oracle-giving played a central role in both physical healing and the easing of psychological tension, to which a shifting of responsibility away from the enquirer no doubt contributed.[32] Asclepius naturally came to be regarded as a major oracular authority, even independently of his healing function.[33] But still he could not challenge Apollo. The inscriptions of Didyma and Claros, by showing that these two great Apolline oracles flourished through the second century and into the third,[34] have underlined the fact that Plutarch's famous pamphlet *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* applies mainly to Delphi, which impoverished Greece could no longer support in the style to which it had become accustomed – though its cultural influence lingered on, witness the Pythian games attested at various cities, even in the more difficult periods of the third century.[35] Christian apologists who crowed about a general demise of oracles were simply lying. Formal, institutionalized oracles continued in late antiquity to respond to real personal, local and regional needs, as well as flattering the pretensions of the urban élites who ran them. Nonetheless, the expense and complexity of these grand, ancient oracles made them especially sensitive to social and political upheaval. Claros, which served mainly the cities of inner Asia Minor, the Black Sea coasts, Thrace and Macedonia, and with Didyma and Aegeae benefited from being on a busy sea-route, apparently succumbed to the disruption caused to the region's economy and communications by the mid-third-century invasions. Didyma became a fortified refugee camp; and though Diocletian patronized and consulted the oracle, just as Julian tried to resuscitate Apollo of Daphne, such projects could not succeed without local interest. In the post-crisis retrenchment elaborate oracles, like local mints (and, no doubt, Pythian games), were often found superfluous.

[31] Le Glay (1991). [32] K. Thomas (1978) 288. [33] Jones (1986) 44.
[34] Parke (1985) 69–111, 142–70; and, on oracles generally, Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 168–261.
[35] *Bull. Ép.* (1982) 450.

The business transacted at oracles was mostly quite practical. Cities enquired what to do about some natural catastrophe or barbarian incursion, or how best to honour a particular god. Private individuals enquired about their everyday cares, as one Etrenion at a temple in the Fayum:

> To my lord Socnopaeus, the great god, and the associated gods . . . if it is not granted that my wife Ammonous should return to me of her own free will, but I must go out so that she comes back, give me this.
>
> (*P. Berlin* 21712 = Aly (1987) 99–100)

The papyrus slip was found with several others, still in the temple, so presumably patience was advised, by the return to Etrenion of the slip on which he had written the alternative proposition. Though he wrote in Greek, he preserved the native Egyptian formula, attested in similar demotic and Coptic documents.[36]

But at Talmis (Kalabsha), far to the south in Nubia, a traveller asked the god Mandulis a question about himself: 'Are you the Sun?' On the temple wall he painted an account of the vision Mandulis granted him:

> You showed yourself to me in the golden stream, as you traversed in your bark the heavenly vault . . . Having bathed yourself in the holy water of immortality, you appeared as an infant. You came, rising at the appointed hour, to your shrine, bestowing the breath of life and great power on your statue and your sanctuary. Then, Mandulis, I knew you to be the Sun, the lord who beholds all things, the universal king, Aion the almighty.
>
> (*IME* 166)

'Theological' responses of this sort are also known from Didyma and Claros;[37] but this text from Talmis shows that a sufficiently receptive enquirer did not need a philosophically trained priesthood to mediate between him and his god. As already mentioned, there are philosophical influences to be found even in the books of the magicians, who dominated the 'private sector' of the oracular business.

In dealing with healing shrines and oracles, we find ourselves at that point where the external forms repose directly on what ordinary people regard as indispensable to any religion – not profound ethical or spiritual instruction, or contact with the divine for its own sake, but reassurance and specific assistance in life's uncertainties. Such fundamental needs were also met by the wide range of mainly Greek or oriental mystery cults.[38] The mysteries – in the stricter sense of a word casually used in this period – offered a brief but striking, even terrifying, experience of initiation (and perhaps of some sort of 'rebirth'), often understood as union with the god and a promise of a blessed afterlife. Genuinely ecstatic experiences were attained, though we

[36] Browne (1987); Frankfurter (1998) 145–97. [37] Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.43–51.
[38] Nilsson (1974) 345–72, 622–701; Burkert (1990).

cannot know how often, by for example the adepts of Cybele and Attis – certainly by those who, so notoriously, emasculated themselves in their enthusiasm, but no doubt also by many others who, especially from the third century onwards, submitted themselves to baptism in the blood of a sacrificial bull or ram (*taurobolium*/*criobolium*). But the mysteries also had deep historical roots and a perfectly down-to-earth human context. Some were associated with the ancient sanctity of particular places, like Eleusis or Samothrace; and though others, such as the mysteries of Dionysus or Isis or Cybele, could be found across the empire, they often retained a strong sense of their ethnic origins. In the cities especially, but also in the countryside, initiates were numerous.[39] In particular, the ubiquity of Dionysiac themes on mosaics and sarcophagi is eloquent of this god's special place in late polytheists' everyday thoughts. Caracalla was apparently no exception – 'he even took about with him numerous elephants', recalls Cassius Dio, 'that in this respect too he might seem to be imitating Alexander, or rather Dionysus' (LXXVII.7.4); and he was the first living emperor to be depicted in this guise on coins.[40] As for Dionysus' humbler initiates, and those in some other mysteries, they usually formed local circles of friends and drinking-companions who helped each other over life's crises, and cared for the memory of the dead. When, in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (XI.28), Lucius mentions that his career in the law courts prospered after his second Isiac initiation, we may suspect that he owed this to help from fellow-adepts – a sort of Masonic network of contacts.

In all the mysteries, special doctrines were imparted, as for example about the afterlife; and use was made of symbols that suggested a profounder, secret content. But 'secret' religion in antiquity was no more than what today we would call 'personal' religion – something that many knew and experienced, but preferred not to noise abroad. Again, some of the more sophisticated initiates, and no doubt hierophants too, like certain prophets at oracular shrines, did interpret the mysteries in a philosophical sense. But in so doing they overshot what most people meant by mysteries no less deliberately than Christian polemicists fell short of it, by dwelling on the ceremonies' obscene or comic aspects. And although the initiation might be repeated, no spiritual progress was implied thereby – except possibly in the cult of Mithras.[41] This reached the peak of its popularity in the earlier part of our period, and was distinctive – perhaps reflecting its mainly military and official milieu – in that it seems to have offered a structured and demanding spiritual 'way' that could be a frame for one's whole life. The more dedicated, at least, among Mithras' adepts became members of a group that was looked after by a 'Pater'; while below this highest grade of initiation were six others,

[39] Apul. *Apol.* 55; *Met.* XI.10; MacMullen (1987) 47–8.
[40] Harl (1987) 48.
[41] Gordon (1994) 465–7.

each associated with a particular stage in the process of instruction, discipline and purification. All the mysteries proclaimed rebirth; but only in the Mithras cult could one obtain a sense of something gradually and systematically achieved by oneself, rather than given. Even more than Asclepius, Mithras got his worshippers involved, and drew them from social classes of no particular education, while still leaving scope for the more philosophical interpretations offered by Porphyry in his treatise *On the Cave of the Nymphs*.

A final, practical point that needs to be made about these various media – healing shrines, oracles and mysteries – by which special relationships with the gods were established, is that even in towns they were not always ready to hand. Hence the necessity and even popularity of what we may loosely call pilgrimage. As historical religions, Christianity and Islam were to develop pilgrimage into a major form of religious expression. But the historicity of the many gods was variously estimated. Egyptians saw nothing strange in visiting the graves of their gods; but most people found Egyptians slightly peculiar. The Cretans showed both the birthplace and the grave of Zeus, but for precisely that reason were deemed arrant liars. On the other hand, pious polytheists did make a point of visiting particularly well-known temples, if they had a special reason or were on the road anyway. In that sense, Caracalla was a typical pilgrim, merely better travelled than most. Hence, for example, his visit to Troy, his first action after crossing into Asia Minor (214). There, recalling Alexander and, no doubt, Apollonius of Tyana, and anticipating Julian, he honoured Achilles with a statue, sacrifices and a race round his neglected tomb. Perhaps he even contributed something to the remarkable popularity of Achilles in late antique art, literature and piety.[42] It was during a similar excursion three years later, to the temples of the Syrian moon god Sin at Harran near the Persian frontier, that the 'most pious' emperor, as Caracalla liked to be thought and called,[43] was murdered while relieving himself by the roadside. Imperial visits were of course major events in the history of even the grandest shrines; and in general festivals and pilgrimages had tremendous social and economic significance in a world where, otherwise, many people scarcely moved beyond their village. Indeed, a major shrine was an incalculable asset to the city that controlled it, attracting, especially for festivals, crowds who spent money, athletes who brought glory, rhetors and philosophers who might, as at Pergamum or Delphi, turn the sanctuary into a year-round cultural centre. This was one of the reasons why the city élites, who profited most, were still so strongly attached to polytheism at the beginning of the fourth century.[44]

[42] Von Gonzenbach (1979). [43] Dio, LXXVII.16.1; Oliver (1978). [44] Ziegler (1994) 206–7.

III. GODS OF HEARTH AND GRAVE

Even in the later fourth century, according to Jerome, Rome twinkled at nightfall with a myriad candles and lamps lit before domestic shrines;[45] and we may be sure that this was one of the very last aspects of self-consciously polytheist cult to fall into disuse. Of the mentalities and practices of temple ritual, domestic cults were a mere extension.[46] So much is implied by Apuleius, describing his personal devotions before his statuette of Mercury. Mystery-initiates might, in the recesses of their homes, take out the symbols of their faith and venerate them, but on the whole polytheists were suspicious of religion not conducted in the light of day according to the established rites – it might so easily be magic, or Christianity.[47] Domestic shrines took their tone from the public temples, and did not lag behind them in the variety of gods, including the emperor, that they served. In a single late *lararium* from a substantial residence in Rome were discovered statues or busts of Isis–Fortuna, Serapis, Jupiter, Diana–Hecate, Venus, Mars, Hercules, a bacchant, Horus, Harpocrates and others, neatly arranged in a series of niches. The same house contained a small private Mithraeum.[48] A shrine in an Ostian bakery, constructed *c.* 210–15, contained some fifty bronze and silver statuettes and a marble one of a lar, and paintings which have been identified, with various degrees of probability, as representations of Silvanus, the Dioscuri, Alexander the Great (no surprise under Caracalla), Augustus, a genius, Fortuna, Annona, Isis and Harpocrates.[49] And it would be perverse to omit mention of the best-known collection of household gods attested from this period, the emperor Severus Alexander's two *lararia*. In these he supposedly 'kept statues of the deified emperors – of whom, however, only the best had been selected – and also of certain holy souls, among them Apollonius . . . Christ, Abraham, Orpheus and others of this same character and, besides, the portraits of his ancestors', not to mention Vergil, Cicero, Achilles and other heroes, and Alexander the Great (*SHA*, *Alex. Sev.* 29, 31). But we may suppose that this particular collection of household deities, if it ever existed, would have been less strenuously eclectic had Elagabalus' successor not been forced to cultivate such a catholic image for public consumption (see chapter 17*c*, p. 555).

From the identity of style between public and domestic devotion we should deduce the warmth of the former rather than the formality of the latter. The safety and regularity of home life in even its most insignificant aspects was felt to depend on the maintenance of the domestic cults,

[45] Jerome, *In Esaiam* XVI.57.7.8 (CCSL 73A, pp. 646–7).
[46] Frankfurter (1998) 131–42.
[47] Apul. *Apol.* 55; Min. Fel. *Oct.* 10; Maximus of Madauros *ap.* Aug. *Ep.* 16.3.
[48] Stambaugh (1978) 598 and pl. VIIIB; Price (1984) 119–20.
[49] Bakker (1994) 65–6, 145–67, 207–8, 251–73, pls. 85–100.

supplemented by magic and all manner of apotropaic devices – phalli carved on the threshold or the corners of the house, or charms inscribed over doorways to ward off the plague. People felt at home with their gods wherever they encountered them; and the respect the gods were accorded did not preclude their exposure to scenes of daily life. Hence the frequency of religious, especially Dionysiac, themes in the decoration of private houses. Walls and floors were adorned with frescoes or mosaics depicting, not just mythological scenes, but also rituals of the mysteries and other cults, and allegories of mystical philosophical teachings. Archaeologists often assume that such decoration was conceivable only in a room designated for cultic or learned gatherings; but religious themes are far too common to justify so specific an explanation in every case. Separation of sacred and profane is a trait of the Christian rather than the polytheist mind, well illustrated by the extreme rarity of representations of Christ on floor-mosaics, and the ban pronounced in 427 on the depiction on floors even of the cross, for fear it might be trodden on.[50]

The individual's last encounter with his gods came of course at death. Numerous gravestones and sarcophagi survive from our period, but their decorations and inscriptions betray no clear conception (such as one finds in ancient Egyptian tombs) of what the dead were to face. Indeed, many had no such conception – *post mortem nescio* (*CIL* VI.13101). The majority assumed some sort of bodily afterlife, pleasurable or punishing, and kept their dead going with offerings of food and drink. Those even remotely accessible to philosophical ideas often believed in the liberation and ascent of the immortal soul to a heavenly dwelling-place; and through the democratization of a once wholly exceptional honour, the deceased was increasingly, though not commonly, spoken of and depicted as a god or goddess.[51] But it is probably not in the sphere of belief that we should seek the explanation for a major change in the funerary customs of the western provinces which, though it began in the second century, became generalized in the third – namely the switch from cremation to inhumation.[52] At so early a date, this can hardly have been Christianity's doing. It is also worth noting that, during the transition period, the two practices co-existed – as had indeed been the case earlier, though with a strong preference for burning in the west, and burial in the east. Clearly, no serious issue of principle was involved. Indeed, the variety of custom underlines polytheism's vagueness on a matter of deep human concern. Here was an important area in which Christianity was attractively explicit, and optimistic.

[50] *CJ* 1.8.1. [51] Waelkens (1983). [52] Koch and Sichtermann (1982) 27–30.

CHAPTER 17

LATE POLYTHEISM

CHAPTER 17C

PUBLIC RELIGION

GARTH FOWDEN

The perspective on late polytheism offered in the last two chapters has been primarily that of the individual. But individuals all organized themselves into groups as well: whether families at the graveside of a relative, villagers celebrating the harvest festival, Isiac initiates lending each other a helping hand in cities across the empire, or philosophers gathering round a revered teacher to study. These group identities, transitory or more enduring, were consecrated by the invocation and presence of particular gods. And the sum total of all these individuals, amidst their shifting group allegiances, was Rome's empire. To the empire's public cults as well, individuals were expected to pledge themselves, to strengthen and in turn be strengthened. It is time now to make a more consistent use of this public perspective, both at the centre and in the provinces.

I. THE ROLE OF THE EMPEROR

As the incarnation of human power, the emperor had to be explained and accommodated no less than did the gods, and irrespective of whether one was polytheist, Jew or Christian. Hence the emergence of emperor-cult.[1] Although during their lifetime the emperor and his family were 'divine' (*divi*) rather than 'gods' (*dei*), their statues were reverenced in conspicuous sanctuaries in even the smallest provincial cities, and they were depicted in the company and often within the very temples of the gods. Rulers might also claim to be specially guarded by certain powerful deities,[2] or be assimilated to them by being represented with their attributes. The Severans outdid their forerunners in this respect, and Julia Domna's surviving portraits assimilate her to at least ten different goddesses.[3] After death, deified rulers might even answer prayer.[4] And as the third century approached its

[1] Bowersock (1982); Price (1984), although note Mitchell, *Anatolia* 1.224–5; Fishwick (1987–92).
[2] Nock (1972) 653–75.
[3] Ghedini (1984); Fishwick (1987–92) I.1.335–47, and (1992). [4] Fishwick (1990).

end, increasingly public and practical consequences began to be drawn from an old idea now reaching maturity, namely that the emperor was the earthly counterpart of divinity, and especially of the divine monarch, Zeus.[5] Naturally enough, terrestrial power claimed a role in the interpretation of that heavenly power of which it was an image. Although, as *Pontifex Maximus*, the emperor had long been accustomed to acting as ultimate authority in religious matters, it was with the conduct rather than the content of the cults that he had concerned himself,[6] except in rare cases where public morality was deemed in danger – and even then, the approved remedy was proscription, not reform.[7] But already in the reign of Aurelian and under the tetrarchy, there began to emerge the revolutionary potential of imperial intervention in doctrine as well as cult. Constantine found Christianity a more rewarding context in which to develop the emperor's role as religious guide, but he did not abandon the imperial cult, preferring simply to purge it of sacrifice (inscription from Hispellum, 333/335: Gascou (1967); Eus. *LC* (ed. Heikel) 11.5). And the extent to which imperial intervention might shape the contours of public piety had already been made abundantly clear by Constantine's polytheist predecessors.[8] The cumulative effect of the emperors' divine status, repeated association with gods, prominent role in their public worship and active involvement in determining priorities for supporting and funding public religion had been gradually to turn the chief public expression of this reality, the imperial cult, into an important focus for polytheists' devotion and a catalyst of their identity, which was an indissoluble complex of political, social and religious elements.[9] The imperial cult also became a convenient means for marking out the boundaries around the growing Christian community. As Saturninus the proconsul remarked to the intending Scillitan martyrs in 180: 'We too are a religious people, and our religion is a simple one: we swear by the genius of our lord the emperor and we offer prayers for his health – as you also ought to do' (*Passio Sanctorum Scilitanorum* 3, ed. Ruggiero (1991); tr. Musurillo (1972) 87; see also Hopkins (1978) 226–31).

The Severan dynasty's attitude to religion was well exemplified by Caracalla (211–17). It was in the nature of things that an emperor's personal piety could not remain a private matter. Caracalla's frenzied invocation of healing and other gods, described in the previous chapter, duly showed up on the coinage in depictions of Aesculapius, Apollo (Grannus?), Serapis and Diana/Luna (Sin). Two less expected figures who make an appearance on Caracalla's coinage, namely Minos and Pluto, are still more suggestive of the ruler's gloomy personal preoccupations. And yet, taken *en bloc*,

[5] Dvornik (1966) chs. 8 and 10. [6] Millar, *ERW* 447–56. [7] Nock (1972) 757–66.
[8] Bagnall (1988); Salzman (1990) 131–7, 179–81, 188–9.
[9] On the princeps as religious paradigm and universal sacrificer, see Gordon (1990).

the religious elements in Caracalla's coinage are conventional, and conform closely to the norms of that *Romanitas* he so vigorously promoted.[10] Admittedly, coin types tend to be conservative – one would hardly guess, from the coinage of this period, the importance of syncretism in late polytheist theology. Even so, all the signs are that Caracalla espoused the usual view of Roman emperors, that religious affairs were an opportunity for self-expression within conventional limits, but not an area for policy-making. Indeed, there was only one conceivable policy: the preservation of what had been handed down, and the extension of its sphere of influence. In the preamble of the *constitutio Antoniniana*, Caracalla duly proclaimed that his motive was a wish to honour the gods and fill their sanctuaries with grateful worshippers (*P. Giss.* 40. 1).[11]

Elagabalus, who succeeded Caracalla after Macrinus' fleeting reign, and ruled for less than four years (218–22) before being assassinated at the age of seventeen, was an extravagant youth, it is true, but hardly a significant rebel against the Severan norm.[12] Hereditary priest of the Emesene sun god Elagabalus, he was manoeuvred onto the throne by Julia Domna's sister, his grandmother, whose appetite for power required that the young man should neither give undue offence, nor prefer his imperial to his priestly duties. The sacred stone of Emesa, transported to Rome, was a toy whose rapid evolution from distraction to obsession was not foreseen. Its appearance on the coinage, the construction of two Roman temples for its cult, the lavish celebration of festivals, and the strange god's propagation in the provinces (a process obscured by subsequent *damnatio*),[13] could all be swallowed. But not the attempt to construct a new Capitoline Triad by 'marrying' the divine Elagabalus first to Athena, then to Dea Caelestis; nor the all-too-mortal Elagabalus' marriage to one of the Vestal Virgins. This violence done to what the Roman élite held holiest, and Elagabalus' insistence that all other gods be subordinated to his, hastened his downfall. Yet his desire was to privilege his own god rather than to deny the rest. Though some maintain that Elagabalus aspired to alter radically the religion of Rome, his coinage, taken as a whole, continued to emphasize traditional symbols. Nonetheless, his successor, Severus Alexander (222–35), took care to 'return the statues of the gods, which the previous emperor had moved from their places, to their original temples and shrines' (Herod. VI.1.3). The Emesene betyl disappeared totally from the coins. Severus Alexander was a typical member of his dynasty – conservative, but aware that Roman religion was catholic, especially regarding cults from the orient.

[10] *BCM* v. xxxviii–xliv lists the commoner coin types at this period.

[11] *P. Giss.* 40. 1 = *P. Giss. Lit.* 6.1. For a new Roman cult in the Egyptian Fayyum, quite possibly established in response to the *constitutio*, see Beard, North and Price (1998) I.362–3. On the *restitutio* theme in third-century imperial propaganda, see Alföldy (1989) 58–66.

[12] Frey (1989). [13] Robert (1989) 161–6.

Respect for tradition was what overwhelmingly characterized the behaviour of the Severans in religious matters. Septimius Severus in particular restored numerous derelict temples throughout the empire, acquitting himself conscientiously of an imperial duty whose neglect could by now become a butt for Christian mockery.[14] Manilius Fuscus, addressing the senate in 203, spoke for the whole establishment:

> For the security and eternity of the empire you should frequent, with all due worship and veneration of the immortal gods, the most sacred shrines for the rendering and giving of thanks, so that the immortal gods may pass on to future generations what our ancestors have built up.
>
> (Pighi (1965) 142, tr. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 464)

Some of this Severan world's most prestigious shrines are enumerated by the lawyer Ulpian: Capitoline Jupiter at Rome, the focus of official piety; Apollo at Didyma, a flourishing oracle; Mars in Gaul, quite possibly the sanctuary at Trier (see pp. 567–8); Athena at Troy; Hercules at Gades (Cadiz); Artemis at Ephesus; the Mother Goddess and Nemesis at Smyrna; and Dea Caelestis at Carthage (*Tit. Ulp.* XXII.6). Although implicit in this list there is much that was in origin neither Greek nor Roman, it is still a very conservative view of what was worthwhile in early third-century religion.

Yet it was a fragile balance that the Severans strove to maintain. Indeed, as representatives of the new elements now entering the Roman élite, they themselves well exemplified the trends that were both codified and encouraged by the *constitutio Antoniniana*. As often happens, conservative patronage ensured that change became irreversible. For the stability of the empire, the results were disastrous. Politics were no longer moulded by senatorial power-brokers in Rome, but by the provinces, or rather their armies, which, in the half-century that followed the demise of the Severan dynasty, tended to choose emperors to suit their own interest, and then seek to impose them by force on the rest. Internal chaos encouraged external intervention; both affected religious life throughout the empire. The charmed world of the Aegean coasts now witnessed the disruption or violation of its famous sanctuaries – the temples of Apollo at Didyma and Artemis at Ephesus, perhaps also the Parthenon at Athens. The traditional cults continued to function, and in places even to flourish;[15] but overall there was a marked decline in the building, repairing and epigraphic habits. Even the priests of Egypt ceased at last to carve the praises of their gods on temple walls and columns.[16]

The instinctive reaction of official circles and the army was to cling to, or even try to renew, that traditional Roman religion so well exemplified

[14] E.g. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* IV.52.
[15] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 572–85; Mitchell, *Anatolia* I.221–5.
[16] Bagnall, *Egypt* 261–73.

by the festal calendar of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* from Dura Europus, drawn up under Severus Alexander.[17] Already, at the celebration in 247 of Rome's thousandth birthday, the only deity given any prominence was Roma Aeterna. There is evidence too, from this period, for a more intense interest in the cult of Vesta.[18] In ordering all his subjects to sacrifice to the gods for the safety of the state, Decius (249–51) was guilty of such heavy handed conservatism (Caracalla had at least offered Roman citizenship as an inducement) that he was led more or less by accident into an innovatory empire-wide persecution of those Christians who refused to obey.[19] That was before the full force of the storm broke over the empire in the 250s and 260s. For Gallienus' reign, various religious and even philosophical initiatives have been claimed; but the more reliable evidence for official behaviour points towards pragmatism, as was natural in the face of so merciless a succession of events.[20]

The trouble with this dominant conservatism modified by pragmatism was that it sought to hold together a far-flung empire by backing a religious cult based on the polis.[21] It was left to Aurelian (270–5) to find a more imaginative response, fertilized perhaps by philosophical discourse about the supreme god.[22] Having assigned Jupiter a prominent place on his early coinage, he followed up his political and military successes with an attempt to advance Sol to cultic primacy. The immediate inspiration for this reinvigoration of the traditional Roman Sol cult came, it was said, during a vision the emperor saw in the temple of Elagabalus at Emesa, after the fall of Palmyra. After he retured to Rome, he built a magnificent temple of the Sun, gave it a college of priests, and adorned it with Palmyrene booty and statues of the Sun and the Syrian god Bel. The coins proclaimed ORIENS AVG., SOLI INVICTO and even SOL DOMINVS IMPERI ROMANI. Yet it does not seem that there was anything unambiguously 'oriental' in all this. Sol was presented in traditional Roman guise, in an iconography that had been widely used on the coinage since the reign of Septimius Severus. What was more, other gods were neither excluded nor explicitly downgraded.[23] That was one of several lessons of Elagabalus' reign that Aurelian had taken thoroughly on board. For that reason, the Sol cult survived its patron, though Aurelian's murder deprived it of impetus, as well as forestalling a planned persecution of the Christians.

We may safely suppose that Aurelian's Sol cult was intended to benefit the state as well as to promote and express Aurelian himself. The earthly autocrat

[17] Helgeland (1978) 1481–8 (including text and translation of the Feriale); Alföldy (1989) 94–102.
[18] Nock (1972) 252–70. [19] Portmann (1990) 238–41; Selinger (1994).
[20] Armstrong (1987). [21] Selinger (1994); Rives (1995) 250–61.
[22] Halsberghe (1972) 130–71; Turcan (1978) 1064–73; Štaerman (1990) 374–9; Göbl (1993) 118, 144, 148 (for the legends quoted below); Hijmans (1996).
[23] *CIL* XI.6308: *Herculi Aug. consorti d.n. Aureliani*.

needed, so Aurelian seems to have felt, a heavenly mirror-image; and once this heavenly autocrat was accepted, his earthly counterpart might expect to be still further magnified.[24] Until the death of Severus Alexander, dynastic continuity had powerfully reinforced the other mechanisms, notably the imperial cult, by which legitimacy was conveyed. But now there were no more dynasties; and emperors were difficult to take seriously when their life-expectancy was so low. Aurelian apparently saw that the answer was to raise the stakes: he would no longer be 'like god' but 'born god', just as his divine protector, with whom he communicated in personal visions, had been raised above the other gods. These ideas were not without echo among those who ruled in the next decade; and they are an important stage in the prehistory of the Christian doctrine of empire forged by Constantine and formulated by Eusebius. But in the meantime the tetrarchy was to make its impermanent attempt to combine a personal relationship with the gods with a bureaucratic type of dynasticism that privileged the office rather than its holder.

Diocletian's idea[25] was to split the empire with a second Augustus, assimilating himself to Jupiter and his colleague to Hercules. The Augusti made no claim to personal divinity, though we may doubt whether many of their subjects noticed (e.g. *Pan. Lat.* xi(iii).3.7–8). Both were assisted by Caesars, who were adopted as sons, married to daughters of the Augusti, referred to as *Iovius* or *Herculius*, and perhaps, more or less officially, protected by Mars and Sol–Apollo. The raw materials of this system were impeccably Roman. As far as its theological aspects are concerned, Jupiter, Hercules and Mars were central to Rome's *veterrimae religiones* (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* xxxix.45), while Sol was a part of them, albeit much more popular in late antiquity than in earlier periods. Even the idea that particular gods might occupy privileged positions in the official pantheon was by now familiar. Nor did the prominence of the tetrarchy's divine patrons on the coinage mean that its members neglected to honour other divinities when particular circumstances suggested it. At Daphne by Antioch, for example, Diocletian is reported to have built temples for Olympian Zeus and Apollo, but also for Nemesis and Hecate,[26] who were both widely worshipped in late antiquity. And when Diocletian fell seriously ill in 304, 'prayers were offered to all the gods for his life' (Lact. *DMP* 17.5).

Diocletian's was not perhaps a very spontaneous piety, but his pronouncements on religious matters were important, forthright and by no means confined to the political sphere. Indeed, he would have seen little profit in distinguishing between religious, political and social aspects of his

[24] Artemid. ii.49 relates how a man who dreamed he had become Helios was then appointed chief magistrate of his native city.

[25] Kolb, *Diocletian* esp. 88–114, 168–72; Desnier (1993).

[26] John Malalas, *Chron.* xii.38; and see below, p. 562, on honours for Mithras.

general approach to government, which was conservative but, necessarily in the light of what had gone before, radical. And it is in the context of this, if not wholly innovative, then at least freshly focused politico-theological synthesis, propagated by the tetrarchy,[27] that we should assess Diocletian's law limiting consanguineous marriages. Sound morality and piety are here proclaimed the *sine qua non* of Rome's political survival (*Coll.* VI.4). Similarly, his edict of 297 or 302 against the Mesopotamian missionary religion of Mani takes a swipe at the rival empire of the Sassanians, as well as asserting that it is wrong for 'the ancient religion to be censured by some new one, for it is the height of criminality to revise doctrines that were settled and defined once and for all by the ancients, and which still retain and possess their validity and status' (*Coll.* XV.3). The same applied to the Christians, though it was not until 303 that Diocletian, prompted perhaps by the socially disruptive effect of conflicts between groups within the church,[28] finally accepted the logic of his own world-view and launched the Great Persecution. But the rapid spread of Mani's teachings, and the slower but surer spread of Christ's, could not be halted by legal violence. Both religions were already sucking the life-blood of polytheism – not just its adherents, but its dialectic, its literature, even some of its metaphysics. In certain polytheist intellectual circles there was already, not only a tradition of anti-Christian polemic, culminating in Porphyry's influential book *Against the Christians*, but also a realization of the need to rethink old attitudes, and even learn from the enemy (see chapter 17*a*). With the collaboration of members of these circles,[29] one of the second-generation tetrarchs, Maximinus Daza (Caesar 305–10, Augustus 310–13), now attempted a structural reform of polytheism in the eastern provinces of the empire.[30]

Daza was one of the most persistent of the persecutors, and a busy patron, according to uniformly hostile sources, of soothsayers and oracles. Not content with building and restoring temples, he invented a new hierarchy, perhaps partly inspired by the organization of the oriental priesthoods and the Christian church. Alongside the unfocused traditional system of part-time, independent priesthoods, and the locally elected provincial high priesthoods responsible for the imperial and other cults, Daza placed a network of centrally appointed priests in every town and area, co-ordinated at the provincial level by a high priest chosen for distinction and administrative skill. This new, more professional hierarchy was charged with two urgent tasks: first to ensure daily sacrifice 'to all their gods' (Lact. *DMP* 36.4), a further intensification of a concern already displayed by Decius and, before him, by Caracalla; and second to harass the Christians, while

[27] On possible anticipation by the Severans, see Fishwick (1987–92) I.1.338–9.

[28] Portmann (1990). [29] Eus. *Praep. Evang.* IV.2.10–11; cf. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.11.5–6.

[30] Lact. *DMP* 36.4–5; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.14.8–9; IX.4.2; Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 9.2; Koch (1928) 56–9; Mitchell, 'Maximinus'.

imbuing polytheists with a sense that theirs could be a religion as coherent and organized as its competitor. It is unlikely that these reforms outlasted their inventor, whereas the traditional priesthoods still had decades of life in them; but Julian's even more radical reforms, half a century later, must have been inspired in part by Daza's. Their prospects of success, though, had meanwhile been virtually nullified by the fatal passage of time and, more particularly, by the legacy of the emperor Constantine.

Constantine[31] marked his break with the tetrarchy by upgrading Sol–Apollo on the coinage, and by claiming or at least allowing it to be believed that he had seen a vision of Apollo (Grannus?) in one of his temples (Grand?) in Gaul (310). This was a return to the more personal, Aurelianic model of relations between the emperor and the divine world. In subsequently publicizing his preference for Christianity, Constantine followed the same model – his choice was represented as having sprung from personal conviction, he established it firmly on an institutional base, and he took care to avoid giving the impression 'that we have detracted excessively from ancient custom' (inscription from Hispellum, 333/335: Gascou (1967)), and to avert open conflict with the Roman religious establishment. The only difference, but a crucial one, was that Sol was assimilable, Christianity was not. So the new religion was practised, increasingly conspicuously, by the emperor himself, but not imposed as the religion of state and people. The erection of cult-statues for the many gods, the consultation of oracles, the performance of sacrifice, perhaps even the mere frequenting of temples was banned if we can believe Eusebius;[32] but there was plentiful non-Christian precedent for attacking divination, as also for other of Constantine's anti-polytheist moves – the suppressing of supposedly licentious cults, for example, or the appropriation of temple valuables to finance imperial projects. In any case, as Constantine himself admitted, these laws were the proclamation rather than the enforcement of a policy.[33]

An authoritative and fair-minded polytheist source states categorically that Constantine 'made absolutely no alteration in the lawful cult . . . Though poverty reigned in the temples, one could see that all the rest of the ritual was fulfilled' (Lib. *Or.* xxx.6). Cult continued, in a situation of studied anomaly. When he entered Rome in 312, for example, Constantine refused to visit the Capitol and sacrifice;[34] yet he remained *Pontifex Maximus*. Sol was not finally dropped from the coinage until 325, and even then was not replaced by specifically Christian imagery. The emperor maintained good relations with the city of Athens, and in 324 guaranteed his new oriental polytheist subjects against molestation; yet

[31] For the state of the question (especially as regards Constantine's attitude to polytheism) see Barnes, *CE* and (1989) 322–33; Kuhoff (1991); Elliott (1991) 169–70.

[32] Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.45.1; IV.23, 25.1; cf. *Origo* 6.34. [33] Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.60.

[34] Fowden (1994) 128–30.

the abruptness with which Constantine acquired the east in 324 perhaps created circumstances less favourable for many polytheists than those that prevailed in the west, where the process of Christianization had been more gradual. Constantine recognized the ultimate inevitability of conflict by moving the capital from Rome to Constantinople; but even there he had himself represented in what might be understood, granted the fluidity of iconographic convention, as polytheist guise, and permitted the temples to remain open.[35] In 337 Constantinople will have been as much a polytheist as a Christian city; and still it was more Christian than the rest of the empire.

The long-term implications of Constantine's conversion were not widely understood during his lifetime. To recognize Christianity had been a typically Roman gesture of imperial self-expression in religious affairs. But dealing with bishops on a daily basis forced Constantine and his successors to realize that the church had a tradition and a mind of its own, formed outside, even in conflict with, the state.

II. REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Constantine demonstrated more clearly than any of his predecessors the emperor's power to influence, or at least affect, his subjects' religious behaviour. He did not confine himself to recognizing Christianity's legality – he also undertook to propagate the gospel: in other words, to change his subjects' beliefs and practices. But still the empire could not have been Christianized, had the church not possessed structures capable of transmitting such change to the peripheries. The whole historical conjuncture, and in particular the importance at this time of what was going on at the centre, was exceptional. But the 'grass roots' perspective, from the regions, has its own value, especially in the case of that congeries of religions we call polytheism. And cities were much better placed than emperors to affect the character of religious life at the local level.

In the late fourth century, a polytheist could still feel that, though 'there is no sure evidence for the Greek fable that Mount Olympus is the dwelling-place of the gods, yet we see and feel sure that the market-place of our town is occupied by a crowd of beneficent deities' (Maximus of Madaurus, grammarian, to Augustine, Aug. *Ep*. 16.1). Even official civic cults remained strong well into the third century, and variety was infinite. But the regional study of late Roman polytheism generally – not just specific cults – is in its infancy. We cannot yet generalize about the 'regional perspective' – or, if we do, we are likely either to overemphasize common denominators such as the imperial cult, or to focus on what is most peculiar to local perspectives,

[35] Dagron, *Naissance* 37–8, 374–5; Fowden (1991).

namely the relatively un-Romanized, 'ethnic' religions. The true situation was much more complex, and will perhaps always defy generalization.

The significance even of well-known gods varied widely from place to place. Roma, the emperor, the Capitoline Triad and the 'Twelve Gods' (the classic Olympians) were revered throughout the empire, but in a way that varied according to the degree of their assimilation to local tradition, and of the natives' zeal for Rome. Nor, even in late antiquity, were Greek and Roman polytheism by any means the same thing. Such ancient institutions as the Eleusinian cult and the Panathenaic festival, or the Arval Brethren and the Vestal Virgins, continued to provide points of reference for traditionalists; while the influence exercised by these two related cultures, both mutually and on third parties, was decidedly unequal. Greece had given Rome much more than Rome had given Greece: even the emperor-cult had hellenistic antecedents. As far as other traditions were concerned, the Greeks had been interacting with them much longer than had the Romans. The influence of the barbarian gods was no less unpredictable. They might at home be regarded as universal, but not elsewhere – such were the African Saturn, Thoth of Hermopolis in Egypt, and Elagabalus of Emesa. Cybele's immigration to and official acceptance by Rome during the wars with Hannibal was an example that proved difficult to follow. Isis, despite her enormous popularity, was not always officially approved – though that of course is an argument for not taking the official/unofficial distinction too seriously. Harpocrates, who was deeply revered by ordinary Egyptians, had nothing like the fortune of Isis and Serapis abroad.[36] Jupiter Dolichenus and Mithras were widely worshipped, especially in the culticallly influential milieu of the army, and at Carnuntum there is a dedication by the tetrarchs to Mithras as 'patron of his empire' (*ILS* 659); but neither of these gods ever became official. Elagabalus did, for a space, become official in Rome – but was rejected virtually everywhere else. Of the African gods, Dea Caelestis was successful outside Africa, but not her consort Saturn.

In short, specimen regional perspectives on late polytheism can be presented; but, beyond their intrinsic interest, there can be no assertion of their typicality until the whole 'landscape with figures' is assembled. One suspects, in fact, that everyday religion was always of a strongly local tinge, and that 'typicality', unless understood in broadly structural terms, is a chimaera. Where earlier generations of scholars sought evidence for 'personal' piety, attention is now increasingly, and with justifiably greater sensitivity to epigraphical than to literary evidence, focused on local religion, not forgetting the scope for individual pieties within that amalgam, or indeed the difficulty subjects of the later Roman empire would have

[36] Dunand (1979) 134–6.

experienced, if asked to distinguish 'indigenous' from 'Roman' with the clarity many scholars still expect.[37]

Tripolitania and Trier (with its environs) illustrate well the variety of the regional perspective. Both were deeply marked by the period from Severus to Constantine, Tripolitania because it bred Severus, and Trier as an imperial residence from the tetrarchy onwards.

1. Tripolitania

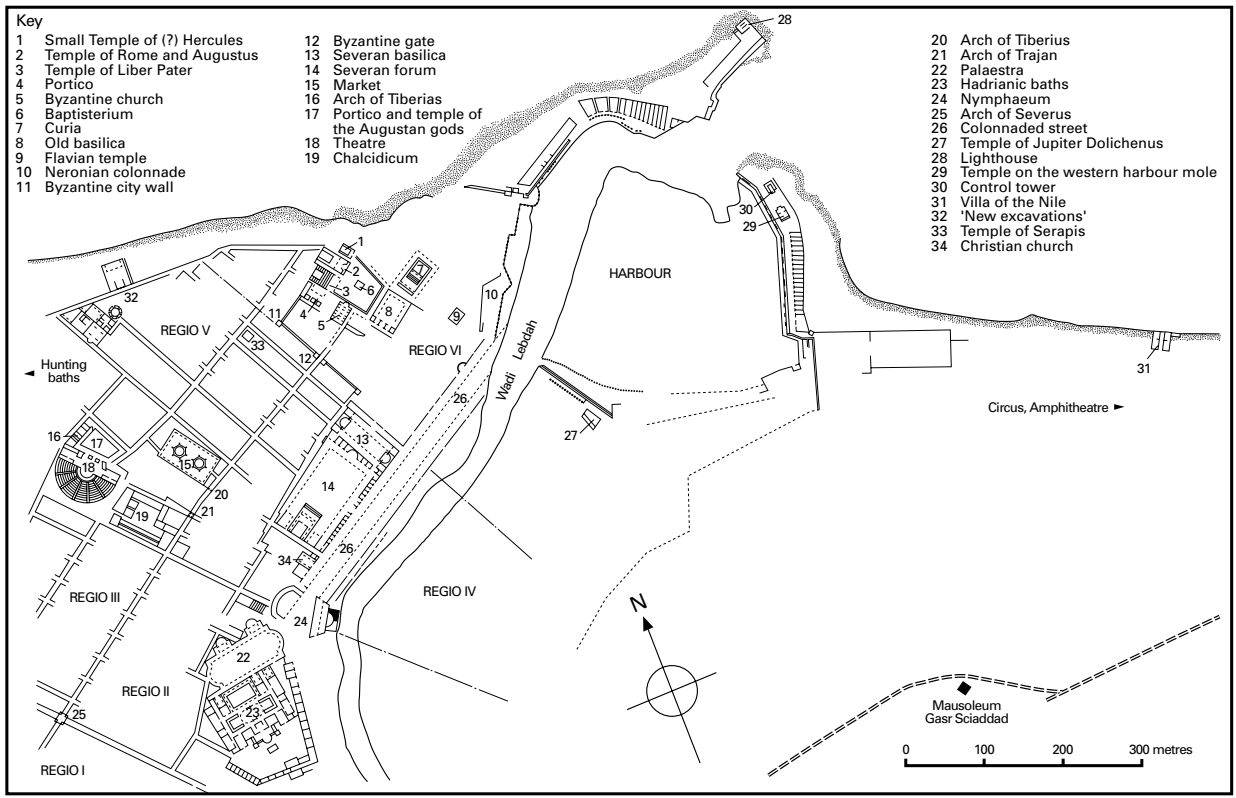
Tripolitania's three eponymous coastal cities, Sabratha, Oea and Lepcis Magna, were termini of trans-Saharan trade-routes and markets for grain and oil abundantly produced in their hinterland. They enjoyed close links with Carthage and Italy, and lay on the important if perilous North African coastal route between Carthage and Alexandria. Their already enviable prosperity was further boosted by the awesome building programme initiated by Septimius Severus in his native Lepcis, and completed by Caracalla. The excavations of Lepcis enable us to reconstruct to an extent impossible elsewhere the cultic topography of a Severan city (Map 9). There is comparative material from the excavations of Sabratha; and additional details are supplied by Oea, mostly inaccessible beneath modern Tripoli.[38]

The historic centre of Lepcis was the old forum, whose shrines offer a first orientation in Tripolitanian religion. Along the northwest side stood temples of Liber Pater, Rome and Augustus, and (?)Hercules, early imperial structures restored and embellished, as usual in Tripolitania, during the second century. The divinities honoured lead us straight to the heart of matters in this basically Libyan and Punic society, with a few Greek and many Roman admixtures, where Latin was the language of officialdom and the educated, but Punic was still commonly spoken (albeit inscribed, by the third century, only in the countryside). For Liber Pater and Hercules were identified with the Punic gods Shadrapa and Milk'ashtart, brought by the old Phoenician traders, but now Romanized in more than just name and housed in classical temples, a powerful factor in the continued vigour of the conqueror's religion.[39] They were the special patrons of Lepcis, where they are also to be seen on the arch of Severus, who first demonstrated among men what they had already shown among gods, that the conquered provincial could take the conquering Roman captive. At Sabratha, the cults of both divinities are attested at least into the 340s.[40] The mysteries of Liber

[37] For sensitive approaches to particular cities see Millar, *Near East* 304–08 (Emesa); Scheid (1995) (Trier).

[38] General works on Tripolitania: Haynes (1981); di Vita (1982); Mattingly (1995). Lepcis: Squarciapino (1966). Sabratha: Kenrick (1986). Religion: *IRT* esp. Index VII(a), 'Gods and goddesses'; Bénabou (1976) 259–380; Brouquier-Reddé (1992).

[39] Lipiński (1993). [40] *IRT* 7, 55, 104.



Map 9 Town plan of Lepcis Magna

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(Bacchus/ Dionysus) were also widely popular,[41] as elsewhere in the empire. One notes though that the shrines of Liber and Hercules in the old forum at Lepcis merely flank a larger sanctuary, that of Rome and Augustus, adorned both within and without by a splendid collection of imperial statuary. And though Severus put his *di patrii* on the Roman coinage, and built them a temple in the capital, the new forum he gave his native city contains only one temple, apparently for the Gens Septimia. The native gods are there too – lurking in the decorative sculptures. There was to be no doubting the supremacy of the imperial power, or the integrative role of Roman in relation to native cults.[42]

Continuing these public themes, the southwest side of Lepcis' old forum displayed a shrine of the emperor Antoninus Pius(?); in the middle stood the capitolium, perhaps;[43] and then a first-century temple of Cybele, whom Rome had long since forgiven her alien origins and accorded official favour. It is probably with this temple that we should associate a scattering of carvings and inscriptions sometimes identified as Mithraic; for Tripolitania was unreceptive to Mithras, in this recalling rather the Greek east than the Latin west.[44] There may though have been a temple of Isis. Even without her, Cybele and Liber–Dionysus will have ensured that the forum was a lively as well as a dignified place. Apart from frequent ceremonies and processions, one might also witness there dramatic recitations of stories about the gods, or hear some visiting rhetor speak on a religious subject, as when Apuleius delivered a well-attended encomium of Asclepius at Oea.[45] There were too 'the much-despised diviners of the market-place' (Artemid. I. *pr.*), the dream-interpreters, and magicians boastfully whipping up a clientele.[46] The gods looked out from their temples on this and much more.

Few public spaces were unadorned by some sort of shrine. The traveller who arrived by sea disembarked by the harbour-side temple of Jupiter Dolichenus, a Syrian deity especially favoured by soldiers and, like most of the oriental gods, never more popular than under the Severans. Also near the shore stood a temple for Neptune, such as was to make Augustine sarcastically enquire why one should pray to Neptune by the sea, when the salt waves themselves are more likely to lend ear than a lifeless statue.[47] The Chalcidicum, apparently a commercial complex, was graced by a shrine to the Numen Augusti and possibly Venus, mother of the Gens Iulia. In the same place a statue had been dedicated for the recovery of Antoninus Pius. In the Hadrianic baths, marble gods mixed with the crowd: mostly Olympians, though one might encounter Isis too, while Asclepius was

[41] Apul. *Apol.* 55. [42] Cf. Février (1976). [43] Barton (1982) 291–2.
[44] *CIMRM* 1.87–9; II.17–18; Daniels (1975) 271–2.
[45] Apul. *Apol.* 55; Aug. *Civ. Dei* II.4, *Ep.* 91.5.
[46] Cf. Alciphr. III.23; Polemon, *Phgn*, ed. Forster (Leipzig, 1893) 163.
[47] Aug. *Sermon* 26, ed. Dolbeau (*Contra Paganos*) ch. 18 (Dolbeau (1992) 104–5).

honoured by at least five statues thanks to his identification with the Punic healing god Eshmun, as well as to the more general vogue he enjoyed in his own right. Likewise in the Severan forum and basilica, Graeco-Roman mingled with local and oriental gods – Isis, Serapis, Asclepius and Battling Giants as well as Hercules and Liber Pater adorn the temple, the famous arcade medallions (whether of Medusa or some other horror is disputed) were there no doubt to ward off evil spirits, while the pilasters that framed the basilica's apses depicted the Labours of Hercules and the revelry of Bacchus (Liber Pater). Artemis of Ephesus had a shrine in the amphitheatre.

But of all public buildings other than temples, theatres were the most closely associated with religious ritual, for (as a Christian writer put it) 'the path to the theatre is from the temples and the altars, from that wretchedness of incense and blood, to the tune of pipes and trumpets; and the masters of the ceremonies are those two all-polluted adjuncts of funeral and sacrifice, the undertaker and the soothsayer' (Tert. *de Spect.* 10). As was widely customary in the Roman world, the Lepcis theatre's central axis was marked by an altar in the orchestra and a temple atop the cavea, respectively dedicated, in this instance, to [Liber?] Augustus and Ceres Augusta, the harvest's all-important patroness. Religious and other statues stood at many points of the building; and outside, in the theatre square, was a temple of the Di Augusti. Lepcis' devotion to the imperial cult, and wish to invoke the protection of the gods for its rulers, was everywhere affirmed.[48]

Non-relation to public space might also be significant. The temple of Serapis is just another building opening off a central street; and its inscriptions are all Greek, two of them recording how Serapis appeared in a dream to a sick man, and cured him. No doubt this is where the Alexandrian community gathered, and cultivated its own identity, just as it reserved special places in the amphitheatre. Sabratha's temple of Serapis and Isis also stands apart, tolerated rather than officially recognized, at the town's eastern end,[49] though its proximity to the sea was appropriate to the 'mistress of sea-faring' (*I. Cyme* 41.49) and convenient for the *Isidis Navigium*, which each spring marked the reopening of the sea to shipping. Maybe this part of Sabratha was favoured by mariners and aliens, who along with slaves seem to have supplied most of the west's Isiacs.[50] The use of Greek indicates that the cult of the Egyptian gods was not fully acclimatized, and is paralleled, if on a lesser scale, in the Asclepius cult, both at Lepcis and elsewhere in the Latin-speaking parts of the empire.[51] Another Egyptian god, Jupiter (originally Zeus) (H)Ammon of Siwa, was widely popular in

[48] Fishwick (1987–92) 1.2.446–54.

[49] Wild (1984) 1817–18; and cf. 1818–19: the 'temple of Serapis' on the forum is a hypothetical identification.

[50] MacMullen (1987) 182–5 esp. n. 494. [51] *Bull. Ép.* (1980) 335–6.

rural Tripolitania, but not in the coastal cities. With Africa's *deus magnus*, Baal Hammon–Saturn, surely and explicitly attested only on an inscribed marble basin from Sabratha,[52] Tripolitania seems a distinctly transitional zone, its innocence of Saturn paralleled by the absence of Cyrenaica's Greek gods.

After the 230s there was little temple-building in the three cities; but Tripolitanian polytheism survived in all its variety into the fourth century.[53] Earthquakes, nomad invasions and failure to effect repairs were probably more significant than Christianity as causes of the ruin that overcame many temples in the coastal cities during the latter part of the century. Inland, where there were no large cities, Christianity was to make even less impact than had Romanization. The rural cults of Tripolitania[54] all show strong Libyan and Punic traits. In the third-century camp at Bu Njem, for example, the official military cults were practised, but also that of the local genius; while in the temples belonging to the adjacent civilian settlement we encounter one Vanammon, otherwise unknown, alongside Mars Canapphar and Jupiter (H)Ammon, the latter widely revered by soldiers and other travellers along the desert highways of the frontier zone. The cult-centre of (H)Ammon's bull-headed progeny, Gurzil, may well have been at Ghirza, where a late antique temple recently excavated turned out to be strongly native in style, despite certain influences from the Mediterranean world. Ghirza seems to have remained a centre of polytheist devotion until the mid-sixth century.

2. *Trier*

Like Lepcis, Oea and Sabratha, Trier was near but not of the *limes*, and acquired imperial connections during our period. But it is the differences between Tripolitania and the Trier region that are more striking, especially Trier's populous countryside, whose religious life is well known to us not just because of the intenser efforts of archaeologists, but because Romano-Celtic religion was anyway strongly rural in emphasis, much attached to sacred trees and springs. Even in Trier itself, this as much as official Roman prejudice or the relative archaeological inaccessibility of the city centre is likely to be the reason why the more important known shrines are on the urban fringe.[55]

One of these is the temple of Mars, in a wooded valley just across the Mosel from Trier. Mars, Mercury and Apollo were the most widely revered

[52] But see also Squarciapino (1991–2). [53] Aug. *Epp.* 46–7; Brouquier-Reddé (1992) 215–16.

[54] Brogan and Smith (1984); Rebuffat (1990); Brouquier-Reddé (1992); Mattingly (1995) 38–9, 168, 209–13.

[55] Wightman (1970) esp. 208–49 and (1986); Heinen (1985) 178–200, 402–5; Merten (1985); Binsfeld *et al.* (1988); Scheid (1992) and (1995).

gods in northeastern Gaul, and their 'surnames' often make clear their native origin. At Trier, Mars was revered mainly as 'Lenus' and 'Iovantucarus', in a splendid second-century temple that combined native and classical elements. Here too were worshipped the Xulsigiae, spring-nymphs perhaps, who fed nearby healing-baths for pilgrims. One approached the temple up a steep road from the river, flanked as it neared the precincts by altars and exedras. Some of these were set up by tribal deputations on official visits to what was evidently a shrine of some political importance, a meeting-place for the community as a whole. First one paid one's respects to the god – there are charming votive statuettes of children carrying birds. Then one might visit the baths, or the theatre designed for ritual performances, declamation and so on – a common feature of sanctuaries both in this part of Gaul, and in other areas of the empire, such as Syria.[56] The priests were men of high social standing, the sort of people whom Rome everywhere sought to enmesh in subtle treason through official patronage of such ancestral rituals as had survived the initial conquest and the weeding out of unacceptable cults that had, in many parts of the empire, ensued. Celtic cults in Gaul, like Punic cults in Africa, were gradually assimilated to their Roman counterparts. Celtic and Punic gods, once aniconic, began to be depicted in statues. Romanitas seeped thus into the subconscious even of the unprivileged – to the confusion of scholars, who still debate whether Mars' role as healer, firmly attested in this region, is to be attributed to his Celtic or his Roman aspect.[57]

These ambiguities pervaded Treveran religion. A dedication to Asclepius made by an alien and another to Mars Victor Augustus, seem clearly Graeco-Roman; and the houses of the wealthy sported mosaics and frescoes with mythological or literary themes, which might be of more than aesthetic significance.[58] But Jupiter Optimus Maximus, to whom an inscription attributes a temple, may well be a native weather god. Trier will certainly have possessed temples of classical design, for the Capitoline triad, for example, and the emperor; but the only undisputed example found so far is the magnificent second-century building, its dedication unknown, that stood in the southeastern corner of the city, on the commanding site called Am Herrenbrünnchen. In the Altbach valley below, in striking contrast, lay a gaggle of over fifty shrines of native type, a square, polygonal or circular cella surrounded in most cases by the characteristic verandah. Some of the gods worshipped in this, the largest cultic area discovered north of the Alps, were either Roman, or more-or-less Romanized – the Gallo-Roman Jupiter, for example, depicted as so often in this part of

[56] MacMullen (1987) 39–42.

[57] On the ambiguities of Ares, see also Mitchell, *Anatolia* II. 28. On the remarkable vigour of local cults, especially in the west and from the mid-second to mid-third centuries, see Alföldy (1989) 78–82.

[58] Simon (1986); Heinen (1985) 359–62 (the later fourth-century Leda mosaic).

Gaul as a rider-god atop a column; and a Mercury who boasted a fine bronze statuette of wholly classical type. But the majority were mother goddesses, water divinities and other rustics who would not have been at ease in the city centre. No doubt they ended up in this green valley, eventually included within the later second- or earlier third-century walls, by a mixture of pressure and preference. There were also what seem to have been priests' houses, and near the precinct's entrance a cultic theatre, abandoned though in the second century, and replaced by a house which in the third century came to accommodate a Mithraeum. The Altbachtal, which reached its highest point of development in the third century, kept going until the time of Gratian, a marketplace of gods, and a symbol of polytheism's anti-exclusivism and convenient imprecision. For to worship 'all the gods', as the Apolline oracles of Didyma and Claros commanded,[59] allowed room both for those sophisticated minds who felt that through the many they worshipped the One,[60] and for the simpler majority, who continued to believe in the gods' individuality, and the homely merits of shopping around. The Tripolitanian who addressed a prayer to an image that represented at once Liber, Amor and Apollo (*IRT* 299), may stand for the infinite shades of syncretism that lay in between.

The roads by which one left Trier, or any other town, were lined with tombs, and the traveller might observe the rites of the dead and ponder their pathetic inscriptions. Some of the tombs were theologically instructive: a splendid third-century specimen at Igel near Trier depicts the passage of the soul to the next world, as well as the intricacies of its owner's cloth-business here below. Once in the countryside, one found shrines (with which fairs were often associated) near tribal boundaries, in villages, next to villas, and in association with hill-tops, springs or sacred trees and groves. One left one's offering – usually a coin – by the entrance to the cella, and passed on. A big and prosperous villa, or even a smaller one on a main road, might contain something more exotic – a Mithraeum, perhaps, though on the whole the Trier region was slower to learn about oriental religions than, say, Mainz on the Rhine *limes*, with its floating military population. And there were occasional larger shrines that attracted pilgrims and the sick, as at Hochscheid, on a well-watered, wooded hill south of the Trier–Bingen road.[61] Here a Romano-Celtic temple with fine statues of Apollo (Grannus) and his consort Sirona stood over a spring where worshippers came and drank, leaving an offering. The spring also fed a bath-house used by pilgrims, who could stay in an adjacent hostel, though there is no suggestion of incubation.

[59] See above, p. 528 n. 16.
[60] *IME* 165; Aug. *Ep.* 16.4 and *Civ. Dei* IV.11.
[61] Weisgerber (1975).

Hochscheid fell out of use in the later third century, a time of unrest hereabout, and was destroyed by Christians during the fourth. But many rural sanctuaries continued in use through the fourth century. As for Trier itself, the studious neutrality in religious matters of the polytheist panegyrist who spoke there before Constantine in 313 (*Pan. Lat.* XII(IX)) was probably a response to what was known or guessed about the emperor's changing views; but the local situation remained undecided and transitional for much longer, probably at least until the end of the fourth century.[62].

III. CONCLUSION

The 'grass roots' perspective, leaning heavily on archaeology, helps us towards a detailed view of polytheism as a set of social acts, but tells us less about the beliefs those acts reflected.

Cultic activity, which is attested throughout our period, is rightly taken as proof that the public polytheism of the cities, at least, was still maintained. But such activity should be seen, not just as a continuation of the way things had been in (say) the second century, but also as a stage on the way to the fourth century. And in the fourth century, civic cult was offered to Christian emperors, who called themselves *Pontifex Maximus*, just as lesser Christian notables held priesthoods in their local civic temples. The persistence of civic cult proves, in other words, the liveliness of the cities, but not necessarily the vigour of their gods. And it is instructive to compare the structure of the civic cults with that of the empire and the Christian church. Reacting to external pressure on the frontiers, growing local particularism after long periods of rule from Rome, and the army's tendency to usurp and fragment imperial authority, Diocletian decentralized important aspects of the exercise of power at the top, but within a firmly collegial framework. The church's formula, whereby locally powerful bishops met periodically in synod, was a similarly flexible approach to the problem of how to establish, then maintain, institutional and doctrinal coherence over a vast geographical area. But in this hierarchical as well as corporate world, polytheism remained obstinately cellular, tied to its inborn sense of place, and to the individuals or groups who inhabited those places.

We should not of course assume that polytheism's attachment to place, its localism, was an unqualified disadvantage. Seen in certain lights, its diversity was a source of strength, and anyway can hardly have bothered very much the peasant who never left his village, and knew – but knew well – only a few gods. But on the more cosmopolitan it imposed an embarrassingly wide choice, and constant anxiety that one might be neglecting some god who would exact revenge (Constantine, *Oratio ad Sanctos* (ed. Heikel) III.3;

[62] Brink (1997).

Aug. *Civ. Dei* IV.11). This is why polytheists' 'religious experience' was so unlike that of Christians. It was not an approach to a given idea of the transcendent, expressed as God, Christ or the Virgin Mother. Instead it was the unpredictable experience of 'at last understanding' the power and significance or even the very identity of, and hence one's own obligations towards, a particular god who had perhaps hitherto hovered at the edge of one's consciousness, or even been 'unknown' (*agnōstos*).[63] The attainment of such understanding could be a striking experience – one thinks of Lucius' vision of Isis at the beginning of the last book of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the anonymous traveller's vision of Mandulis at Kalabsha (see chapter 17*b*, p. 548), or this dedicatory inscription attached to a statue of Cybele–Caelestis at Carvoran in Britain:

> The Virgin in her heavenly place rides upon the Lion; bearer of corn, inventor of law, founder of cities, by whose gifts it is Man's good lot to know the gods [*nosse . . . deos*]: therefore she is the Mother of the Gods, Peace, Virtue, Ceres, the Syrian Goddess, weighing life and laws in her balance. Syria has sent the constellation seen in the heavens to Libya to be worshipped: thence have we all learned. Thus has understood, led by thy godhead [*ita intellexit numine inductus tuo*], Marcus Caecilius Donatianus, serving as tribune in the post of prefect by the emperor's gift.
>
> (*RIB* 1791, second or early third century; cf. Stephens (1984))

Happy experiences such as these were the punctuation in a wider anxiety. But the growing frequency of dedications 'to all the gods' at least gave vent to this anxiety, and also served to express a catholicism inherent in traditional polytheism. Monotheism, admittedly, had both logical and practical advantages; so too did the revelations on which it rested. Hence not only the spread of monotheist tendencies within polytheism itself, but also the growing interest of third-century polytheists in Judaism, the only traditional and therefore respectable religion that taught a single God. And of course this interest gradually spread to Christianity too – an upstart religion, but free of Judaism's narrowly ethnic character. In Asia Minor, epigraphy illustrates the emergence, even in remote and rural places, of milieux whose devotion to a 'highest god' seems to have been built on common ground shared by polytheism, Judaism and Christianity.[64] And the experience of 'at last understanding' might of course lead one, not to another of the gods of polytheism, but to the one God of Christianity.[65] We should not, though, be tempted to go further than this and assume that the politico-social crisis of the third century was in itself bound to be lethal to polytheism, which had survived equally acute problems in the past. After all, polytheism did

[63] For such uncertainties, see Paus. I.1.4; V.14.8; X.4.4; Eus. *Vit. Const.* I.28.1; Robert (1980) 399. For a different interpretation see Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 34.

[64] Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.31–51. [65] E.g. Eus. *Vit. Const.* I.32.3.

not claim to explain everything. It presented, if we except the philosophers, no grand programme of ultimate truths; and that which was not asserted could hardly be invalidated. Polytheism did claim to be able to handle divine *dynamis*; but the problems of doing that were neither more nor less tractable in the third century than they had been earlier. The difference between the third century A.D. and, say, the chaos of hellenistic times was that there was now a serious alternative religion. But Christianity triumphed more because of what it offered than because of what polytheism lacked. The proof is that, at least until Augustine and the aftermath of Rome's fall in 410, Christian apologists themselves attacked polytheism rather for what they considered to be its failure to depict and worship God worthily than for having failed to meet its own goals or been sapped by inner crisis. The increasing numbers of men and women who abandoned polytheism did so not, in this period at least, because the religion that was their birth-right had become unviable, but because of a hard-nosed calculation of Christianity's superior effectiveness and responsiveness to their needs. The political élite, in particular, was coming to feel that what aspired to be a single and universal empire ought to worship a single and universal god.[66]

No less attractive than Christianity's monotheism was the example of love and compassion that Christ offered for imitation, another element hard to find in non-philosophical polytheism – though it was much esteemed when offered, for instance in the cult of the *philanthrōpotatos* Asclepius. As an autocrat and a man of passionate faith, Constantine was deeply attracted. And what the emperor wanted counted, by now, for a lot in matters of religion. But at the first Christian emperor's death, and for decades to come, the many gods could still be plausibly represented as Rome's natural defenders.

[66] Fowden (1993a).

CHAPTER 18A

CHRISTIANITY, A.D. 70–192

MARK EDWARDS

It would be difficult, and almost disingenuous, to undertake a history of 'the church' within this period as though it were one developing entity. It is generally admitted that the structure of the churches differed widely from place to place, and that what was plausible speculation in one city might be heresy in another. Yet this is equally true of other topics which are frequently approached with a presumption of uniformity: we cannot infer, because we have a series of rescripts from emperors, that each would have been familiar with, or obedient to, the policy of the last;[1] nor when so much argument persists as to the 'causes of persecution', can we assume that this phenomenon or its causes were the same in every city. This chapter will attempt to give due weight to the diversity of regions, and will not aspire to a universal narrative. If, as is so often the case in the study of antiquity, we do not know how to characterize those 'happenings' of which we have some evidence, we can hardly expect to ascertain 'why' they happened, and perhaps not even 'when'.

1. Syrian region (outside Antioch)

The book of Revelation and the three synoptic gospels all allude to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, which, involving as it did the dissolution of the temple, could be seen as a divine anathema against Judaism. The Christians of the city fled to Pella (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* III.5.2), and from this point history can say little of them. Eusebius gives a continuous list of bishops after James (*Hist. Eccl.* III.11 etc.), but since the latter was not in fact a bishop, but the chairman of the presbyters, this information carries little weight.[2] Claims are often made for the perseverance of a 'Jewish Christianity' in this area, and the Ebionites,[3] who are said to have practised poverty

[1] Rives (1995) 255 notes that Ulpian made the first collection; but cf. n. 23 below.

[2] *Acts* 15:23 and 21:18 etc.; Campbell (1993).

[3] Epiphanius, *Panarion* XXX etc. For materials on 'Jewish Christianity' see Klijn and Reinink (1977), and for recent scepticism Taylor (1990).

in imitation of Christ without accepting his divinity, are sometimes represented as custodians of the most primitive Christian teaching. Yet even the earliest writings of the New Testament presuppose the adoration of Christ as Lord, if not as God, and if this cult was not spontaneous, no analogies from the ancient world can explain how it arose. Much that we are told about the Ebionites is certainly fictitious – the name of their founder Ebion, for example, which is nothing but the Hebrew term for a pauper – and unless that were a community of Euhemerists, we must suppose that they worshipped Christ along with the rest of the primitive church.

It may have been in Syria that Lucian first encountered Christianity; for not only was he a native of that province, but he says that it was in Syria that the Cynic Peregrinus formed a temporary alliance with the church. Peregrinus was to die upon a pyre of his own construction at Olympia; this was not the act of a philosopher, Lucian tells us, but of a lunatic and a criminal, for whom the worshippers of a 'crucified sophist' were the fittest company (*Peregrinus* 13). In fact he had been imprisoned as a Christian by the governor of Syria, but released with 'the usual penalties' (*ibid.* 14), which presumably means a flogging. Even the church was later to expel him for the eating of 'forbidden foods' (*ibid.* 15): this passage implies that Lucian was familiar with some ceremony of excommunication, and also with the prohibition of things sacrificed to idols (*eidolothuta*) which appears to have been ubiquitous in the second-century church.[4]

In the great intellectual centre of Apamea, the philosopher Numenius is said to have shown some knowledge of the gospels (Origen, *c. Cels.* IV.51). It was also from Apamea that the teachings of the Elchasaites were dispersed to other provinces (Hippolytus, *Ref.* IX.13–16). This sect, which dated its origins to a vision received in A.D. 100 from Christ and the Holy Spirit, abjured both sexual intercourse and the use of meat in order to emancipate the soul from the fatal bondage which the stars were thought to impose upon the flesh. An excessive pursuit of continence was also ascribed to Tatian, a pupil of the orthodox martyr Justin, who in later life is said to have founded the encratitic movement in his homeland (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I.28.1). Renouncing meat and marriage, he averred that the material creation was the work of a lesser God (Origen, *De Oratione* 28.5). He did not, however, quarrel with the basis of orthodoxy, for he compiled a *Diatessaron* or *Harmony of the Four Gospels*. The title suggests that, like his other works, it was composed in Greek, although it was in Syriac-speaking areas that it became a standard text.[5]

[4] See Edwards (1989b) on Lucian's plausibility; Downing (1993) on Christians and Cynics.
[5] Moliton (1969).

An encratitic tendency, and therefore a Syrian provenance, have been claimed for the gospel of Thomas, now extant as a Coptic text from Nag Hammadi in Egypt.[6] The document from this site which would appear to have been most popular in antiquity, the *Apocryphon of John*, is also thought to have originated in the eastern provinces. It is perhaps the first epitome of a developed Gnostic system, and asserts that the divine reflection, falling into matter, produced the physical universe as a lurid imitation of the spiritual realm. This and related texts describe the soul's ascent through ceremonies and visions to the realm of perfect freedom; by contrast the necessity of ecclesiastical discipline is the keynote of the *Didache*, or 'Teaching of the Two Ways'.[7] It lays down tests for distinguishing true prophets from the impostors, who roam from church to church in quest of food, accommodation or pecuniary gain (13). Other hypocrites are alleged to keep the Jewish fasts (8), perhaps in order to conceal their Christianity. The work is early, as bishops are not yet distinct from presbyters (15): it prescribes for confession, baptism and the eucharist, and gives the Lord's Prayer in its longest form (6–9).

The church of Edessa flattered itself with legends of an ancient and extraordinary foundation. The correspondence of Abgar V and Jesus is recorded by Eusebius, who adds that Thomas was sent to cure the king of his disease (*Hist. Eccl.* I.13). The figure of greatest note within this period is Bardaisan, who in his Greek form Bardesanes is mentioned by Eusebius as the author of a syncretistic heresy (*Hist. Eccl.* IV.30.1). He was admired, however, for his polemic against astrology, much of which survives in Greek and Syriac: his argument, familiar from Carneades, was that if different zones are governed by the stars, we should expect to find the same destiny befalling all men of a single race.[8]

2. *Antioch*

But in Syria, the metropolis was, as everywhere, the chief centre of Christianity: indeed, it was at Antioch that the sect received its name (Acts 11:26). We possess a list of bishops, but most of the names are ciphers after Peter and Ignatius. Peter's tenure may be legendary, though the apocryphal works ascribed to him, the *Preaching* and the *Gospel*, had more currency here than in any other region.[9] Ignatius has bequeathed a vivid portrait of

[6] Quispel (1981); text in Robinson (1990) 124–38. On the *Apocryphon of John*, see Quispel (1979) and Robinson (1990) 104–23.

[7] Provenance and date are discussed in Audet (1958).

[8] See Drijvers (1966), and *FGrH* IIIC. 648–56.

[9] Dobschutz (1893); Hennecke and Schneemelcher (1992) 36–40. The *Preaching* is partly incorporated in the Clementine novels, centred on Caesarea. Cf. n. 11 below.

himself in the seven letters which are generally agreed to be authentic.[10] Five of these were written to Asian churches, one to Polycarp and one to Rome; thus they tell us little of his own province, except that there must have been some form of official persecution there in the early second century. Proud as he was to be following Paul to Rome, Ignatius must have been a citizen; his only designation for himself is bishop of Syria (*Rom.* 2.2), which must mean, not that Syria was a single church, but rather that the Antiochene incumbent had already acquired a metropolitan status. Ignatius was aware that his passion for martyrdom was eccentric, and he may not have been expressing common sentiments when he calls himself a ransom for the community (*Eph.* 21.1 etc.) and predicts that death will bring him straight to Christ (*Rom.* 5.3 etc.).

Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, composed the longest apology from this period. Appealing to Greek philosophy in support of Christian teachings, he also produced a learned demonstration that the Pentateuch is superior in antiquity (and thus, of course in value) to the literature of Greece. He is the earliest writer to speak of the Godhead as a Trinity, a *trias* (*Ad Autolycum* II.15 etc.), and says more than most contemporary apologists of esoteric topics such as resurrection, judgement and the Fall. Sarapion (appointed *c.* 190) is the latest Bishop of Antioch from our period (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.12). His action in first allowing, then proscribing the circulation of the so-called *Gospel of Peter* need not indicate that Antioch had no canon; on the contrary, it was only by appeal to works admitted to be canonical that he was able to pronounce its doctrine spurious.[11] If use had implied canonicity, the work would have been scrutinized more closely at the outset, and could not have been so easily suppressed.

3. Proconsular Asia

Among the numerous apostolic churches of the Troad Ephesus had the strongest claim on Paul and also purported to house the tombs of John the Apostle and the Virgin Mary. Moreover it was said to have been the home of John the Elder, to whom some ascribed the Book of Revelation (Eus. *HE* III.39.4ff.). Ephesus is one of the seven churches denounced in this book for their laxity in a time of (unidentified) persecution: the others are Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyateira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.[12] The consumption of pagan offerings is now treated as a heresy, since the idols had been fed with the blood of Christians (2.14 etc.); an allusion to a 'synagogue of Satan' in Philadelphia and Smyrna (2.9, 3.9) may imply that some were

[10] On the milieu of Ignatius, see Bammel (1982); on his metropolitan status, von Harnack (1908) 463; and for the following speculations, Edwards (1995).

[11] See n. 40 below. Cf. Origen, *De Principiis* I, *pr.* 8.

[12] Sweet (1979) 21–9 dates it to the reign of Domitian; cf. n. 39 below.

hiding Christianity under the forms of Judaism. The same two churches are censured by Ignatius for observing sabbaths without the circumcision (*Phil.* 6.9; *Smyrn.* 5.1; cf. *Magn.* 8–9). Here, as in Tralles, Ephesus and Magnesia, the apostates were urging the 'docetic' claim that the sufferings of Christ had been illusory – a position rebutted also in the First Epistle of John (1.1ff.). For Ignatius his own approaching martyrdom is a witness to the Passion (*Trall.* 10 etc.), and Christ himself is the 'archive' which contains all truths required for our salvation (*Phil.* 8.2). He is present in the eucharist, at which the whole church is gathered as a sacrificial body around its bishop (*Eph.* 5 etc.). The bishop is sovereign even in his silence (*Eph.* 6.1), and the presbyters and deacons must be treated with the reverence due to God and his apostles (*Trall.* 3.1 etc.); any other gathering is a 'pharmacy of death' (*Trall.* 6.1). We cannot therefore doubt that the threefold order was established in the towns of western Asia; but, as Bauer observes,[13] the tone in which the autocratic theories of this bishop are propounded make it clear that they were not yet commonplaces, even there.

By common consent of scholars, it is Christians who are denounced for their lack of culture in the forty-sixth oration of the pagan sophist Aelius Aristides. His invectives may have been sharpened by his devotion to Asclepius,[14] but may also reflect the popular antipathy to Christians in his native town of Smyrna, which led between 146 and 167 to the burning of the aged bishop Polycarp on a charge of atheism.[15] Philippus the Asiarch was the servant of the mob (*Martyrium Polycarpi* 12.2), and we do not hear that the other Christians put themselves in danger when they asked for Polycarp's body, though (as in all martyrologies) the petition was refused (*Mart.* 17). The day of Polycarp's death is called a 'great sabbath' in our narrative (*Mart.* 21), which may mean that his death was metaphorically perceived as an Easter sacrifice. Good Friday in the Asiatic calendar coincided with the date of the Jewish Passover, the fourteenth day of Nisan, and a defence of this 'Quartodeciman' observance is attributed to Melito of Sardis (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.26.3). Yet his surviving treatise *On the Pascha* is remarkable, not for this, but for its imagery, its rhythms and its axiom – which governs all later Christian typology – that Christ is the Word who supersedes the Law.[16] Melito is one of five apologists from Asia who are said to have petitioned Marcus Aurelius: the safest deduction is that apologetic had now become a fashionable genre. Delivery of such speeches would have been perilous

[13] Bauer (1971) 60–94.

[14] Gresswell (1834) 312–13 notes the sudden celebrity of this deity where Christianity was strong. It was cursed by a false devotee of Asclepius: Lucian, *Alexander* 25.

[15] All depends on the date of the proconsulate of Statilius Quadratus (*Mart.* 21). Barnes (1967) is not so exhaustive as Lightfoot (1889) 628–702 or Gresswell (1834) 243–337. The meaning of 'great sabbath' is intrinsic to these discussions.

[16] Hall (1979). Jews in Sardis may have influenced the *De Pascha* more than, e.g. those of Ephesus influenced Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*: J. M. Lieu (1996) 209–35.

in those circumstances in which it was not superfluous, and we must look with scepticism on itineraries devised by modern scholarship which enable the patient autocrat to hear all five within the space of months.[17]

Justin, at the end of his *First Apology*, quotes two rescripts, one from Hadrian and one from Antoninus Pius, which are said to have been written in reply to pagan demands for greater powers against the Christians in this region. Both imply that Christians should not be brought to court unless they are guilty of other crimes, and say that calumnious imputation of Christianity should be punished. Of the two, that of Hadrian, which is addressed by name to the governor and says little in praise of Christians, is more likely to be authentic. The pagan miracle-hunter, Phlegon of Tralles, found a place for those of Christ and fixed the date of the eclipse which coincided with his death (Origen, *c. Cels.* II.14, 33, 59). The first ecclesiastical historian was Papias, to whom we owe our account of the tombs at Ephesus, our earliest information on the order and composition of the three synoptic gospels, and a sensuous picture of the world to come.[18]

4. Phrygia

Remains of Christianity in this region are prolific, the most famous being the epitaph of Abercius Marcellus, which celebrates his labours in defence of orthodoxy.[19] Yet the epithet Cataphrygian became the exclusive label of the heresy that Abercius had striven to put down. It had two heads – the raptures of Montanus, who purported to speak with the voice of the Holy Spirit, and the prophecies of Priscilla and Maximilla, which were inspired by the appearance of the celestial Jerusalem above their native village of Pepuza. No doubt there were other outbursts, for such charismatic movements never have a single origin, and modern attempts to find one are as vain and contradictory as those of Epiphanius and Eusebius.[20] There were certainly many prophets claiming immediate inspiration and resistant to the clergy of Asian bishoprics, who undertook to cure them by a form of exorcism. In the light of these excesses, Christian leaders learned to argue that a seer cannot be inspired by God unless he retains possession of his mind (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.18.9 etc.).

We ought not to exaggerate the anomalous characteristics of the Montanists: we have no evidence of female leadership or a general expectation of the End.[21] No weight can be attached to the tradition that Montanus

[17] Though Grant (1988b) may be right to suggest that a change in Marcus' policy was inspired by the revolt of Avidius Cassius.

[18] Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* III.33.3; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* III.36 and 39; Jerome, *De Viris Illustr.* 18.

[19] Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 276–7 notes that he found co-religionists even beyond the Euphrates in Nisibis.

[20] Freeman-Grenville (1954); but cf. Barnes (1970).

[21] Students of historiography may contrast Trevett (1996) with Schepelern (1929).

was a eunuch of Cybele; it was another sect who endeavoured to impose a Christian *gnosis* on a pagan hymn to Attis. The Naassenes, professing to hold no deity in such reverence as Man and the Son of Man, were none the less prepared to find epiphanies of Christ in Attis, Adam, Dionysus and Osiris (Hippolytus, *Ref.* V.6–11). Their thesis of a constant peregrination of the soul between the waters of the intellect and matter was supposed to be the key that would unlock the common store of truth in every sacred text.

5. *Bithynia and Pontus*

The churches of Bithynia may have been among those addressed in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, but their history begins for us with the governorship of Pliny (*c.* A.D. 112). Suspicious, like his master Trajan, of all nocturnal assemblies, he responded to anonymous reports of Christian gatherings by summoning the accused and asking whether they were, or ever had been, members of the sect (*Ep.* X.96.3). Those who would neither deny nor renounce their faith were put to death, or, if they were citizens, imprisoned (*ibid.* 4); denial would not suffice unless accompanied by a sacrifice to the emperor and a curse on the name of Christ such as no Christian should be able to pronounce (*ibid.* 5). For all his harshness, Pliny was unable to discover any mischief in the Christians, except that their religion was a fable, and that they met at dawn to share a meal, forswear wrongdoing and sing a hymn to Christ 'as to a god' (*ibid.* 7). He says nothing, and so presumably heard nothing, about an official hierarchy. Two things appeared to justify his measures: the contumacy implied by a refusal to perform sacrifice, and the revival which he had brought about in the trade of local shrines (*ibid.* 10; cf. Acts 19:25).

Pliny thinks it possible – and he alludes to previous trials – that the profession of Christianity, *nomen ipsum*, is a capital offence (*Ep.* X.96.2). Trajan agrees, though he does not name the author of this doctrine or speak of a *religio non licita*. He takes for granted Pliny's method of trial by *cognitio*,[22] but tempers his severity by stating that the Christians are not to be sought out, that the defendant has the right to meet his accuser in open court and that denial with sacrifice should be sufficient for acquittal (*Ep.* X.97.2). His rescript thus confirmed, but neither created nor explained, the legal status of the Christians; its unusual publication may have been partially responsible for the clemency of his immediate successors.[23]

Pontus, according to Lucian's *Alexander* (25), was full of Christians by the middle of the second century, and here it was that Marcion drew the strongest of all dichotomies between suffering and salvation. The world

[22] On the legal process see de Ste Croix (1963) 17; Ramsay (1893) 216–17.
[23] It is cited by Tertull. *Apol.* 11.6, and from this by Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* III.33.3.

and the law, he taught, were the creation of a God who was just, not good, whereas the Father of Jesus Christ was good and, in the teeth of justice, sent his Son to redeem our spirits from a gaol that he had had no part in building. The flesh was irredeemable, and the powers who rule the body were deceived by a phantasmal crucifixion. Gnostic in his basic tenets, Marcion could not stomach the Gnostic allegories which justified the Old Testament; even his New Testament included only parts of our Pauline corpus and a short redaction of Luke. His churches, which were numerous, evinced a high degree of organization, and it is sometimes held that his teaching forced the episcopate to tighten discipline and define its canon.[24] It must be said, however, that he drew less fire than others from the episcopal theologians of the second century.

6. Greece

The heresies and dissensions which beset the church at Corinth in the time of Paul retained their vigour during the next half-century, to judge by the letter from Clement of Rome exhorting them to humility, mutual charity and a willingness to suffer for the faith. Clement speaks of presbyters in Corinth (*1 Clement* 1.3), but these are still identical with presbyters (*ibid.* 42). By the time of Marcus Aurelius there was a monarchic bishop, Dionysius, who wrote as a metropolitan to Sparta, Crete and Athens, encouraging the latter when they had lost their own bishop in a persecution (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.23). The successor of this bishop, one Quadratus, has been tentatively identified with the Quadratus whose 'Apology', composed in the reign of Hadrian, based its argument on the miracles of Christ.[25] If this was the first apology, the second too was ascribed to an Athenian philosopher Aristides,[26] whose work survives in three discordant versions. If the Greek papyrus is the original, he subjected his fellow-countrymen to a new form of ethnography, which ignored the polar distinction between barbarian and Hellene. Instead the world is divided into Christians, Jews and polytheists, with a further subdivision of the last into Greeks, Egyptians and Chaldaeans. This treatise may be one source of the notion that the Christians were a 'third race', which remained incomprehensible to the Latin-speaking Christians of the west.[27]

Also styled an Athenian and a philosopher in the manuscripts of his work is Athenagoras, whose *Legatio* is addressed to Marcus Aurelius and to Commodus under titles which suggest a date of A.D. 176. It mimics the petitions that were publicly delivered to the emperor by the orators of this epoch on behalf of their own communities; but here the community is

[24] Discussed in Blackmann (1948).
[25] See Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.3 on the apologist and IV.23.2 on the bishop.
[26] Geffcken (1907) 1–96; Grant (1988a) 35–9.
[27] Harnack (1908) 266–78: the origin is probably Matt. 21:43. Cf. n. 52 below.

the worldwide church, and the plea is not for bounty but for tolerance. The length of the speech, its mixture of different genres and the admission of criminality implied in the very act of composition all suggest that the inscription to the emperors is a fiction.[28] Nevertheless Athenagoras may have hoped that pagan readers would be moved by his attempt to show from Plato and the Orphics that the Christian faith was genuine philosophy, and closer to the heart of the Greek tradition than the rites and myths of civic polytheism. Christianity means for Athenagoras a belief in the uniqueness and transcendence of the deity, who generates his logos as his instrument in the making and salvation of the world (*Legatio* 10 etc.). His defence of the resurrection was postponed to another treatise.[29] From his denial that Christians practised cannibalism or incest, we may infer that he had read Fronto, or else had heard some tidings from Lyons (see below).

7. Egypt

Despite the legendary visit of St Mark, and a spurious letter ascribed to Hadrian in the *Historia Augusta* (*Firmus* 8), there remains no credible record of an episcopate in Egypt before the end of the second century. Eusebius professes to know the names of all the bishops, but he attaches no biography to any before the beginning of the third century. The thesis of Walter Bauer, that the earliest Christianity in this province was of the kind that we call Gnostic, is not weakened by discoveries of Old Testament papyri,[30] since Gnostic writings also made much use of the Jewish canon. The Rylands papyrus, dated to about A.D. 130 is proof of an early readership for the Gospel of John in Egypt,[31] but its first interpreters seem to have been Basilides and Heracleon, both notorious masters of heterodoxy. By the end of our period, there was a catechetical school in Alexandria, whose teacher Pantaenus is considered orthodox; but the influence of Philo was always certain to encourage speculation, and Pantaenus' pupil Clement speaks of heretics like Theodotus with qualified respect.[32]

'Gnostic', as Clement's usage shows, was not the appellation of one sect, still less a pejorative term applied by adversaries, but an epithet that was likely to be claimed by anyone teaching a higher doctrine. Gnosis was the necessary perfection of faith or *pistis,* but, since different teachers gave it a different content, each was apt to declare that his own was true and that of others spurious. As a noun which in itself means simply 'knowledge', it could signify the recondite erudition that was needed to decipher a sacred text, or a private revelation from angelic powers, or a secret tradition handed

[28] Buck (1996) argues this position well against Schoedel and Barnes.
[29] Though Grant (1954) denies him the extant treatise *De Resurrectione*.
[30] Roberts (1979) 49–53 against Bauer (1971) 44–59.
[31] Roberts (1935) and (1938). [32] On the school see Van den Hoek (1997).

down by pupils of the Apostles. It was only the partisans of a particular variety of gnosis who alleged that other kinds were being hawked about as all-sufficient nostrums of salvation, without reference to moral principles or way of life.

Basilides, for example, was accused of fatalism, but also of the incompatible tenet that our sufferings in the present life are the penalty of our misdemeanours in a previous one.[33] He was said to have reckoned martyrdom among these punishments, and to have treated the denial of Christianity under persecution as a mark of gnosis. Nevertheless, it is not denied that his teaching had produced at least one martyr. Charges of promiscuous copulation at the love-feasts of the Basilidean Christians must be treated with suspicion, as must accounts of even lewder practices introduced by his disciples Isidorus and Carpocrates (Clem. *Strom.* III.1–2 ff.). According to the system that Hippolytus ascribes to Basilides (*Ref.* VII.21–7), the realm of matter is indeed condemned but it is pervaded by the Spirit, the third emission or filiation of God the eternal Father, whose task it is to liberate and perfect the willing soul. Suffering is the means of this perfection, but it comes from the benign will of the deity, not from error, chance or the evil government of the world.

Equally monistic is the system that was generally ascribed to Valentinus, though details may have been added by Heracleon, Ptolemaeus and Theodotus.[34] In this myth, the Godhead is a fullness or *pleroma* of thirty aeons, temporarily diminished by the transgression of its lowest element, Wisdom or Sophia. The offspring of her passion is first matter, then the ignorant (though not wholly wicked) Demiurge, who aspires to create a spiritual universe, but only contrives to entomb the human soul in a godless world. This fable is most probably an allegory of the soul's fall from the contemplation of God into a futile cult of idols, or in Israel's case an equally superstitious veneration of the Law in its application to the flesh. The Demiurge is the God of Plato's *Timaeus,* but also the Creator as erroneously conceived by Judaism. Paul had spoken of Christ as one who came in the 'fulness of time' (Gal. 4:4; cf. I Cor. 10:11), who was bodily inhabited by God's fullness (Col. 2:9), and who became through death the firstfruits of redemption (I Cor. 15:20 ff.). The Valentinian myth draws on these passages when it states that it is Christ who redeems Sophia and divides the world from the Godhead by his cross. Newly discovered texts, which may originate from the Valentinian school of the second century, insist upon the efficacy of the cross in our salvation and do not entirely exclude a resurrection in the flesh.[35] There would therefore be no basis for denying the occasional necessity of martyrdom, and Valentinus appears to be an

[33] Lohr (1996) is now the definitive treatment.
[34] Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I–II; Hippolytus, *Ref.* II; Clem. *Excerpta ex Theodoto*; Markschies (1992).
[35] For the *Gospel of Truth* and *Epistle to Rheginus*, see Robinson (1990) 38–57.

early and sound expositor of Paul. The Valentinians differed from the main church in attempting to explain what the bishops handed down by rule, and the Commentary on John composed by Heracleon was probably the first such treatment of a Christian text.

8. Italy

Paul's letter to the Romans is our first evidence of a Christian congregation in that city. No bishop or other official is indicated, and some readers have surmised that it was addressed to a loose sodality of churches.[36] It is striking that Ignatius makes no reference to a bishop when he writes to Rome, as he does in his correspondence with the Asiatic churches. Nor do Clement and Soter (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.23.7), when they write as acknowledged leaders of the Roman Christians, give themselves an ecclesiastical title. Both are included in Irenaeus' catalogue of presbyters who are said to have succeeded one another without a break since the first was ordained by Paul and Peter (*Adv. Haer.* III.3.2); here again, however, there is no word of a bishop, still less of any monarchical role for Peter. Even after the end of the second century, Hippolytus could rail against 'Pope' Callistus (as we call him) in a fashion that has led some modern interpreters to see Callistus rather as the chairman of a synod than as the sole head of the Christians in Rome.[37]

The writings of Paul and Clement show that Greek was the earliest language of the Christians in the capital. It may be that a substantial Jewish party is implied by Paul's Epistle (e.g. Rom. 2:17), but in that case it must rapidly have ceased to be an influential presence. We hear in the second century, however, of a group of Asiatics who claimed Polycarp's authority for celebrating Easter at the time of the Jewish Passover, rather than, with other Roman Christians, on a fixed day of the week (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.24). 'Pope' Victor, who attempted to impose a uniform custom, is traditionally said to have been an African, as well as the first Latin speaker in his office; the remonstrance of Irenaeus was, however, written in Greek. While the Gaulish bishop appealed to Victor's predecessors, Polycrates of Ephesus, who also intervened, thought it enough to say that Quartodeciman practice had been followed by the Asiatic martyrs. Latin-speaking churchmanship was always inclined to respect the office more than the man who held it; it ought not to surprise us, then, that Greek was still the language of the fiery and insubordinate Hipploytus in the following century. The cosmopolitan origin of the Christians in the capital appears to be one of the arguments employed by Irenaeus when he states that the doctrine held by the Roman presbyters can be taken as an index of the universal Christian belief.[38]

The leaders were not distinguished from the laity in the imperial persecution under Nero, which appears to have been confined to the metropolis,

[36] Minear (1971). [37] Brent (1995). [38] Abramowski (1977).

and followed the fire of A.D. 64 (Tac. *Ann.* XV.44). Sought out on vague charges of superstition and misanthropy, those who confessed were punished by spectacular and painful executions; the confession must have been of Christianity, not incendiarism, as popular opinion continued to blame Nero for the fire. The event created a precedent – though not, perhaps, a legal definition – for subsequent acts against the Christians; the next of these to be documented anywhere is probably Domitian's execution of his kinsman, the consul Titus Flavius Clemens on a charge of 'atheism' (Dio, LXVII.14). Eusebius records a persecution under this emperor (*Hist. Eccl.* III.17–20 ff.), and Clement's letter, which speaks of the tribulations of his church, may be a further testimony. If his name suggests a connexion with the consul, it can only be that of a freedman, not a son.[39]

The episodes under Nero and Diocletian show that Christians in Rome were hated chiefly for their refusal to participate in civic religious practice. Loyalty to the rulers was enjoined, however in Paul's Epistle (Rom. 13:1ff.), and also in that of Peter (I Peter 2:13), which purports at least to be written from the capital. Such injunctions may, of course, be prompted by a tendency to insubordination; but Clement, when he compares the church's structure with that of an army (*I Clement* 37), must surely be assuming that compliance with the secular authority was the norm.[40] Ignatius' plea to his Roman brethren not to intercede for him (*Rom.* 4.1) suggests that the persecution of Domitian had not robbed the local community of its influence in high circles; at the same time his martyrdom in the amphitheatre shows that the pagan citizens had not lost their appetite for Christian blood.

The high esteem in which this church was held by other Christians is evident from the deference of Ignatius and from the manner in which Clement dictates his peace to the Corinthians. The *Shepherd* of Hermas (*c.* 140) assumes that Clement would have had the authority to distribute an inspired text to the other Italian cities (*Visio* II.4.3). Hermas is the first author to assert that those who lapse under persecution may obtain remission after suitable penances; a readiness to absolve the most heinous sinners was to become a notorious hallmark of the Roman episcopate. Irenaeus (*c.* 180) accords a *principalitas* to the Roman see (*Adv. Haer.* III.3.2), which, later at least, was thought to entail a primacy *de jure* for its bishop. The Muratorian Fragment, often dated to the end of the second century, suggests that Rome was now making official use of Latin and had a canon of the New Testament very similar to our own.[41]

[39] Though now unfashionable, the arguments of Lightfoot (1890) 16–62 and Ramsay (1893) 259–74 remain impressive. 'Atheism' ought not to mean Judaism, and authorities for the persecution are numerous: Lightfoot (1890) 104–15.

[40] The attempts to usurp the 'rain-miracle' of 177 (Tert. *Ad Scap.* 4.6) assume that Christians would be willing to be soldiers.

[41] See Henne (1993) versus Hahneman (1992).

Among the Christian teachers who are said to have been active in the metropolis were Marcion, Valentinus and Justin Martyr.[42] The last, less reserved than other apologists, describes the eucharistic and baptismal rites and reveals that the church pays worship to Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*1 Apol.* 61 and 65–7). His so-called *Second Apology* describes the tribulations of an Alexandrian woman who had tried to divorce her reprobate pagan husband (*2 Apol.* 2). The summary justice used against her friends may be contrasted with the efforts of the magistrate to avert an execution in the Christian report of Justin's martyrdom; we should not forget that Christians had their reasons to exaggerate both the severity of the judge on some occasions and the temptations that could be posed by his benevolence on others. Justin wrote his *Apologies* with impunity, though we cannot tell whether he published them or sent them to the emperor; according to Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* IV.16.1), he was tried when a deposition had been laid against him by the Cynic Crescens. The flagrant immoralities of philosophers are the main theme of the *Oration to the Greeks* by his pupil Tatian; even in Rome, this Syrian would not call himself a Greek. The more eirenic Justin had maintained that all the wisdom of the pagans was derived from Hebrew prophets (*I Apol.* 44–5). The opposite view is asserted, *c.* 180, by the pagan Celsus, whose *True Logos* is the work of a Roman, even if it was not produced in Rome.[43] The new religion, Celsus argued, is indeed a novelty, which originates in a breach with Judaism (Origen, *c. Cels.* I.28ff.). He regards both immorality and magic as characteristic of all Christians (*ibid.* VI.24, 39–41), though occasionally he sneers at the diversity of sects (V.61 ff.). Their lack of culture is a constant theme (V.14 ff.), though some at least are citizens from the higher social orders, or else it would be pointless to upbraid them with their failure to take up offices of state (VIII.75).

9. Africa

There are few remains of African Christianity before A.D. 200, but by the end of our period there was evidently a flourishing population, for Tertullian in A.D. 197 declares that persecution has multiplied their numbers (*Apol.* 50.13) and that pagans are often startled by discovering the conversion of a neighbour (*ibid.* 3.1). African Christianity displayed a unique strain of fanaticism, shunning the very names of pagan gods in daily intercourse, and sometimes ready to goad a reluctant magistrate to the work of persecution. In later times the chief bishopric in Carthage was more docile to the empire than the Numidian seat of Cirta; it was a citizen of the latter town, the rhetorician Fronto, who accused the new faith of Thyestean banquets and Oedipal

[42] For Marcion, see Epiphanius, *Panarion* XLII.1.7; for Valentinus, Tert. *De Praescr. Haeret.* 36.
[43] Chadwick (1953) xxviii–xxix. For recent bibliography see Francis (1995) 131–7.

copulations.[44] If he was inspired by stories told about the local cult of Saturn, he may be reckoned as the father of those (unprovable) modern theories which contend that the Christianity of this region was a baptized variety of the native worship.[45]

Fronto's claims are put into the mouth of a pagan speaker in the *Octavius* of his fellow-African Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 31 etc.). If this work is, as some suppose, the first specimen of Christian Latinity, it must fall within our period.[46] It is typically economic in its exposition of doctrine, and, though it is set in Ostia and cast in the form of a Ciceronian dialogue, it betrays the irascible temper of the African, for the pagan speaker's assault on Christianity is provoked by the animadversions of Octavius on the formal cult of idols (*Oct.* 3). It is no surprise that the prophecies of Montanus gained a following in Africa, where, if we may take Tertullian as a typical adherent, the new age of the Spirit was believed to entail new fasts, an end to sexual relations even in marriage, and an inexorable rigour in ecclesiastical discipline. There is, however, no sign of formal schism, though there were local separations; Tertullian does not seem to think that the office of a bishop is discredited by attacks upon his person; and women, though their prophecies and visions were taken seriously, were given no institutional authority in the church.[47]

Tertullian's polemics suggest that dualistic movements had become prevalent in the region: the *Adversus Marcionem*, in five books, is his *magnum opus*, and the obscure Alexander cited in his treatise on the incarnation must be a local figure (*de Carne Christi* 16.1). Montanists and Gnostics (if we may call them such) had common traits: both styled themselves 'pneumatics' and disparaged the less enlightened class as 'psychics', and both believed that the natural condition of the soul was one of bondage to the powers of death and sin. Demons rule the world of Minucius Felix and Tertullian, though they merely inhabited that of Apuleius; the Christians, however, state that numerous confessions have been elicited from these supernatural agents by the rite of exorcism (Min. Fel. *Oct.* 26–7; Tert. *Apol.* 22–3 ff.). A doctrine of inherited corruption is attested by Tertullian (*De Carne Christi* 16), though baptism of infants had not yet become a universal rule.

10. Gaul

This period yields few remains of Christianity in Gaul, and the only bishopric certainly attested is that of Lugdunum or Lyons.[48] Its congregation

[44] Champlin (1980) 64 allows priority to Fronto.
[45] Frend (1971); on the indigenous cults of Saturn, see Rives (1995) 142–50.
[46] Daniélou (1974) 189–208; but cf. Buizer (1925). [47] Rankin (1995).
[48] Harnack (1908) 451–63 doubts that Lyons was the only Gallic bishopric at this time.

appears to have been Greek-speaking for the most part, and it may have been the daughter of an Asiatic church, for when it became the victim of a popular eruption it was to the 'churches of Asia and Phrygia' that it sent its famous record (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.1.3–2.8). The event was inspired by a rescript from an emperor to the governor of Gaul (v.1.39); the emperor is generally believed to be Marcus Aurelius, and the year 177.[49] The rescript was perhaps inspired by the caluminies of Fronto; certainly the governor appears to have been spurred on by a mob who expected to convict the church of 'Thyestean banquets and Oedipal copulations' (*Hist. Eccl.* v.1.11). Roman citizens were tortured and beheaded (v.1.43), and, despite the recommendation of the emperor (v.1.42), those who renounced their faith received no pardon (v.1.27 and 41); here at least, the church accepted those who purged a previous apostasy by seeking martyrdom. In general the victims chose to make a secret of their doctrines v.1.25): we do not know whether the one who said that Christians ate no bloody meat (v.1.21) was speaking also for the Asians who were caught up in this storm (v.1.14, 45 ff.). Those who survived flagellation were thrown to beasts in the amphitheatre (v.1.33ff.): the letter immortalized the slave Blandina, whose courage under various tortures wearied and amazed her persecutors (v.1.14, 36, 52 ff.). The death of the aged bishop Pothinus was the greatest blow (v.1.24).

He was replaced by Irenaeus, a friend of the martyr Polycarp and so perhaps a migrant from the east (*Adv. Haer.* III.3.4). The greatest theologian of his day, he induced the Roman church to allow its Asiatic visitors to keep their own date for Easter, and he undertook the refutation of every Christian doctrine that diverged from the episcopal consensus. Where Marcion, Valentinus and Basilides slighted matter and denied the resurrection of the body, Irenaeus retorted that the body too belongs to the image of God and must partake of the resurrection (*Adv. Haer.* v.1). Creation and the law are part of the work that culminates in our redemption through the incarnation of Christ, the eternal Word and Son of God. The evil in the world springs not from matter, but from the waywardness of Adam, who bequeathed to his descendants both mortality and the frailty that makes us liable to sin (IV.38).

Irenaeus denies predestination and suggests that God intended us to arrive at good through experience of evil (*Adv. Haer.* IV.37–9). Yet, even while he affirms that man was not created perfect, he insists that sin is culpable, and can be expiated only by the sacrifice of Christ (v.17 ff.). He defends the fourfold canon of the gospels (IV.11.8), and cites most of our New Testament, including Revelation and the Pastoral Epistles. He was the first to appeal to the ecumenical consensus of the bishoprics as a test of orthodoxy (III.2.1), but he cannot be held to blame for the modern usage of

[49] Frend (1965) 23 n. 1; but cf. Gresswell (1834) 303.

the word 'Gnostic', which implies that all the world-denying heresies were at one in their aims, beliefs and opposition to the episcopate.[50] In asserting the catholicity of his own faith, Irenaeus supplies the only evidence from this period for the spread of Christianity to Germany and Spain (1.10.2).

The death of the emperor Commodus would seem to have no significance in church history,[51] yet it marks the watershed between the age in which we have only sporadic anecdotes of churches and the age in which a history of 'the church' becomes conceivable. The reason for the change was perceived instinctively by the crowds who took advantage of imperial hostility to the Christians in the later Antonine era: the bishop was now the primary, and sometimes the only, object of attack. Whereas a pagan cult would owe its vigour to the patronage of a civic luminary, the survival of Christianity depended on the presence of the whole in every part.[52] Even while the bishop was supreme in his congregation, his office bound him to every other bishop, in opposition to the world and to parochial dissent. Ignatius in Antioch, Polycarp in Smyrna and Pothinus in Lyons were feeble shadows of the patriarchs who withstood the great persecutions of the next century; but even so, their meagre correspondence and their obituaries are our two great sources of knowledge in this period. It is as true of Rome and Antioch as of Carthage and Alexandria that wherever the episcopate was lacking in resolution or authority, there is no continuous story to be told.

[50] Edwards (1989a).

[51] The martyrdom of the Alexandrian 'Apollonius Saccas' in an Asian persecution under Commodus is probably fictitious.

[52] For Christians as the soul of the world see *Epistle to Diognetus* 6; the authorship and provenance of this short tract are (appropriately) unknown.

CHAPTER 18

CHRISTIANITY IN THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES

CHAPTER 18B

THIRD-CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

GRAEME CLARKE

Third-century Christianity has to be read against its polytheistic context. Not only that. If we are to appreciate what it may have been like to be a Christian in this century, we also need to have some idea how idiosyncratic it may have been in fact to belong to the Christian following (the social setting) as well as how influential was the Roman state in the lives of individual Christians (the political setting). To map these two co-ordinates may help us to see third-century Christians from our vantage point – insofar as we are able to reconstruct those settings. It goes without saying, however, that this reconstruction need not necessarily be the same as how third-century Christians themselves perceived their own place in their social world and how they construed their relations with the Roman state: the rhetoric of self-identification and self-representation need not coincide with our description.

The first section, accordingly, attempts to trace quickly the geographical coverage of Christianity in the third century,[1] whilst the second section deals with what we know of Christians' relations with the Roman state – the persecutions which formed a backdrop to the mental lives of many Christians even if physically they may have been little affected by them. But the possibility of persecution was not the obsessively dominant feature in their lives as many have construed it to be: the third section surveys the literary and intellectual life of third-century Christianity.

1. GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

Until the Great Persecution and its aftermath in the early fourth century brings to light invaluable evidence for the geographical spread of Christianity (and impressionistic anecdotes, in places, illustrating the depth of

[1] The classic treatment is von Harnack (1924).

that spread), we are forced to be content, for much of the preceding century, with extremely fitful testimony. And given the erratic nature of that surviving testimony it is very difficult to gain any sense of the *progressive* spread of Christianity that may have been taking place over that century. This is a difficult enough task for the urbanized areas of the empire: it is even more difficult outside the urban areas in the unnewsworthy villages, hamlets and farms of the countryside (where the bulk of the population of the empire eked out their living).[2]

1. Britain

Tertullian's grandiloquent flourish, at the beginning of our period, declaring that, amongst other extravagances, the remoter parts of Britain, as yet unsubdued by the Romans (*Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca*), have already been made subject to the Christ (*Adv. Iudaeos* 7.4 (CCSL. II.1354)) ought to be construed as pure rhetoric, Britain being established in the literary tradition as at the ultimate periphery of the western world. We should conclude the same of Origen (*In Ezekiel Hom.* IV (*PL* XXV.723)), dated to towards the middle of the century, where Britannia along with the Mauri illustrates the verse *Omnis terra clamat cum laetitia*. By the end of the Constantinian reign, however, there are indeed participating British bishops in councils outside Britain – and they can be praised later for their orthodox stance in the Arian controversy (Athan. *Hist. Arian. ad Mon.* 28 (*PG* XXV.725)). But we have no notion of the scale of the communities they administered. The evidence is tellingly exiguous: three bishops are first attested in the (variable) recensions of the Council of Arles (314) – representatives from York, London and (?) Lincoln along with a priest and a deacon (representing perhaps a fourth see: Cirencester?).[3] But on the scanty evidence available to us Christianity must have been a marginal exotic religion in Britain over this period.[4]

2. The Gauls

Since the martyrdoms at Lyons (witnessing, predominantly foreign, Christian communities at Lyons and Vienne) in the 170s (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.1ff.) and the writings of Irenaeus, there is scarcely a word about Christians in all the Gauls until the 250s. There is, it is true, another rhetorical flourish in Tertullian (*Adv. Iudaeos* 7.4 (CCSL II.1354): 'the diverse tribes of the Gauls

[2] There is a valuable discussion in Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 287ff.; for a more triumphalist assessment, Frend (1967).

[3] See the discussion of Mann (1961).

[4] Frend (1968) 37–49; Thomas (1981) 42ff.; Watts (1991) 9ff. The (later) traditions of British martyrs (Alban, Aaron, Julius), are impossible to date.

have been subjugated to the true Christ') as well as in Hippolytus (*Philos.* 10.34 (*GCS* Hippolytus III.292)) – the *Celtoi* figure in a long list of 'Greeks and barbarians' expected to listen to the true doctrine just expounded: these help little to flesh out any sense of the progress of Christianization amongst the indigenous population, despite Irenaeus' preaching among the Celts (*Adv. Haer.* I, *pr.*3 (SC 264.24)) and his bearing witness that there were churches 'among Celts' (*Adv. Haer.* I.10.2; cf. III.4.2 (SC 264.158, 211.46)). But by the mid-third century the evidence of Cyprian, *Ep.* 68 (254/5) reveals the establishment of other bishoprics apart from Lyons (already known from Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.1.29), not only at Arles (Cypr. *Ep.* 68.1.1) but also a number of other sees (the *coepiscopi* of *Ep.* 68.1.1, 2.1). There is a distinct suggestion of an established synodal organization among those bishoprics (*Ep.* 68.1.1, 2.1, 3.1) and there is a hint (only that) of rival groups clustered around Lyons (*Ep.* 68.1.1, 2.1) and a further grouping in Provence centered on Arles (*Ep.* 68.3.1). But we gain clearer knowledge by the early fourth century: to the Council of Rome (313) were summoned by imperial command *inter alios*, Reticius, Maternus and Marinus, bishops of Autun, Cologne and Arles (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.5.19, Opt. I.23 (CSEL XXVI.26), app. III (CSEL XXVI.205): *quosdam episcopos ex Galliis*), and at the Council of Arles the following year among the forty-three churches (predominantly western) represented were sixteen Gallic bishoprics (some with attendant clerics), their geographic locations being concentrated, as one might expect, in the more urbanized districts of southern Gaul and the Rhône valley. The lack of even legendary bishop-lists for most of these sees suggests that the majority had become established only within the last generation or two.[5] But whilst it is tempting to posit organizational growth for the Gallic church in the second half of the third century, our impressions may simply be based on the vagaries of available evidence. And there is one piece of corroborative evidence: there were 'church buildings' (*conventicula*, τῶν ἐκκλησίων τοὺς οἴκους), which Constantius did (or did not) pull down in Gaul under the terms of the First Edict of the Great Persecution (Lact. *DMP* 15.7; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.13), issued in 303. Beyond that we can scarcely go.[6]

3. The Germanies

In the Germanies, Belgica and Raetia our information is even more fugitive: we could expect by the end of the period some Christian communities or

[5] Duchesne (1907) 6ff. At the Council of Nicaea (325) bishop Nicasius from Die attended, a bishopric not represented at Arles.

[6] Arnob. *Adv. Gentes* I.16 with unhelpful rhetoric reckons the Christians dwelling in Spain and Gaul as *innumeri*. In the later fourth century, Martin of Tours can more realistically be depicted in north Gaul as working in territory where 'virtually no-one had received the name of Christ', Sulpic. Sev. *Vit. S. Martini* 13.9 (SC 133. 282): *ante Martinum pauci admodum, immo paene nulli in illis regionibus Christi nomen receperant.*

cells in at least the major military towns and colonies. Trier (a Roman colony and then imperial residence) did indeed send a bishop to the council of Arles (314) (as did Rheims): the church building there was small and needed rebuilding by the time Athanasius visited it during his banishment, 335–7 (Athan. *Apol. Ad Constant.* 15). As for the Germanies, apart from rhetorical generalizations found in Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 1.10.2 (SC 264.158): 'nor are the faith and traditions of the churches established in the Germanies in any way different') and once again, in Tertullian (*Adv. Iudaeos* 7 (CCSL II.1354)), in the company of Sarmatians, Dacians and Scythians, as well as, this time, Arnobius (*Adv. Gentes* 1.16: Christians to be found among the Alamanni, Persians and Scythians), the hard datum consists simply of the bishopric of Cologne (the bishop being present at the Council of Rome, 313 (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.5.19) and with a deacon at the Council of Arles, 314). We should have to conclude on this evidence that Christianity was only weakly established in the whole of this territory.

4. Spain

The churches in the Iberian peninsula have similar weak testimony until the mid-third century. Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 1.10.2 (SC 264.158)) and Tertullian (*Adv. Iudaeos* 7.4 (CCSL II.1354): *Hispaniarum omnes termini*) can both include, for rhetorical effect rather than factual information, the provinces of Spain as witnesses to the wide spread of the one faith (marking the western limits of the inhabited world before the great Ocean). It is only with Cyprian, *Ep.* 67 (datable to the pontificate of Stephen, 254–7) that we are able to view some particulars: bishoprics are attested as established up in the northwest (Legio-and-Asturica) as well as down in the southwest (Emerita), with a further community at Caesaraugusta towards the northeast of the Peninsula. Not only that. It can be claimed that at the appointment of Sabinus as bishop the custom was followed of having neighbouring, comprovincial bishops (*episcopi eiusdem provinciae proximi quique*) either present themselves or with their views represented by letter (§§5.1f.). A number of further bishoprics can therefore be safely conjectured as having been by now established in order to accommodate this assertion (with certitude, at least, for Tarraco where bishop Fructuosus was martyred in 259). Indeed, that three so widely separated communities as those named in this letter can be found acting together (opposed by other bishops – *aliqui de collegis nostris,* §9.1) suggests that the Spanish churches have by now well-developed lines of communication among themselves – and very probably they have met together from time to time in some form of provincial synod, convened to discuss communal issues.

At least half a century later they did so meet at Iliberris (Elvira), most likely as not shortly before the outbreak of the Great Persecution. In the

received tradition there attended representatives from thirty-seven Spanish Christian communities, nineteen delegations being headed by bishops (among them being bishop Ossius of Corduba, destined for fame, or notoriety) and eighteen sending presbyters only: twenty-five of the thirty-seven came from Baetican churches, the province in which the council was held – this may not necessarily, therefore, indicate a special concentration of Christianity in southeast Spain. But what does come as a total surprise is the content of the eighty-one canons illuminating a remarkable permeation of Christians into provincial society at all levels. The churches found it necessary not only to draw up a wide range of regulations – no fewer than twenty-six – on sexual mores; they also found it necessary to draw clearer lines of demarcation between Christians and Jews (*can.* 16, 49, 50, 78), orthodox Christians and heretics (*can.* 16, 22, 51), Christian and heathens (*can.* 15, 16) (including various forbidden professions – charioteers and *pantomimi*, *can.* 62 – or activities, e.g. gambling, *can.* 79). But, most revealingly, they had occasion to legislate on the behaviour of landowners (*can.* 40) and slave-owners (*can.* 5, 41), and on the cases of Christians who occupied the office of chief magistrate of a city (*can.* 56), who took up local priesthoods (*can.* 55), who looked on at public sacrifices on the Capitol (*can.* 59) or contributed garments for public religious processions (*can.* 57), or who even held the provincial high-priesthood of the imperial cult, the flaminate (*can.* 2–4). The degree of secularization surprises: Christianity has become domiciled in this region. Ought we to presume the same for southern Gaul extrapolating from this evidence?

5. *The Mediterranean islands*

(a) Sicily

From *Ep.* 30.5.1 in the Cyprianic corpus (written by Novatian in the name of the presbyters and deacons of Rome in late summer 250) we learn that a letter had gone from Rome to Sicily counselling prudent deferral of the question of reconciling the lapsed: that tells us that the Decian persecution was active in Sicily amongst the Christian community. This is valuable testimony for the history of the church in Sicily; apart from the (fortuitous) fact that St Paul's ship put in to Sicily on its way to Puteoli (Acts 28:12f.), the only notice we have which might conceivably indicate the presence of Christianity in Sicily prior to this witness is Clement of Alexandria's teacher who came from Magna Graecia along with Pantaenus, 'the Sicilian bee', (see Clem. *Strom.* I.1.11; cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.11.4). Hierarchy is firmly recorded for the early fourth century (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.5.21ff.: bishop Chrestus of Syracuse attended the Council of Arles along with a deacon, Florus) as is the church generally (cf. Eus. *Mart. Pal.* (S) 13.12). It is highly doubtful whether the fact

that Porphyry composed his work against the Christians whilst established in Sicily (cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.19.2) need tell us anything.[7]

(b) Sardinia

Sardinia has even thinner an ecclesiastical history for this period. Apart from Christians sent to the mines of Sardinia (Hippolytus, *Philos.* 9.12; *Catal. Liber. s.v.* Pontianus; *Chron. Min.* I.74f.) we know of one bishop (Quintasius), plus a presbyter, of Cagliari, who attended the Council of Arles (314). Polytheism may well have long dominated there.

(c) Crete and Cyprus

Crete, on the other hand, is entirely unrepresented over our period (no bishop even at the Nicene council) – despite second-century testimony for Christian communities established at Gortyn (with a bishop) and 'other churches of Crete', including Cnossus which had by then a bishop also (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.23.5, 23.7f.). That is not untypical of our third century ignorance. Of the Aegean and Ionian islands, Rhodes, Cos, Lemnos and Corcyra sent bishops to Nicaea: we know no more. Cyprus, despite the Apostolic period missionary work (Acts 13.5ff., 15.39f.), is, again, without testimony for the third century: three bishops – from Paphos, Salamis and Trimithus – attended Nicaea, but there must have been established by then a number of other dioceses as twelve Cypriote bishops attended the Council of Sardica (Athan. *Apol. Contr. Arian.* 50).[8] But whilst we can reasonably surmise from this sample that there were Christian *conventicula* on at least the major islands, especially if they lay on regular sea-lanes, we are nevertheless compelled to rely on conjecture.

(d) Italy

At the beginning of the third century the church of Rome still retained many characteristics derived from its immigrant past, displaying a mixture of languages and ethnic cultures (but dominantly Greek), the mélange of traditions being reflected in the second-century dispute over the date(s) computed as proper for the celebration of Easter. It was not until the mid-third century that Rome produced in Novatian a Latin-writing theologian – and it was at this time also that the papal epitaphs in the papal crypt in the catacomb of Callistus began to be inscribed in Latin. Novatian's third-century predecessor Hippolytus, as the second-century writers before him, had all composed in Greek.

Our best statistics for the mid-third-century church in Rome are famously provided by the pope Cornelius (*ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.43.11)

[7] For the early history of the church in Sicily: Pincherle (1964–65); Garana (1961) 197ff.

[8] Christian confessors were sent to hard labour in Cyprus during the Great Persecution, Eus. *Mart. Pal.*(S) 13.2.

claiming 'that there are forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers and doorkeepers, above fifteen hundred widows and persons in distress, all of whom are supported by the grace and loving-kindness of the Master'. The context of this claim needs to be appreciated. Cornelius is asserting (to Fabius of Antioch) – against the pretensions of the anti-pope Novatian (whom Fabius was inclined to favour) – that he is in command of *the* church in Rome. We must suppose that there were other Roman clergy, additional to those in the following of Cornelius, who had accompanied Novatian into schism. The full tally of Christian clergy will have been therefore higher than Cornelius' 154. And these calculations do not reflect either the many heterodox Christian groups by now established in Rome (such movements tending to gravitate to Rome).

Division into districts (reflected in *Liber Pontificalis* XXI [Fabianus] *hic regiones dividit diaconibus*, XXVI [Dionysius] *hic presbyteris ecclesias dedit et cymiteria et parrocias diocesis constituit*), the acquisition and maintenance of separate Christian burial-grounds (notably Calepodius', Callistus', Praetextatus', reflected in *Liber Pontificalis* XVII [Callistus], Hippol. *Philos*. 9.12), the construction and upkeep of Christian shrines (notably those of St Peter on the Vatican, of St Paul on the *Via Ostiensis* and at S. Sebastiano ad Catacumbas on the *Via Appia*) as well as the evidence for church places of assembly and an elaborate Mediterranean-wide network of communications (maintained by means of letter of communion) – all these point to the Roman church constituting a significant and well-organized minority group within the urban community of Rome by the mid-third century. Certainly half a century later Maxentius found it politically prudent to avoid rousing the opposition of the Christians of Rome (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.14.1; Opt. I.18): by then the minority had grown to a size and status that could not be overlooked without cost. The extent of the charitable services alone suggest a broad-based community. Even so it would be unwise to posit too deep a penetration into the conservative ranks of the upper levels of Roman society. Of course the public presence of the Christian church in Rome was transformed by the lavish donations of Constantine, and the elaborate building programme undertaken of funerary chapels, martyria and basilicas proclaimed at once imperial largesse and ecclesiastical triumph.[9]

In the same letter to Fabius of Antioch Cornelius reports on a synod of Italian bishops convened in Rome in 251: it was attended by sixty bishops and a still larger number of presbyters and deacons (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.43.2). Regrettably we have lost the catalogue Cornelius appended to his letter consisting:

[9] See Pietri (1976) 3–96 for a valuable summary.

of the bishops present at Rome who condemned the stupidity of Novatus, indicating at once both their names and the name of the community over which each one presided; and those who were not present, indeed, at Rome, but who signified in writing their assent to the judgement of the aforesaid, he mentions the names and, as well, the city where each lived and from which each wrote.

(Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.43.21)

Given the absentees and the fact that Novatian also had episcopal supporters (reduced by Cornelius in caricature to three gullible, rustic and simpleton bishops 'from a small and insignificant part of Italy', *ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.43.8ff.), we would be safe in conjecturing upwards of 100 Italian bishoprics by the mid-century. On the available evidence – including the fifteen who attended the Council of Rome (313) – they were concentrated in lower and central Italy rather than in the north. In upper Italy, Milan and Aquileia alone are known for certain (Councils of Rome and Arles), but we may reasonably conjecture communities already in the early fourth century at Ravenna, Brescia and Verona also (all soon to be represented by bishops at Sardica): but Christianity was but sparsely established over this terrain.

(e) Moesia, Pannonia, Noricum, Dalmatia

Despite a strong process of Romanization and urbanization (conditions that appear to have favoured a sympathetic reception to Christianity, or at least were more likely to lead to the recording of its reception), knowledge of the spread of Christianity into these regions is scanty. Nicaea provides us with two bishoprics for Moesia, Sardica (Protogenes) and Marcianopolis (Pistus), and one for Pannonia (Domnus: see unspecified). Victorinus, bishop–theologian from Pettau, indicates another Pannonian community and Diocletianic martyrdoms provide further witness (e.g. *Mart. Dasii:* Durostorum in Moesia). There are also likely to have been bishoprics in Noricum (represented later at Sardica). Dalmatia had very early contacts with Christianity (e.g. II Tim. 4:10) but little more is known of any communities established there. Altogether we have to be content with these tokens of knowledge and imagine a scatter of churches but with no sense of their numerical strength nor of how far there was any extension beyond Christian cells in urban centres into the countryside.

(f) The Balkans

Greece, the scene of concentrated missionary endeavours in the apostolic age, certainly continued to maintain a spread of Christian communities but, as often elsewhere, we gain little impression of their size. Athens,[10]

[10] Despite the fact that Origen found the Christian community in Athens congenial to visit and to write there (Origen, *c. Celsum* III.30, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.32), Athens persisted long as a strongly polytheist city: Frantz (1988) 19ff.

Thessalonica and Corinth would be the most frequently mentioned (the latter two appearing especially flourishing) but it would be consistent with our knowledge to surmise that the total Christian population was pretty thinly spread throughout the peninsula. Chance testimonies suggest, however, that the spread, if thin, was still broad: by the course of the second century, for example, we have attested Thessaly (Larissa: Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.26.16 (Melito)); the Peloponnese (the Lacedaemonians: Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.23); Thrace (Debeltum and Anchialus: Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.19.3) and the Nicaean lists confirm other sites (e.g. Stobi, Thessalian Thebes, Euboea) with further possible glimmers of light at Nicopolis in Epirus (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.16.3) and Byzantium (Tert. *Ad Scap*. 3.4). The attendance lists of Nicaea also reveal some penetration into the Black Sea and Crimea (bishops Theophilus of 'Gothia' and Cadmus of Bosphorus).

(g) The African provinces

Knowledge of Christianity in Africa comes to us, as it were, fully formed, in the late second century, with the Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs (180) followed by the voluminous literary output of Tertullian (197+). Our ignorance of any second-century background highlights how reliant we are on Eusebius – and how limited was the knowledge he could obtain on western church affairs. As in contemporary Rome, there is initial evidence of a Greek-speaking component[11] but that is quickly lost to our view, neither throughout the century do we have any hint of a Punic element. On our present testimony we have a Latin-speaking church, with by mid-century its own accepted Latin version of the Bible, and its liturgy conducted in Latin.[12] And Tertullian shows himself fully aware of contemporary religious issues and currents, ready to engage in major theological debate often whilst attacking perceived heretical teachings (e.g. Marcion, Hermogenes, Valentinians, Praxeas) and open to the pull of Montanist revivalism. This is no isolated ecclesiastical community as the third century begins.

Tertullian is notoriously triumphalist in his claims of the spread of Christianity (e.g. 'Such are our numbers, amounting to almost a majority in every city', *ad Scap*. 2.10 (CCSL II.1128)).[13] But the closest statistic we can gain is that of the seventy African bishops claimed to have convened

[11] Tertullian composed a Greek version of several of his works (*de Spect.*, *de Bapt.*, *de Virg. Vel.*, *de Cor. Mil.*) and Jerome, *de Viris Illustr*. 53 refers to the lost *de Ecstasi* (cf. *op. cit*. 24, 40), a work ultimately in seven books (but a Latin version only is known). Perpetua addresses the bishop Optatus and the presbyter Aspasius in Greek (*Act. Perp. et Fel*. 13.4 (Musurillo (1972) 122), and the angels intone the Sanctus in Greek (*op. cit*. 12.2 (Musurillo (1972) 120). See further Barnes, *Tertullian* 67ff., 253f., 265f.

[12] Cyprian accepts his scriptural text as it stands; Tertullian is prepared on occasion to criticize the version he has before him. Barnes, *Tertullian* 276ff.; Fahey (1971).

[13] Tert. *Ad Scap*. 3f. (CCSL II.1129ff.) attests Christians in Numidia and Mauretania as well as in the proconsular towns of Thysdrus and Hadrumetum: to which add Uthina (*De Monog*. 12.3 (CCSL II.1247)).

under Agrippinus, bishop of Carthage (?220s or 230s),[14] to be followed by the ninety bishops who met under Cyprian's predecessor Donatus (earlier 240s: Cypr. *Ep.* 59.10.1 (CCSL IIIC.353)) and then the eighty-seven signatories of the council meeting in autumn 256 (bishops loyal to Cyprian's stance against recognizing heretical baptism). Whilst this is remarkable enough to give us a notion of the numbers of the prosperous African small towns and centres that had a Christian *conventiculum* by mid-century – in excess of 100 is a very safe conjecture – that unfortunately tells us little of the relative size of such communities despite Tertullian's stridently iterated assertions. The distribution, however, is relatively clear (thanks to the *Sent. Episc.* LXXXVII): sparse in the Mauretanias (as also in Tripolitania) but clustered closely in the fertile tracks of Africa Proconsularis and the populous centres of Numidia (where at least twenty-five locations are identifiable).[15] Tertullian and Cyprian certainly attest a high level of literary competence – indeed in the case of Tertullian, brilliance – and the delicately mannered and cultured apology of the *Octavius* (*c.* 230) by Minucius Felix in all probability reflects the polite circles of Cirta (though its literary setting is Rome and Ostia). But these three writers seem to have few in the way of peers: certainly some of Cyprian's correspondents reveal much lower standards of literary competence.[16] We simply do not have the grounds for painting too sanguine a picture of the social levels to which Christianity may have reached generally over the century in the region, despite its remarkable geographical spread. Nevertheless this is a highly organized church, with a strong metropolitan leadership based in Carthage (though regional councils could also be held) with a structured clerical hierarchy and an elaborate system of charitable support.

The nearest snapshot we have of a typical African Christian community is right at the beginning of the fourth century: the congregation at the major Numidian town of Cirta.[17] The clergy consists of a bishop and of at least 2 presbyters, 2 deacons, 4 subdeacons, 7 lectors and in excess of 6 *fossores* ('grave diggers') as well as *seniores*: there is a church house (*domum in qua christiani conveniebant*) which has also a well-equipped *triclinium*. There is also a cemetery (*area martyrum*) which has a *casa maior*. The church paraphernalia in addition to chalices, lamps, lampstands, candelabra and

[14] Aug. *De Unico Bapt.* 13.22 (CSEL LIII.21), *c. Cresc.* III.3.3 (CSEL LII.412); cf. Cypr. *Ep.* 71.4.1 (CCSL IIIC.521).

[15] Consult Maier (1973). By the 330s, Donatists could muster no fewer than 270 bishops: Aug. *Ep.* 93.10.43 (CSEL XXXIV.2.486f.).

[16] Notably *Epp.* 21, 22, 26, 78, 79 and some of the *sententiae* of *Sent. Episc.* LXXXVII. See Saxer (1984) 257ff. The emphasis on the exceptional status of Perpetua is studied (*Vibia Perpetua, honeste nata, liberaliter instituta, matronaliter nupta*, *Act. Perp. et Fel.* 2.1).

[17] Opt. *App.* 1 = *Gesta ap. Zenophil.* (ed. Zwisa, CSEL XXVI.185ff.): text and French translation also in Maier (1987) 214ff. (English in Edwards (1997) 150–69). See also Duval (2001).

other gold, silver and bronze items also had in store 82 women's tunics, 38 veils, 16 men's tunics, 13 pairs men's shoes and 47 for women, and 19 rustic *coplae* =?capes (safely presumed to be donations for charitable handouts?).[18] This congregation also possessed as scriptures one unusually large *codex* (*codicem unum pernimium maiorem*: a lectionary?), as well as 30 other *codices*, 2 smaller *codices* and 4 fascicules (*quiniones*). The professions of two of the lectors are given: one is a *sarsor* (marble-cutter), the other is a *grammaticus* (*professor Romanarum litterarum*) whose father was a local decurion and whose descent was indigenous *origo nostra de sanguine Mauro*. One of the *fossores* describes himself as an *artifex* ('artisan'). In the court proceedings we also hear of a successful fuller, Victor, who could afford a donation of 20 *folles* and there also figures the Carthaginian Lucilla, a wealthy and influential woman of the highest class (*clarissima femina*) who could contribute no fewer than 400 *folles*. Throughout it is assumed such gifts to the church are properly to be distributed to the *pauperes*, little old women (*aniculae*), the indigent (*populus minutus*) or simply the *populus* (=?*populus dei*) – and not to be pocketed by the clergy as bribes. There is little reason not to assume that this sort of ecclesiastical establishment with this sort of (modest) social mix was not by now duplicated – scaled proportionate to population – throughout similar urban centres of Africa.[19]

(h) Arabia

It is difficult to gauge how far Christianity may have spread beyond the hellenized cities of the region, but the presence of six bishops at Nicaea (from Bostra, Philadelphia, Dionysias, Isbounta, Sodom and an obscure Beritaneus), a wholly Christian village (near Madaba) in Eusebius' *Onomasticon* (Cariathaim/Caraiatha)[20] and a fully developed synodal system by mid-century suggest no inconsiderable spread at least to the north of the province. The fact that early in the century the governor of the province could summon Origen from Alexandria for discussion may tell us more about the governor himself and the growing status of the Christian philosophy (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.19.15), but his seat of government, Bostra, was soon to have, towards mid-century, a controversial bishop, Beryllus, prominent for his writings (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.20.2) whose christological speculations

[18] Why the disproportion in men's and women's items? More indigent men – or simply more women with cast-off clothing to donate?

[19] Can some local religious tensions also be detected? The (discredited) clergy are charged with stealing casks and their contents (sour wine: *acetum*) from the local temple of Serapis. Note also the informative *Acta Purgationis Felicis* (Opt. *App.* II in Maier (1987) 174ff.) attesting to (destroyed) Christian *basilicae* (= meeting halls) at Zama and Furnos as well as at Abthungi (also described as *locum ubi orationes celebrare consueti fuerant*); Abthungi has, in addition, *areae* (= burial grounds) *ubi orationes facitis* (date: 303). Note, too, Ferrua (1977) 225ff. (early fourth-century *basilica dominica* at Altava).

[20] Cariathaim/Caraiatha (ed. Klostermann (1904) 112.14–16).

stimulated at least one synod attended by 'a large number of bishops' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.33.2), to be followed by another 'no small synod' (on the status of the soul after death, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.37),[21] to both of which Origen (and others) came and spoke. Rome could correspond with (and send frequent aid to) this church (Dionys. Alex. *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.5: on Novatianism, later 250s) and in the following decade Maximus, as bishop of Bostra, was to play a prominent role in the dispute with the teachings of Paul of Samosata (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.28.1). This church, whatever its size and the depth of its penetration, is no ecclesiastical or theological backwater.[22] But we cannot even glimpse any adoption of Christianity in the more southerly and remoter reaches of this area in the third century.

(i) Syria

Antioch, the provincial capital, shows every indication of being a Christian stronghold exemplified by the celebrated *canon* 6 of the Council of Nicaea which recognizes (obscurely) the special and traditional rights of the see of Antioch (like Rome and Alexandria) over adjacent provinces. Hence the piquancy of the scandal that its bishop in the later 260s, Paul of Samosata, when he should have been giving his fellow bishops spiritual leadership, is arraigned by them instead for his heterodox christological views – and his offensive and secular high life-style (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.30). Paul no doubt cut a prominent figure in this society: the church was a visible (and sometimes noisy) part of the life of the city (the rival bishops appealing to the emperor Aurelian to settle the issue of the ownership of the 'house of the church' after the deposition of Paul, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.30.19).[23] Antioch was also the scene for a series of regional synods convened to deal with the controversial issues of the day – in the 250s, Novatianism and the rebaptism dispute (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.46.3 and VII.5 – the provinces of Cilicia, Cappadocia, Galatia 'and all the provinces that border on these', Pontus, Bithynia, Palestine, Arabia, Mesopotamia as well as Egypt were involved) and in the 260s the series of meetings on the teachings of Paul, attended by a 'countless' number of bishops, along with presbyters and deacons (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.28.1; cf. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.30 – Cappadocia, Pontus, Cilicia, Galatia, Palestine, Arabia being specifically mentioned, and Egypt being invited, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.27.2; cf. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.30.2).

[21] There is every chance that the debate between Origen and the bishop Heracleides took place in Arabia as well (note esp. *Dispute with Heracleides* (Scherer (1960) 10.18). Among the bishops present are named Heracleides, Demetrius, Philip (and, probably, Maximus and Dionysius) and *Dispute* 10.22 mentions a second Heracleides and his predecessor Celer.

[22] Jerome, *Ep*. 33.5 rather implies a gathering of the bishops of Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia and Achaea, who combined to defend Origen against otherwise universal condemnation (*exceptis Palestinae, et Arabiae et Phoenices atque Achaiae sacerdotibus in damnationem eius consentit orbis*).

[23] The classic study is Millar (1971).

Moreover the Antiochene church continued its tradition of theological writing and biblical scholarship, producing Serapion (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.12)[24] and Geminus (Jerome, *de Viris Illustr.* 64) earlier in the century,[25] to be followed later in the century by the *rhetor* Malchion (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vii.29.2; Jerome, *de Viris Illustr.* 71) and the learned Dorotheus (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vii.32.2ff.) and Lucian (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* viii.13.2; ix.6.3; Jerome, *de Viris Illustr.* 77 and especially Suda *s.v.* Λουκιανός). But Antioch was not the only Syrian see to be able to boast of erudite Christian teachers and scholars: nearby Laodicea, for example, managed to detain the learned and eloquent Anatolius (from Alexandria) to be its bishop (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vii.32.6ff.). However, an increase in figures of prominence does not necessarily imply increase in overall figures.

A little over twenty bishops from Syrian towns attended Nicaea (from widely scattered locations, from the coast to the Orontes valley and beyond, to the Euphrates).[26] It is noteworthy that there attended, additionally, two Syrian *chorepiscopi*, but it is difficult for us to have much notion how far this church may have penetrated into the village communities of Syria and into the Semitic-speaking levels of its population. For what it is worth Paul's fawning followers are described as including bishops 'of the neighbouring country as well as towns' *ap. Hist. Eccl.* vii.30.10 (τῶν ὁμόρων ἀγρῶν τε καὶ πόλεων). But what highlights our ignorance of this penetration is the chance discovery of the church-house of Dura Europus (destroyed in the 250s), well down the Euphrates, as well as a fragment of the Greek *Diatesseron* of Tatian there. This was, in part, a military town – its population is therefore to some degree somewhat exceptional – but the general inhabitants seem to have been highly multi-cultural, though Greek certainly dominated. Can we safely presume similar modest Christian communities scattered throughout the province? It is worth observing that the Christian meeting-place was not nearly as capacious nor nearly as sophisticated in its artistic pretensions as the Jewish synagogue nearby in the same town. And the language the Christians wrote in was predominantly Greek.[27]

(j) Phoenicia

Further to the south, inland of the mountains, we do know that communities, with a bishop, were established by the time of Nicaea at Emesa,

[24] Note that Serapion can write rebuking the Christian community of Rhossos in Cilicia for their heterodox views (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi.12.2ff.).

[25] It is more significant for the status of Christianity than for the church at Antioch that Origen spent 'some time' there in the early 230s conversing with Julia Mamaea (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vi.21.3f.).

[26] The see is not identified of the Syrian bishop who took his followers into the desert awaiting the Second Coming: Hippolytus, *In Dan.* 4.18 (early third century). For the attendance lists at Nicaea: Wallace-Hadrill (1982) app. 1, 165f.

[27] Kraeling (1967). The Assembly Hall had a capacity to accommodate a congregation of between sixty to seventy persons: p. 109. The graffiti are recorded on pp. 89ff. (C. B. Welles).

Palmyra, Damascus and Caesarea Philippi (Paneas).[28] As so often, we catch our first glimpses of Christianity in these centres only from the activities of the Great Persecution. Thus from Emesa came the martyred bishop Silvanus (with two companions), oddly described as 'bishop of the churches around Emesa' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.3), but also revealing the precious information that he had been bishop there for a 'full forty years' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.6.1), that is dating back to the early 270s. And from Damascus we have the prostitutes (under compulsion) giving out tales of orgies 'in the very churches' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.5.2). Over in the Beka'a valley we know nothing of any community at the great pagan cult centre of Heliopolis until Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.58, cf. Soc. *HE* I.18 (the construction of a large church-building under imperial patronage, with the installation of bishop, presbyters and deacons) – but our evidence attests long resistance to Christianity there (Soz. *HE* VII.15; Theodoret, *HE* IV.19 'Phoenician Heliopolis, a place where none of the inhabitants, who are all given over to idols, can endure so much as to hear the name of Christ').

It is, however, the cities of coastal Phoenicia, early exposed to Christian influence and open to lines of communication and the trade of ideas (they have long been 'hellenized') where we may feel Christianity has established a more significant presence. Certainly Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, Beirut and Tripoli (and possibly Antaradus (Coptic list) as well) were all represented at Nicaea. Ptolemais and Tyre had made a brief appearance (with bishops) long ago during the paschal controversy (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.25) and Tyre appears by mid-century rather as the leading bishopric of Phoenicia (Dionys. Alex. *ap. Hist. Eccl.* VII.5.1),[29] until, once again, these coastal cities re-emerge in our accounts of the Great Persecution – Sidon (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.3, the presbyter Zenobius), Beirut (Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 4.2f., Apphianus lived a virtuously Christian life there; cf. Theodoret, *HE* I.4 (bishop Gregorius)), Tripoli (Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 3, Dionysius; cf. Theodoret, *HE* I.4 (bishop Hellanicus)), and Tyre (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.3, bishop Tyrannion; *MP* 5.1, Ulpianius; *MP* 7.1, Theodosia; cf. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.7.1f., Egyptians at Tyre; cf. Theodoret, *HE* I.4f. (bishop Paulinus); Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.4f. (Eusebius' panegyric on the building of churches addressed to bishop Paulinus of Tyre 'by whose zeal and enthusiasm the temple in Tyre, surpassing in splendour all others in Phoenicia, had been erected.').[30]

But again, as so often, our evidence does not take us much beyond these major hellenized and urban centres.[31]

[28] Cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.17f. (the statues interpreted to be of Christ and the woman touching the hem of his robe, on view at Paneas).

[29] Origen died and was buried in Tyre (Photius, *Bibl.* 118 (92b)) in the course of the 250s.

[30] Note especially Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.4.37ff., 63ff. for a detailed description of this rebuilt church – in fact our earliest text describing a Christian church.

[31] But note *OGIS* 608: chance survival of an inscription reveals a Marcionite *synagōgē*, apparently led by a presbyter (Paulus), in 318/19 in the village of Lebada (Deir-Ali) south of Damascus. How far was this typical – or merely an isolated phenomenon?

(k) Palestine

Although Palestine was the homeland of Christianity and already the site, therefore, of pious pilgrimage,[32] impressions are that Christianity met with strong resistance, not only in towns with growing Jewish dominance, such as Tiberias, Sepphoris, Capernaum (cf. Epiph. *Panarion* 30.4), but also in thoroughly hellenized centres such as Gaza[33] (though note the seat of a bishop 'of the churches round Gaza', Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.5 = ?the port of Maiumas). Bishoprics there undoubtedly were – some eighteen or so Palestinian bishops attended Nicaea[34] – and there was early established a synodal organization (cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.23.3, late second century) but it is very difficult to gauge the size of the communities involved. Certainly Jerusalem retained some of its status as the site of Christian origins (cf. Firmilian *ap*. Cypr. *Ep*. 75.5 and later enshrined in Council of Nicaea, *can*. 7); it became a centre of Christian learning (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.20.1, the library of bishop Alexander; *P. Oxy*. III.412.59f., the *patria* of the cultivated Julius Africanus)[35] – and was destined to enjoy imperial munificence (Eus. *Vit. Const.* III.26ff.). Caesarea, the provincial capital, grew into an even more prominent centre of Christian scholarship (the sojourn of Origen, the school and library of Pamphilus). And chance notices such as 'many rulers of the country churches' (Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 1.3 – near Caesarea?), a confessor bishop 'in a small city of Palestine' (Epiph. *Panarion* LXIII.2.4), 'bishops administering the churches round Jerusalem' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.11.2, early third century) remind us that spread, even if numerically thin, may well have been erratic.

Here statistics drawn from the snapshot sample of Eusebius' *Onomasticon* might provide some sort of guidance. He registers some thirty local and regional villages as being 'very large' (μεγίστη κώμη) and three as being large (κώμη μεγάλη). Of these thirty-three, seven are identified specifically as being Jewish, one only as being Christian (ὅλη Χριστιανῶν).[36] In addition he notes four other villages (size not designated) as being Jewish

[32] Melito *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.26.14 (Jerusalem) *c*. 160s; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.11.2 (Jerusalem), early third century; Origen *c. Cels*. 1.51 (the cave at Bethlehem); Pionius, *Mart. Pionii* 4.18ff.; Firmilian; Jerome, *de Viris Illustr*. 54 (*sub occasione sanctorum locorum Palestiniam veniens*); cf. later, Eus. *Demonstr. Ev*. VI.18.23; *Vit. Const.* III.25ff.

[33] Note the famous statistic in (the unreliable) Marc. Diac. *Vit. Porph*. 21: the original congregation in Gaza is given as 127 Christians when Porphyry took up his duties in 394, with idol-worshipping villages still near the city (ch. 17; cf. Soz. *HE* VII.15). Jerome's novelistic *Life of Hilarion of Gaza* is also instructive (*PL* XXIII.29ff.).

[34] Sources agree at least on Jerusalem, Neapolis, Sebaste, Caesarea, Gadara, Askalon, Nicopolis, Jamnia, Eleutheropolis, Maximianopolis, Jericho, Zabulon, Lydda, Azotus, Scythopolis, Gaza, Aila, Capitolias.

[35] Vieillefond (1970) 17 is unduly agnostic.

[36] References are to the edition of Klostermann (1904). Jewish: Akkaron (22.9), Anaia (26.9), Engeddi (86.18), Eremmon (88.17), Esthemo (86.21), Ietta (108.9), Thala (98.26). Christian: Ietheira (108.3). Should we deduce a strongly gentile population generally?

whereas there are two in this category described as 'wholly Christian'.[37] That is suggestive of the type of proportion – and the sparse scatter – that may have been found throughout the small towns and villages of the Palestinian and neighbouring countryside.[38] But the casual mention of a Marcionite bishop (Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 10.2) is a sobering and important reminder that rival Christian followers are largely excluded from our records.

(l) East of the Euphrates

Despite the strong impression influentially left by Eusebius, Christianity's boundaries were by no means coterminous with the Roman frontiers. It is clear, for example, that well before the Roman frontiers moved across the Euphrates in the later second century to claim the new provinces of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, Christianity was already well established there, most notably in Osrhoenean Edessa[39] (witness Bardaisan (d. 222) and his son Harmonius)[40] – though, notoriously, some centres, such as Carrhae, long adhered to their traditional cults. Bardaisan himself is made to bear witness to the presence of Christians also in 'Parthia', 'Persia', 'Media', Hatra and among the 'Kushanians' (Bactria) in *The Book of the Laws of the Countries* (written in Syria in the early third century).[41] And, if nothing else, the life and missionary endeavours of Mani, self-styled as 'Apostle of Jesus Christ', and of his early disciples in the course of the third century are evidence enough of the receptivity to and rapid spread, both outside and inside the imperial boundaries, of a variation on the Judaeo-Christian message in the east.[42] No surprise, therefore, that Eusebius can cite a document on the paschal controversy from 'those in Osrhoene and the cities there' (*Hist. Eccl.* v.23.4, late second century), that by mid-century Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, can write (to Rome) well aware of the attitude of the church of Mesopotamia on Novatian (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* vii.5.2), that early in the next century Eusebius feels he can even describe Edessa as being entirely Christian (since the apostolic age!) (*Hist. Eccl.* ii.1.7), boasting an archive of documents, in Syriac, to prove it (*Hist. Eccl.* i.13)) and that the Roman frontier cities of Rhesaina and Nisibis as well as Edessa could be

[37] Jewish: Dabeira (78.6), Zif (92.21), Nineve (136.2), Noorath (136.25). Christian: Anaia (26.13; not = Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 10.2 (Anaia near Eleutheropolis)), Caraiatha (112.15 – near Madaba).

[38] The study of Goodman (1983) is invaluable on the Judaeization of Galilean village life. On the Golan, see Urman (1985) and Urman and Flesher (1995).

[39] Note the *Chronicle of Edessa*: the flood of 201 damaged 'the temple of the church of the Christians', presumably a converted church-house such as at Dura. Translation in Segal (1970) 24f. The Christian Julius Africanus clearly found court life at Edessa congenial in the company of Bardaisan (and others): *Cest. fr.* 1.20.28ff. (ed. Vieillefond (1970)). See also Ross (2001) ch. 6.

[40] On the (vague) whereabouts of the origin of Tatian: Millar, *Near East* 460.

[41] Trans. Drijvers (1965) 59ff. (cf. Eus. *Praep. Ev.* vi.10.46) and Drijvers (1966) 60ff. On Harmonius: Theodoret, *Haeret. Fab. Compend.* 1.22 (*PG* lxxxiii.372); Soz. *HE* iii.16.5ff.

[42] Lieu (1992) and (1994), esp. ch. 2. Gardiner and Lieu (1996) 146ff. For a convenient text and English translation of the Cologne Mani-Codex: Cameron and Dewey (1979).

represented by bishops at Nicaea.[43] Further afield, Constantine, as Christian emperor, is made to evince awareness that there abounded 'many churches of God among the Persians and that thousands of people were gathered into the fold of Christ' (Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.8; cf. IV.13) – thus provoking suspicion of the loyalty of Christian subjects in Persia and leading to spasmodic persecutions there.[44] Eusebius can mention that one of the 'Persian bishops' was present at the consecration of the church in Jerusalem (*Vit. Const.* IV.43), and there is a persistent legend that some of these Persian Christians, notably the Greek-speaking ones (distinguished as 'Christians' versus 'Nazaraeans'), owed their origin to Christians who were among the deportees captured during the incursions of Shapur I in the 250s.[45] But we can also surmise that the movements of commerce across the permeable frontier zones and the extensive Jewish diaspora in the region may have further assisted the spread of the new religious ideas.[46] Certainly by the late third century Christians (and Manichaeans) were prominent and numerous enough to incur the ire of and suppression by the Zoroastrians.[47]

Overall, whilst details remain sparse, the early production of local language texts, martyr-*acta*, manuals and hymns (leaving aside how far, in some cases, they may be ultimately derivative from western sources) suggests churches that have managed to establish remarkably solid local followings.[48]

(m) Egypt

Egyptian Christianity emerges in the third century with strong intellectual (and indeed social) credentials, with the writings of Clement (pupil of Pantaenus) displaying broad erudition and addressing a cultivated and philosophically educated as well as (at least in some sections) a financially secure audience.[49] And this can be set against an intellectual context which

[43] For eastern representation at Nicaea see Wallace-Hadrill (1982) app. 1, 165f. Note the late third-century bishop from Mesopotamia, Archelaus, whose work in Syriac against Mani was translated, according to Jerome, into Greek (*De Viris Illustr*. 72).

[44] See Brock (1982); and Barnes (1985), elucidating Aphrahat, *Demonstration* 5. Note also Epiph. *Panarion* 1.42.1 claiming Marcionites are still to be found in Persia.

[45] For example, *Chronicle of Se'ert* 2 (ed. Scher (1908) 220f. with French trans.); English trans. in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier* 297.

[46] Of course there are persistent legendary accounts of apostolic missionary activities outside the empire, e.g. Thomas to Parthia, Andrew to Scythia (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* III.1.1), Bartholomew to 'India' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.10.3). For what it is worth, at the beginning of the third century Tertullian (rhetorically) has Christianity spread amongst 'Parthians, Medes, Elamites and those who dwell in Mesopotamia and Armenia' (*Adv. Iudaeos* 5.4 (CCSL II.1354)), whilst a century later Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes* II.12 has the Christian message heard 'in India, among the Seres, Persians and Medes'. On commerce with Persia, see, for example, *Expositio* 22 (mid-fourth century).

[47] The inscription of the Magian Kartir at Naqsh-i-Rustam (Sprengling, *Iran*). See Brock (1978), and (1971) on the distinction between 'Christian' and 'Nazaraean' (pp. 91ff.).

[48] For an overview, Millar, *Near East* 481ff.

[49] Especially observable in the *Paedagogus* and *Quis Dives Salvetur*.

had already produced much heady Gnostic speculation and writing (most notably Basilides and Valentinus) as well as many widely circulated apocryphal texts (e.g. Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Mary, The Wisdom of Jesus Christ).

The vignette which we have of the young Origen in Alexandria early in the century is telling – and bears witness to this continuing tradition of open theological inquiry – as recounted (defensively) by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.2.13f.):

> But when his father had been perfected by martyrdom, he was left destitute with his mother and six smaller brothers, when he was not quite seventeen. His father's property was confiscated for the imperial treasury, and he found himself, along with his relatives, in want of the necessaries of life. Yet he was deemed worthy of divine aid, and met with both welcome and refreshment from a certain lady, very rich in this world's goods, and otherwise distinguished, who nevertheless was treating with honour a well-known person, one of the heretics at Alexandria at that time. He was an Antiochene by race, but the lady we have mentioned kept him at her house as her adopted son, and treated him with especial honour. But although Origen of necessity had to consort with him, he used to give clear proofs of his orthodoxy, at that age, in the faith. For though very great numbers, not only of heretics but also of our own people, were gathered together with Paul (for that was the man's name), attracted by his apparent skilfulness in speech, Origen could never be persuaded to associate with him in prayer, keeping the rule of the church, even from boyhood, and 'loathing' – the very word he himself uses somewhere – the teachings of the heresies.
>
> (trans. J. E. L. Oulton)

Dionysius, who later took over the direction of the catechetical school from Heraclas, can report in mid-century – again, defensively (to Rome) – that he had a vision urging him to 'read all things that may come into your hands' and claiming that it was by dint of reading (and refuting) heretical works that he had actually found his faith (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.7.2f.). And he goes on to record in the same epistle his episcopal predecessor's [Heraclas'] expulsion of Christians who 'while still reputed members of the congregation were charged with frequenting some false teacher' (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.7.4). Alexandria was undoubtedly the site of much theological discussion and debate – but also not without its attendant tensions, all this being well exemplified in the scholarly activities and personal history of the great Origen himself.

The impressive series of Christian teachers and writers in Alexandria that span the rest of the century – Dionysius (to whom Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* books VI and VII are in large part devoted), Theognostus (Photius, *Bibl.* 106.86b), Pierius (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.32.26ff.; Jerome, *De Viris Illustr.* 76; Photius, *Bibl.* 119.93af.) and Peter of Alexandria (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.32.31) – tends to dominate our perception of Egyptian Christianity. This is to some

degree due to the dominant cultural and administrative role that Alexandria itself played in Egyptian life with its reflection in the dominating, indeed authoritarian, role of the chair of Alexandria in the institutional life of the Egyptian church. The patriarchate is in formation.

It is salutary, therefore, to be reminded of the millenarian writings of Nepos 'bishop of those in Egypt': he had composed a work entitled 'Refutation of the Allegorists'. Not content with composing a refutation in two books in response ('On Promises') Dionysius went up to the Arsinoite *nome* 'where this doctrine had long been prevalent so that schisms and defections of whole churches had taken place', and there he held a three-day debate with the 'presbyters and teachers of the brethren in the villages (there being present also such of the brethren as wished)' (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.24). Likewise the churches in the Pentapolis, indulging in Sabellian speculations on the nature of the godhead, occasioned similar debate with Dionysius ('there came to me from either side both documents and the brethren who were ready to discuss the question') and the bishops required extensive written refutation (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.6; VII.26.1). Clearly, Egypt, Libya and the Pentapolis is a region where Christianity has appealed not just to the educated and the urban of Alexandria (whom Dionysius designates simply as οἱ πολιτικοί).

How deep that appeal had penetrated by the end of the third century is remarkably illuminated by the diffusion of Christian texts in middle and upper Egypt, displaying a wide range of reading among Christians literate in Greek in provincial Egypt (biblical, apocryphal, devotional, theological – and up-to-date with contemporary Alexandria, and beyond). Not only that: the production of Coptic Christian texts in the course of the third century brings to light what we can but dimly see otherwise of the Christian mission to the indigenous population[50] (such Christians being habitually designated by the urban Origen and Dionysius as 'Libyans' or 'Egyptians', as opposed to 'Hellenes'). These Coptic texts help to flesh out the picture we might derive from the *Life of Antony* (especially chs. 1f., 72f.): he is described as unlettered in Greek, and the biblical passages which he had heard in his home church at the village of Coma in the 260s had therefore been presumably turned into Coptic.[51] On this evidence Christianity has become remarkably diffused.[52] And whilst we cannot rely too literally on Eusebius' enthusiastic description of the droves of Egyptian martyrs during

[50] See, for a valuable survey, Roberts (1979); also Judge and Pickering (1977); Rousseau (1999) ch. 1.

[51] Jerome understood that the seven letters attributed to him had been *in graecam linguam translatae*: *De Viris Illustr*. 88). On these letters see Rubensen (1995).

[52] Note the lector Aurelius Ammonius of the former village church of Chysis (304): he is described as 'not knowing letters' (*P. Oxy*. XXXIII.2673). That would normally imply he did not know Greek and must have therefore read the lessons in Coptic. For doubts (not altogether persuasive): Wipszycka (1983). Aurelius Ammonius testifies that, apart from a bronze gate, his church possessed 'neither gold nor silver nor money nor clothes nor beasts nor slaves nor lands nor property either from grants or

the Great Persecution (they are described as μυρίοι in *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.8.1; VIII.13.7 and cf. VIII.7; IX.11.4), victims from this area on his testimony should be numbered in the very many hundreds, including 'those who were distinguished for wealth, birth and education and also for learning and philosophy' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.9.6).[53] Christianity has managed to establish itself as a feature in this landscape,[54] Eusebius (*Praep. Ev.* III.5.5) being prepared even to claim that 'the majority of those in Egypt have already been released from this sickness [*sc.* of animal cults]':[55] the author of *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* ch. 34 seems to testify otherwise.

Only a dozen bishops from Egypt and the Pentapolis are known in mid-century (from the writings of Dionysius of Alexandria). Some 22 bishops attended Nicaea and the schedule of Melitius to bishop Alexander attests 29 (Athan. *Apol. c. Arian.* 71). However, Athanasius can claim he had the support of 'nearly 100 bishops' from Egypt, Libya and the Pentapolis in the late 330s (*Apol. c. Arian.* 1, 71). This evidence certainly suggests a major leap forward, at least in terms of institutional organization, since the mid-third century: does the narrative in Antony's *Life* suggest the beginnings of a corresponding sea-change in popular religious adherence?[56]

6. The provinces of Asia

(a) Cilicia

Despite the Pauline mission and the close ties this region naturally had with Antioch and Syria generally, our knowledge of the third-century church here is meagre. In mid-century Helenus of Tarsus appears as the metropolitan of a Cilician synod of bishops ('Helenus at Tarsus and all the churches of Cilicia', Dionys. Alex. *ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.5.1; cf. VI.46.3; VII.5.3): by the time of Nicaea those churches numbered at least nine with one *chorepiscopus* in addition.[57] From the location of those bishoprics – and the

bequests'; i.e. the range of categories of possessions expected to be found in a church by this time. Epiph. *Panarion* LXVII.1.1ff. attests the ascetic and biblical scholar Hieracas, a bilingual teacher and writer in Greek and Coptic (*c.* 270–360).

[53] For further discussion on Egypt in the time of the Great Persecution, see below.

[54] Note that already by mid-century there could be sectional assemblies in the Alexandrian church (Dionys. Alex. *ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.17). By the end of the century, a *nome* capital like Oxyrhynchus could boast two churches, in the north and in the south of the town, *P. Oxy.* I.43, verso, col. i, l. 10; col. iii, l. 19. Observe, too, that before the third century was out Manichaean devotees had established themselves in sufficient numbers to attract attention from Christians and pagans alike (*P. Ryl.* III.469, Alexander of Lycopolis).

[55] Eus. *Demonstr. Ev.* VI.20.297b can even assert: 'Of all mankind it is amongst the Egyptians that the word of the gospel teaching has waxed strongest.'

[56] For attempts to measure that change Bagnall (1982) with the reservations of Wipszycka (1988). On Egyptian bishoprics in the early fourth century, see Martin (1979) 6–7.

[57] Viz. Tarsus, Epiphania, Neronias, Castabala, Flavias, Adana, Mopsuestia, Ageae and Alexandria Parva. On *chorepiscopi* in this region, see Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.70ff.

fourth-century sequel[58] – we can safely assume that Rough Cilicia was still largely untouched by the Christian mission.

(b) Cappadocia

Cappadocia has almost as slight a record for the third century. Early in the century the learned Alexander was translated as bishop from Caesarea (the metropolitan church) to Jerusalem[59] but the major figure known to us is Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea for over a quarter of a century (d. 268), a friend and correspondent of Origen's (they also exchanged visits) and who played a senior role in ecclesiastical affairs.[60] Seven Cappadocian bishops attended Nicaea[61] in addition to five *chorepiscopi* (the latter no doubt reflecting the scattered nature of much of the settlement pattern).[62] Apart from the presence of the leaders of the Cappadocian churches 'distinguished above all for learning and eloquence' at the dedication of the church at Jerusalem (Eus. *Vit. Const.* IV.43) we have to wait for later in the fourth century for any real sense of Christianity in this area.[63] But to judge by what little we know of the third-century bishops this was no cultural or theological backwater in the third century either.

(c) Armenia

To the north of Cappadocia, we hear of the church in the area of Armenia Minor first from a notice in Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.46.3. In mid-century Dionysius of Alexandria 'wrote to those in Armenia whose bishop was Meruzanes . . . on repentance'. This rather sounds as if Meruzanes may have been sole bishop in the region (at Sebaste?); but as the subject of penitence had become a major source of controversy in the aftermath of the persecution of Decius it also implies that there were Armenian Christians who had been caught up in the persecution. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.6.8 (obscurely) further implies that there were Christians in the area of Melitene also at the beginning of the Great Persecution (but was this now rather in the province of Cappadocia?).[64] But our most startling insight comes from the Testament of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (under Licinius, ?early 320s,

[58] Fowden (1998) 540–1. Note also the Egyptian confessors sent to work in the mines in Cilicia during the Great Persecution: Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 10.1, 11.6.

[59] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.11.1f.

[60] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.46.3; VII.5.1; cf. VII.5.4; VII.14; VII.28.1; VII.30.4; and see further G. W. Clarke (1984) 250f.

[61] From Caesarea, Tyana, Colonia, Cybistra, Comana, Spania and (?) Parnassus.

[62] Note Christians captured among the victims of the Gothic raids (late 250s): Basil, *Ep.* 70 (*PG* XXXII.436); these included Christians from the village of Sadagolthina (near Parnassus), Philostorg. *HE* 11.5 (*GCS* 21 bis: 17). Firmilian *ap.* Cypr. *Ep.* 75.10 (CCSL IIIC.590ff.) attests country Christians also, including clergy (*unum de presbyteris rusticum, item et alium diaconum*: 230s): Origen, *In Matt.* 24.7 (*GCS* Origen 11.75 comm. ser. 39) may well refer to the same incident as Firmilian, adding the detail of the burning of churches (plural) of Christians blamed for a series of earthquakes.

[63] Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.67ff. [64] See Kopeček (1974) 320–1.

Soz. *HE* IX.2). Greetings are sent to over a dozen different Christian communities (those places named are nevertheless all obscure) with the clear implication that there are Christian groups scattered throughout Armenian hamlets and villages serviced by presbyters and in some cases assisted further by deacons. Christian settlement in the countryside, it is well to be reminded, can be very erratic. How far was this replicated elsewhere? Satala as well as Sebaste sent bishops to Nicaea.

As for the kingdom of Armenia to the east we have to rely unfortunately on the legends associated with the evangelization of Gregory the Illuminator. All one can assert safely is that at the time of the Great Persecution Eusebius can regard these Armenians as Christians *tout court* (*Hist. Eccl.* IX.8.2; cf. Soz. *HE* II.8) and that Aristakes, said to be the son of Gregory, and Akrites attended Nicaea as bishops. But we really cannot form a reliable picture of the depth of evangelization by the end of the third century. Not only is this another example of our third-century ignorance – it also highlights how seldom in this century do we hear of proselytizing missionaries as the source of the spread of Christianity.

(d) Pontic region

Where we do hear of missionary activity in mid-century is in the adjoining region of Pontus along the Black Sea. But again it is in a difficult source, an encomiastic oration written by Gregory of Nyssa a full century after the events narrated and reflecting anachronistic ideals of the role, powers (spiritual as well as political) and status of bishops (as held by a bishop) in the late fourth century. So on many of the details of the life of the honorand of that panegyric, Gregory Thaumaturgus, we cannot securely rely. However, as in much of Asia Minor generally, this is a region early evangelized with second-century evidence ranging from individual cities like Sinope (whence Marcion, wealthy son of a bishop: cf. Epiph. *Panarion* XLII.1.3ff.) or individual bishops (Hippol. *Comm. in Daniel.* 4.19, ed. M. Lefèvre)[65] to general statements implying an established hierarchy and synodal capacity (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IV.23.6: Dionysius of Corinth writing to 'the church sojourning at Amastris and the other churches in Pontus': cf. *Hist. Eccl.* V.23.3 (paschal controversy)) and reflected also in non-Christian sources (Pliny, *Ep.* X.96; Lucian, *Alex. Abon.* 25; cf. 38).

The legendary stories of Gregory's missionary activities may well reflect traditional memories (palpably inaccurate!) of mass conversion throughout the region both in towns and countryside (but especially in the vicinity of Neocaesarea) over the generation or so after 240.[66] But Gregory's own status,

[65] A 'pious and humble-minded' bishop, the subject of millenarian dreams, induces brethren to 'abandon lands and fields', most of whom sold off their possessions: a rural bishop, perhaps?

[66] Famous is the claim that Gregory found but seventeen Christians in Neocaesarea, when he reluctantly agreed to be its bishop, and when he died he left unconverted but seventeen pagans (Greg.

and that of his brother Athenodore – wealthy, carefully educated, hailing from the local aristocracy of Pontic Neocaesarea, and seriously dedicated pupils and converts of Origen's[67] – is an accurate sign of the changing times: it is now possible for such men to find in Christianity a congenial and attractive alternative 'philosophy'. Both became Pontic bishops (Gregory of his hometown of Neocaesarea). And Gregory's so-called Canonical Epistle reveals him authentically in episcopal action, addressing a brother bishop (of Trapezus?)[68] in the aftermath of raids by Boradi and Goths in the early 250s and judiciously laying down orderly legislation in a disorderly world of rape, raiding, looting and abetting (by Christians) of the barbarian invaders and captors. By the time of Nicaea the region could send bishops from Amastris, Pompeiopolis, Ionopolis, Amasia (cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.8.15; *Vit. Const.* II.1f. (Licinius)), Comana (cf. Greg. Nyssa, *Vit. Greg. Thaum.* (*PG* XLVI.933ff.)), Zela, Trapezus and even as far away as Pityus.

(e) Bithynia

Nothing could illustrate more vividly our typical third-century ignorance than the province of Bithynia. It fades almost completely from our sight after the letter of Pliny (*Ep.* X.96, early second century) and a notice in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* IV.23.4: letter of Dionysius of Corinth to the Nicomedians, late second century).[69] When it re-emerges to view in the time of the Great Persecution a century later, there are numerous Christians to persecute (e.g. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9a.4f.), with Christians in the imperial service – soldiers, civil servants, eunuchs, slaves (Lact. *DMP* 14.3f.; 15.1f.; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.6.; cf. *Oratio ad Sanctos* 25); Christians are judged to be worthy targets of serious polemical attack (Lact. *Div. Inst.* V.2.3ff.; V.2.12ff.; V.3.22; *DMP* 16.4 (Sossianus Hierocles)) and at Nicomedia famously there is already a church erected on high ground in full view of the imperial residence (Lact. *DMP* 12.3) – with Lactantius himself present as an observer. Clearly silence in our sources should not be read to imply that a quiet transformation has not been taking place on the religious landscape but we simply do not know how rapidly – or by what processes – it was occurring: the sequel, however, does suggest that the transformation has been considerable: nine Bithynian bishops plus two *chorepiscopi* were representatives at Nicaea.

Nyssa, *Vit. Greg. Thaum.*; *PG* XLVI.909 and 953): a claim refuted by the archaeological record (e.g. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* 530ff.; Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.53ff.).

[67] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.30, Greg. Thaum. *In Origenem* esp. 5.56ff. (Crouzel (1969)).

[68] *PG* X.1020 (*can.* 1): note also 1040 (*can.* 6) with offending Christians to be sought out in the regional countryside. For an English translation, see Heather and Matthews (1991) ch. 1.

[69] Origen was sojourning briefly in Nicomedia (240s ?), when he responded to Julius Africanus on the book of Daniel (*Ep. ad Jul. Afric.* 2.21: he is in the company of his patron Ambrose and his wife and children *ibid.* 24 (ed. de Lange, in Harl and de Lange (1983)).

(f) Lycia, Pamphylia, Isauria

Equal ignorance of third-century Christianity prevails in these southwesterly regions of Asia Minor before the Great Persecution, apart from bishop Neon and the lay-preacher Euelpis from Laranda (Isauria) in the earlier part of the century (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.19.18), and the writer (and bishop) Methodius, most probably of Olympus (Lycia), in the later part of the century.[70] However, inscriptional evidence (gravestones) from the borderlands of Isauria and Lycaonia, in the valley of the Çarşamba river, is certainly suggestive that there may have been strong Christian representation in this area before the third century was over (allowing all due caution over the dating of undated epitaphs).[71] And Nicaea can reveal from this territory no fewer than twenty-five bishops altogether (some thirteen of whom were from Isauria, including four *chorepiscopi*): we cannot safely assume that the spread of Christianity has been uniform.[72] Local cults and conditions will have been important inhibiting factors.

(g) Asia (Lydia and Mysia) and Caria

A similar pall of ignorance descends over this region during the third century in glaring contrast with the brilliant illumination provided for the second century by the writings of Ignatius, Polycarp, Melito of Sardis and the letter of Polycrates (*ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* V.24). This evidence, in combination with the Pauline mission, would justify us in assuming this region in the third century would be a heartland of Christianity, but astoundingly our only glimpse that might support such an assumption is in the account of the martyrdom of Pionios and his companions in Smyrna (A.D. 250: persecution of Decius).[73] There we encounter not only two presbyters (Pionios and Limnos) and the bishop (Euctemon),[74] but we are also reminded of the sectarian rivalries that have been splitting the communities everywhere. There figure also a Marcionite presbyter (Metrodorus) and a Montanist (Eutychian) – and there is heavy emphasis by Pionios and his followers that they are *Catholic* Christians. And the Jewish polemic of the document further reminds us of the diaspora context in which Christianity may have

[70] The (confused) testimonia on Methodius are well discussed by Musurillo (1958) 3ff. Methodius sets the scene for his dialogue 'On the Resurrection' in the house of the physician Aglaophon at Patara (*De Res.* I.1.1.): consequently evidence of a Christian presence there? Note that the martyr Apphianus (Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 4f.) came from a wealthy aristocratic family in Lycia (Gagae?).

[71] See the discussion in Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.58f.

[72] As usual there are variants in the attendance lists. I rely throughout, with no great faith, on *Patrum Nicaenorum Nomina* (Gelzer *et al.* (1898)). On the petition of the province of Lycia and Pamphylia attesting anti-Christian sentiment (*TAM* II.3 785, now *I. Aryk.* 12 (Arykanda)), see Mitchell, 'Maximinus'.

[73] See Robert *et al.* (1994). See however *MAMA* X.xxxvi–xl for some inscriptional evidence of Christians in the Lydo-Phrygian borderland.

[74] Note also the Christian woman from a village (Karine): *Mart. Pion.* II.2.

found itself throughout Asia generally: an integrated Jewry[75] might be inducive for the toleration – and indeed acceptance – of the Christian *secta*. Despite the silence of our sources, the subscriptions at Nicaea, however, confirm that there were continuing Christian communities at Ephesus, Smyrna, Sardis, Thyateira,[76] Philadelphia, Miletus as well as at least thirteen other cities.

(h) Galatia, Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycaonia

Were we obliged to rely on the surviving literary testimonies, our knowledge of Christianity in these regions of central inland Anatolia would be only marginally less exiguous. We would know of the strongly enthusiastic following that the Montanist movement, arising in Phrygia, won in the region (evidence enough of a significant Christian population) – and of the consequent reaction of the hierarchy to it (see Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.16ff.): hence the synodal meetings at Iconium (Pisidia) and Synnada (Phrygia)[77] (230s?) – 'in the most populous churches and the synods of the brethren, in Iconium and Synnada and in many places' (Dionys. Alex. *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.7.5; Firmilian *ap*. Cypr. *Ep*. 75.4) – and the earlier (condemnatory) document in circulation from Hierapolis (Phrygia) with 'the autograph signatures of many other bishops' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.19). We would also know of various locations associated with the Montanist movement, revealing that Christianity has spread from urban settlements like Ancyra (Galatia: *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.16.3) into some of the rural communities and districts like the Phrygian villages of Ardabav (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.16.7), Cumane (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.16.17), Pepuza and Tymion (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.18.2, 13) or small towns like Eumeneia (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.16.22). We begin to get a context for the anonymous small town (πολίχνη) in Phrygia where all the inhabitants, including all of its officials (λογιστής τε αὐτὸς καὶ στρατηγοὶ σὺν τοῖς ἐν τέλει πᾶσιν), as Christians, were burnt to death in the Great Persecution along with their meeting-place (*conventiculum*) (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.11.1; Lact. *Div. Inst*. v.11.10).[78]

So far our meagre literary record goes. But it is in this region, for the first time to any significant degree, that the pre-Constantinian inscriptional record throws a remarkable flood of light on an otherwise dimly perceived landscape. The monuments come principally from Phrygia in the upper

[75] The central location of the synagogue at Sardis and the synagogue inscriptions from Aphrodisias (though their dating is controversial) are spectacular illustrations (see Reynolds and Tannenbaum (1987)).

[76] For a long period a Montanist stronghold: Epiph. *Panarion* 51.33.

[77] Note *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.19.18: bishop Celsus and lay-preacher Paulinus at Iconium, bishop Atticus and lay-preacher Theodore at Synnada (early third century); and Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.28.1: bishop Nicomas of Iconium (260s).

[78] Compare the small town of Orcistus (late 320s): *MAMA* VII.305, col. i, ll. 39–45: Constantine claiming (no doubt tendentiously) *omnes [i]bidem sectatores sanctissimae religionis habitare dicantur*.

Hermus valley, from Temenothyrae (on the western Phrygian border with Lydia) and its larger eastern neighbour Acmonia, the upper Tembris valley, the valley of the Çarşamba river, the territories around Eumeneia (South Phrygia) and Laodicea Catacecaumene (East Phrygia). Interpreting these sepulchral monuments is fraught with difficulties – identifying, first, indubitably Christian stones (given the high degree of cross-fertilization in sepulchral sentiment with polytheistic as well as Jewish monuments), and then, second, dating undated epitaphs by means of typological analogy, lettering and workshop production with the relatively very few epitaphs dated securely to the pre-Constantinian period. But even so, the implications are clear that some Christians here in these relatively remote and isolated regions were sufficiently comfortable in their environment to display publicly their Christian allegiance; that, on some reckoning, and relying on the proportion of Christian as opposed to non-Christian monuments surviving for the period, Christians made up a significant minority of the population (say, some 20 to 30 percent, and in some instances this went much higher, most notably in the upper Tembris valley and in Eumeneia and its surrounding district). But it is also clear that the record is patchy – Christianity spread irregularly even within a single provincial area.[79] Unfortunately, therefore, we cannot safely extrapolate from this evidence to other areas, but at least we do have unimpeachable evidence that there was an appreciable Christian population in these rural districts. And even though these provinces sent some twenty-four episcopal representatives altogether to Nicaea the location of the bishoprics also indicates that Christianization was far from evenly distributed – eastern Pisidia/Lycaonia is noticeably under-represented, for example.

(i) Summary

On the (unsatisfactory) evidence we have assembled it was clearly a very different experience to live as a Christian in one of the large urban communities (such as Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, Antioch), open to the channels of communication with a wealth of visitors and with a substantial community of fellow-believers, from living (say) in a relatively remote and isolated village of upper Egypt or rural Anatolia. Little wonder there developed regional differences in liturgy and doctrinal emphases, let alone in organizational principles. Some areas, like the African provinces, appear to have a bishop appointed for every community of whatever size whereas others, as in the Egyptian terrain, appear to have fewer bishops with (village) communities left in charge of presbyters – and *chorepiscopi* ('country bishops') appear in the eastern provinces, enjoying an uneasy relationship with their

[79] See now the admirable analysis by Mitchell, *Anatolia* II.38ff., 57ff.; also *MAMA* X.xxxvi–xl and Tabbernee (1997).

urban colleagues.[80] The number of bishops, therefore, from any one area is a statistic that requires further explication. And everywhere it is difficult to discern the degree of rural penetration – and where we can (dimly) discern this, even within a particular region the spread seems erratic and far from uniform. Everywhere also, our sources do not allow us to have much sense of the size and spread of non-orthodox Christian groups – Gnostics, Montanists, Marcionites, Novatianists, Manichaeans *et al.* – but undoubtedly they did exist, as the sequel shows.

Neither can we see clearly the processes of evangelization.[81] So far as we have evidence, to be accepted into baptism involved an unspectacular and ordered procedure, requiring (by contrast with contemporary polytheistic religion) not just joining a cult-group honouring a deity of acknowledged power, but a somewhat lengthy period of instruction in doctrinal content as a catechumen as well as of moral testing in conformity with behavioural codes. Under these circumstances it would be unrealistic to anticipate too wild an advance in numbers over the century, but one practical effect of the 'toleration' of Gallienus may well have been to relax the resistance of many to undergo this process after the turbulent decade of the 250s. Even so we cannot see too many in the narrow percentage of the population belonging to the élite classes – though we cannot expect them, under the circumstances in the third century, to be forward in displaying any Christian allegiance either.[82] But as the fourth-century sequel reveals, Christians emerge rapidly in official ranks, suggesting our record for the later third century is very defective.[83] It was not totally unpredictable, therefore, but neither were the probabilities very high, that Constantine should have emerged from a family environment displaying some tolerance towards Christianity. The brothers Gregory and Athenodore, hailing as they did from the administrative and governing classes, but attracted to the new philosophy, may not have been so isolated a phenomenon as they appear to us earlier in the century. Certainly Christianity was emerging as a worthy target for serious philosophic polemic by the end of the second century (Celsus) and this continued into the late third century (e.g. the voluminous Porphyry). It is now a major feature on the religious landscape, and as the following section discloses, felt by some to be a thoroughly threatening one.

[80] Revealed in the Council of Ancyra (314) *can.* 13; the Council of Neocaesarea (315?) *can.* 13; and, later in the century, the Council of Antioch *can.* 8, 10; the Council of Sardica *can.* 6; the Council of Laodicea *can.* 57.

[81] We do catch glimpses in such passages as Origen, *c. Cels.* III.9, III.44; III.53; III.55ff. And Dionys. Alex. (*ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.II.12), defensively, sees the hand of God in his being exiled to Cephro so that 'for the first time was the word sown through our agency among those who had not formerly received it'.

[82] For analysis of the known data for the third century, see G. W. Clarke (1974) 32ff. and especially Eck (1971).

[83] See Barnes (1989). For sociological modelling of growth in the sect of Christians see Stark (1996) and Hopkins (1998).

And whilst statistics fail us, Christianity certainly emerges as a visible presence in the social landscape of the empire as well – but the fourth century shows that whereas, on our evidence, it can have been overall only a minor presence (and especially so in some of the western provinces), it was soon to be a powerful and dynamic one.

II. CHRISTIANS AND THE ROMAN STATE

1. Persecution, A.D. 193–249

In this first section I provide a quick summary – with minimal analysis – of the known clashes between Roman authorities and the Christian communities in the first half of the third century.

'Persecution' of Christians by Roman officials had been in the course of the second century sporadic and unsystematic, and basically local in range, and is best seen in the context of the occasional harassment of many another exotic group equally regarded as deviant (astrologers, soothsayers, magicians and the like). However, Christians had been considered troublesome enough to have been brought to the attention, from time to time, not just of Roman provincial governors or of the Roman urban prefect but on rare occasions of Roman emperors themselves (Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius), so much so that early in the third century Ulpian was able to draw up a register of imperial rescripts (i.e. imperial responses to referrals by provincial governors, possibly responses to complaints or queries by provincial councils etc.) demonstrating the punishments that by then were deemed appropriate for Christian adherents:[84] there was by that date an adequate accumulation of case-histories with imperial authority. But the intermittent and regional nature of the outbreaks needs to be emphasized: Christians were *ipso facto* potentially on the wrong side of the law but it required local circumstances to realize that potentiality, especially through popular agitation (whether out of religious fervour, or of superstitious fear occasioned by earthquake, drought, flood, plague or famine) or, occasionally, through Christian enthusiastic provocation. In either case it was pressure from below, rather than imperial initiative, that gave rise to troubles, breaching the generally prevailing, but nevertheless fragile, limits of Roman tolerance: the official attitude was passive until activated to confront particular cases and this activation normally was confined to the local and provincial level. There is a strong tendency in later sources to universalize these local outbreaks as the heroization of the past age of martyrdom gained pace in the post-Constantinian era but there are no solid grounds

[84] Lact. *Div. Inst.* V.II.19: *rescripta principum nefaria collegit ut doceret quibus poenis adfici oporteret* (from the seventh book of *De Officio Proconsulis*, composed under early Caracalla).

for concluding that the same pattern did not apply for the first half of the third century as it had throughout the second century.

And throughout this first half of the third century we have to appreciate that this intermittent trouble is brought to our attention by casual evidence: our sources being so fitful, we have to allow that we have but a sample of what Christians may well have experienced elsewhere (thanks to Eusebius, a fundamental source, our view is notoriously biased towards eastern evidence). And we have to allow that, additionally, victims belonging to other Christian sects may well have been crowded out of that imperfect record: with martyrdom valued as the supreme sign of the elect, memory of these sectaries was promptly erased in what emerged as the orthodox tradition, in the rush to lay claim to the spiritual high ground of martyrdom. It was of course solemnly and consistently argued by the orthodox that there can be no true martyrdom outside the church. Thus, under the Antonines, Montanists and Marcionites and other non-orthodox groups could lay claim to 'innumerable martyrs' (*ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.16.20f.), but typically our knowledge of individuals comes basically in efforts to discredit their spiritual credentials; e.g. *ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* v.18.5ff. (Montanists); Tert. *adv. Prax.* 1.4 (Praxeas). A century later, in the martyrdom of Pionios (250) we casually – but significantly – encounter (without elaboration) a Marcionite martyr (ch. 21.5f.) and a Montanist confessor (ch. 11.2) – such sectaries, generally suppressed, have to be added mentally to our register of Christian victims.[85] In all this the frequent occurrence of confessors (that is, released Christians) as opposed to perfected martyrs is noteworthy: in the case of provincial governors, wielding as they did the *ius gladii*, their discretionary powers (the *arbitrium iudicantis*) could be crucial. A period of imprisonment after an initial hearing (with pressure to recant) appears to have been standard, to be followed, in a significant number of cases, by eventual release as hopelessly recalcitrant – or as renegade (Tert. *ad Scap.* 4 provides, among many other instances, some pertinent illustrations). Arrest as a Christian did not inevitably lead to a martyr's death: adventitious circumstances such as the hostility of a crowd or the strength of the religious sentiments of a governor could be determinant.

Under Septimius Severus the spotlight for us falls on Egypt and Africa, but that focus may well be due to the vagaries of our surviving documentation (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.1–5; Tertullian's writings especially *De Corona Militis, Scorpiace* and *ad Scap.,* and the *Passio* of Perpetua and Felicitas).[86]

[85] Note also the anonymous Marcionite woman, martyred in Caesarea (Pal.) under Valerian, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.12, and the Marcionite bishop Asclepius martyred also in Caesarea (Pal.) during the Great Persecution, Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 10.3 (A.D. 309), as well as the condemned Thecla (who has Montanist companions in prison) *Mart. Pal.*(L) 3.2 (A.D. 304); cf. 6.3.

[86] Symptomatic of our incidental knowledge are passing remarks made by Tertullian (*Ad Scap*. 3.4) in a passage warning Scapula (A.D. 212) of the grim fate that awaits persecuting governors: Claudius Lucius

Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* VI.1 (in typical fashion) asserts that 'when Severus was stirring up persecution against the churches, in every place splendid martyrdoms of the athletes of piety were accomplished and this was especially frequent at Alexandria', and he goes on to illustrate – without further reference to the emperor or to other places – the cases of ten specific (Alexandrian) individuals whilst declaring 'countless numbers' donned the crowns of martyrdom (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.2.3). There is no good reason to doubt the reality of the particular cases that Eusebius cites, only the generalization that he draws from them and the imperial source he attributes to them. The named victims are Plutarch (brother of Heraclas, later to be bishop of Alexandria), Serenus, Heraclides, Hero, a second Serenus, Herais ('of the women'), Potamiaena (these seven are all identified by Eusebius as being converts and disciples of Origen's, several being catechumens or only recently baptized, *Hist. Eccl.* VI.3.2; 3.13, 4.1ff.), Marcella (the mother of Potamiaena) and the soldier Basilides (also a catechumen?, *Hist. Eccl.* VI.5.6). These all appear to suffer under the Egyptian prefect Ti. Claudius Subatianus Aquila (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.3.3, 5.2 – attested in office from at least 206 until 211). The tenth named victim is Leonides, Origen's father: his death, and the subsequent confiscation of his property (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.2.13), is dated by Eusebius unequivocally to the tenth year of Severus (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.2.2) under the prefecture of Quintus Maecius Laetus (attested for at least 200 to 203). Despite the impression of Eusebius, his case might well be an incident quite separate from that of the other victims: at least a further prefecture of Egypt, that of Claudius Julianus, intervened (204–205/6).[87] There does seem to be a popular element in the attack on the catechetical school and its members: Origen barely escaped stoning from the heathen mob, he needed to be defended in his own home by soldiers and was forced to flee from house to house for safety from the unbelievers (or so Eusebius defensively declares, *Hist. Eccl.* VI.2.4ff.). But this is no mob pogrom: some of the victims are beheaded.

At about the same time (traditionally remembered as 7 March), when the procurator Hilarianus was acting proconsul in Africa Proconsularis (203?, but 202 or 204 are also possible), a group of five youthful catechumens along with their teacher were condemned to death fighting the beasts in the amphitheatre of Carthage (though the location is not actually attested in the *Passio*), at games celebrating the birthday of Geta, the emperor's younger son. They were two slaves, Revocatus and Felicitas, Saturninus and

Herminianus (*PIR*² C888), angered at his wife's conversion to Christianity, as governor of Cappadocia had cruelly treated Christians and had succeeded in making some deny their faith through torture. Likewise Tertullian implies by the remark attributed to Caecilius Capella (partisan of Pescennius Niger) at the eventual fall of Byzantium in A.D. 196 ('Christians rejoice') that Christians had been ill treated under his governorship there.

[87] Bastianini (1975) 304ff. and (1980) 85.

Secundulus (who actually died in prison before the ordeal, *Passio* ch. 14) along with the twenty-two year old Perpetua, highlighted in our account as being 'of good family, well-educated and a married Roman matron' (*honeste nata, liberaliter instituta, matronaliter nupta*, ch. 2.1). Their teacher, Saturus, not arrested with his catechumens, voluntarily surrendered himself subsequently (ch. 4.5). The dream account of Saturus adds four named others, seen to be already in the garden of Paradise, 'Jucundus, Saturninus, and Artaxius, who were burnt alive in this same persecution, together with Quintus who had actually died as a martyr in prison' (ch. 11.9) whilst they also recognized in Paradise 'many of their brethren, including martyrs' (ch. 13.8).[88] The extraordinary document of their trial preserves the record written by Perpetua herself of her imprisonment including four of her dreams (chs. 3–10) along with Saturus' account of his vision (chs. 11–13). By these accounts we gain a remarkable insight into the contemporary mentality of such martyrs, their sense of privileged spiritual access (a prophetic dream, on request, to determine whether they would indeed suffer – or be reprieved, ch. 4), their sense of spiritual powers (Perpetua's deceased brother Dinocrates released from his sufferings, chs. 7–8), their sense of spiritual superiority (they act as mediators of the contention between their bishop Optatus and the presbyter Aspasius, ch. 13), their sense of immediate election to Paradise (chs. 10off.). Apart from graphically perceiving the stark realities of their periods of imprisonment (awaiting formal trial before the acting proconsul and then, after condemnation, awaiting the games) we also perceive in Perpetua's case familial tensions ('I grieved for my father's sake because he alone of all my kindred [*genus*] would not be rejoicing at my suffering' ch. 5.6) with a brother also a catechumen (her younger brother having died, it seems, unbaptized, chs. 7f.) and presumably mother and (absent) husband already Christian. Other-worldly aspirations are highlighted by her preparedness to abandon her infant son at the breast (as well as by Felicitas' abandonment of her new-born child). The crowd (*populus*) is variously shown to be sympathetic and hostile (eg. chs. 17, 18.9, 20.2, 21.7). The grounds for condemnation are importantly (and unequivocally) reported by Perpetua: 'The procurator Hilarianus . . . said: "Have pity on your father's white hairs, have pity on your infant son. Perform sacrifice (*fac sacrum*) for the well-being of the emperors." And I replied: "I will not." Hilarianus said: "Are you a Christian?" And I replied: "I am a Christian . . ." . Then Hilarianus pronounced sentence on us all and condemned us to the beasts' (ch. 6.3ff.). The sequence of official thinking is clear: so long as Perpetua was prepared to conform to accepted public

[88] Tertullian's *Scorpiace* could well be composed at this season when 'some Christians the fire has tested, others the sword, others the beasts, whilst yet others are still hungering in prison, having had in the meantime, through clubs and claws, a foretaste of their martyrdom (ch. 1.11)': see Barnes (1969). On the *Passio*, see the study of B. D. Shaw (1993).

Roman ritual ceremonies, she could go free (whatever the beliefs – and indeed practices – she might privately continue to maintain). The exclusivity of Christian worship was the sticking-point. That avenue refused, condemnation followed precisely on the grounds of her persistent Christian adherence. Had she refused to sacrifice, for example, and then it emerged that she was Jewish, condemnation would not have followed.

Many have attempted to link these (on the face of it, quite unrelated) incidents in Egypt and Africa with a compressed and confused passage in *SHA*, *Sev.* 16.8f. which has Septimius, with Caracalla, journeying from Syria through Palestine on their way to Alexandria (that is, in A.D. 199) and 'on their way he established many privileges (*iura*) for the Palestinians. He forbade under severe penalty that people should become Jews (*Iudaeos fieri*). He also decreed the same concerning Christians (*idem etiam de Christianis sanxit*).' However, if such a linkage is made, there are clear chronological difficulties; the purported imperial embargo does not find any resonance elsewhere in our sources – indeed Tertullian, *ad Scap.* 4 (A.D. 212) can wax eulogistic on Septimius' favourable personal relations with Christians;[89] and not all of the known victims fall into the envisaged category (of converts? – and their teachers); e.g. Leonides. The *Historia Augusta* passage is best regarded as spurious, an invention reflecting the author's late fourth-century preoccupations and prejudices, and the temptation to link these incidents should accordingly be resisted.[90] They can be considered as typical of the perils that could potentially befall anywhere openly enthusiastic converts and staunch Christian adherents alike. Such a charged atmosphere in which Christians found themselves living was guaranteed to generate eager talk of the coming of Antichrist and perfervid millenarian expectations (so at this season Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.7 (the writer Judas); Hippol. *In Dan.* 4.18 (Syria), 4.19 (Pontus); Tert. *Adv. Marc.* III.24 (Palestine)).

However, *De Corona* 1.1 (a Montanist work, dated to the time of a military donative by joint Severan emperors, i.e. datable to before late 211)[91] has a (Carthaginian ?) soldier brought to trial (*reus ad praefectos*, 1.2) and imprisoned, there awaiting the largesse of martyrdom (*donativum Christi in carcere expectat*, 1.3) but by his ostentatious refusal to wear the ceremonial laurel crown drawing the complaint of pusillanimous Christians for 'jeopardizing for them a peace so long and so good' (*tam bonam et longam pacem periclitari sibi*, 1.5). We must suppose that there have not been too many incidents known to Tertullian and his audience like that of Perpetua, Felicitas and companions in the interim, since *c.* 203.

[89] 'Furthermore Severus, far from inflicting harm on men and women of senatorial status (*et clarissimas feminas et clarissimos viros*), knowing them to be of this persuasion, actually bore distinguished testimony in their favour and publicly restored them to us from out of the hands of a raging mob (*populo furenti*)' (*Ad Scap.* 4.6).

[90] See Schwarte (1963). [91] See Freudenberger (1970).

Under early Caracalla it was to be no different. Tertullian bears incidental testimony to lethal danger in Numidia and Mauretania (*nam et nunc a praeside Legionis, et a praeside Mauretaniae vexatur hoc nomen, sed gladio tenus, ad Scap.* 4.8), as well as continuing stress in Africa Proconsularis itself (*ad Scap.*, *passim*): one martyr is named, Mavilus of Hadrumetum, condemned to the beasts, *ad Scap.* 3.5 (there are textual uncertainties). We also encounter some later surviving confessors, implying that their stand for their faith had occurred under the earlier Severans. For example, bishop Alexander was in prison as a confessor in Cappadocia at the time of the appointment of Asclepiades as bishop of Antioch (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.11.5), in the first year of Caracalla, 211/12 (according to Eusebius' *Chronicle*): he was, however, soon to be released and translated from his see in Cappadocia to the bishopric in Jerusalem (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.8.7). Asclepiades, in turn, had been a confessor by the time of his appointment to Antioch, *Hist. Eccl.* VI.11.4 – his confession (and release) presumably had taken place during the principate of Septimius; and Asclepiades' predecessor in the *cathedra* of Antioch, Serapion, had had occasion to write to one Domnus who had 'fallen away from the faith of Christ at the time of the persecution', *Hist. Eccl.* VI.12.1, that is, again under Septimius, Serapion's bishopric extending from 191 to 210 according to Eusebius' *Chronicle*. We ought to deduce further trouble for Christians apart from Africa and Egypt, in Cappadocia and Syria. Likewise again for Africa: Cyprian (*Ep.* 39.3.1) in early 251 incidentally mentions the illustrious martyred forebears of the young (Decian) confessor Celerinus – his grandmother Celerina and his two uncles (paternal and maternal), Laurentinus and Egnatius, both soldiers. We must presume their deaths (in Carthage? – their anniversaries were annually commemorated there) occurred in the reasonably distant past – Cyprian in the *De Lapsis* (251) can blame the *pax longa* for its lulling effects in stultifying the faith of those who had recently lapsed (*De Laps.* 9) – but they will still have had to fall within the last generation or two. We have to suppose such scattered incidents were endemic, liable to occur anywhere at any time: however diminished these incidents may have become in frequency, there still remained a background of insecurity and some peril in which Christians had to live out their lives.

However, from our perception of things, that pattern of peril does indeed appear to be visibly changing. There is much less evidence of outbreaks of popular hostility against Christians in the thirty-five years or so before 250: was this as Christianity became a more familiar part of the kaleidoscopic religious landscape and, being less secretive, therefore became less feared? And in parallel many fewer Christians are known to be arraigned for trial. But appearances can be deceptive and our perception distorted by the tyranny of our sources: we have, for example, scant western evidence between Tertullian and Cyprian and where we do have it (e.g. *via* the papal

calendars) much is unreliable.[92] The earliest and the most reliable (the Liberian) does record baldly the deportation of the pope, Pontian, and the presbyter Hippolytus (one supposes *the* Hippolytus) to the unhealthy island of Sardinia in 235 (and the resignation of the former from his office in late September on that island).[93] We simply do not know what circumstances may have occasioned this action. But here, once again, the testimony of Eusebius has been invoked (though he was himself apparently unaware of these particular events). For *Hist. Eccl.* VI.28 reads:

> When Alexander the emperor of the Romans had brought his principate to an end after thirteen years, he was succeeded by Maximin Caesar. He, through ill-will towards the house of Alexander, since it consisted for the most part of believers, raised a persecution, ordering the leaders of the church alone to be put to death, as being responsible for the teaching of the gospel. Then also Origen composed his work *On Martyrdom*, dedicating the treatise to Ambrose and Protoctetus, a presbyter of the community at Caesarea; for in the persecution no ordinary distress had befallen them both, in which distress it is recorded that these men were distinguished for the confession they made during the period, not more than three years, that the reign of Maximin lasted. Origen has noted this particular time for the persecution, in the twenty-second of his *Expositions of the Gospel according to John*, and in various letters.
>
> (tr. J. E. L. Oulton)

Regrettably we do not have Eusebius' collection of Origen's letters (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.36.3) nor the twenty-second *Exposition on the Gospel of John* (from which Eusebius deduced the dates of the trouble) but we can verify that in the *Exhortation to Martyrdom* Origen does address Ambrose (deacon and Origen's patron) and the otherwise unattested priest Protoctetus urging them to face with steadfast courage threatening troubles, but in the most general of hortatory terms. There are in fact no deaths (Ambrose surviving to be the dedicatee of the *contra Celsum* composed a dozen years later, *c.* 248). The rest seem to be deductions and generalizations of Eusebius' own (imperial motivation,[94] universal attack on church leaders specifically, as being responsible for preaching the gospel) based presumably on his own more recent experiences. Ironically, where we do have some collateral evidence it serves only to undermine further Eusebius' generalization.

[92] For example, the legendary stories of the deaths in Rome in 222 of pope Callistus (thrown down a well with a stone tied to his neck), the aged Roman presbyter Calepodius (his body thrown into the Tiber) and the Roman presbyter Asterius (hurled from a bridge into the Tiber) are evidence, if genuine, of (on the face of it) mob pogroms – but attestation for them is late and untrustworthy (*Acta SS Octob.* vol. VI.439ff. (*acta*); 410ff. (discussion); Duchesne (1955–7) I.xcii f.).

[93] *Chron. Min.* I.74ff. The later *Liber Pontificalis* has, unreliably, Pontian die, beaten to death by clubs, in late October the same year: Duchesne (1955–7) I.145f. (and discussion, I.xciv f.).

[94] Compare the similar motivation ascribed later to Decius (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.39) after the alleged Christian sympathies of his predecessor Philip (VI.34), and also *Orac. Sibyl.* XIII.87f. ('And immediately there will be spoliation and murder of the faithful because of the former king.') with the commentary (and text) of Potter, *Prophecy*, *ad loc.*

For Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, writes to Cyprian in the autumn of 256 (Cypr. *Ep.* 75.10.1f.):

(10.1) I should like now to recount to you an incident, relevant to this present matter, which happened in our area. About twenty-two years ago, in the period after the emperor Severus Alexander, a great number of trials and tribulations befell in these parts both the whole community generally and the Christians in particular. There occurred a long succession of earthquakes, as a result of which many buildings throughout Cappadocia and Pontus collapsed, and even towns were swallowed up by crevasses opening out in the ground, sinking into the abyss. In consequence, there arose against us a violent persecution for the Name; it broke out suddenly after there had been a lengthy period of peace, and its effect was all the more devastating in throwing our people into disarray because trouble of this kind was so unexpected and novel to them. Serenianus was governor of our province at the time, a bitter and relentless persecutor.

(10.2) The faithful, finding themselves in the midst of this upheaval, took to flight in all directions in fear of persecution; they abandoned their home territories and moved to other parts of the country (they were free so to move, in that this persecution was local and did not extend to the whole world). Suddenly, a certain woman started up in our midst: she presented herself as a prophetess, being in a state of ecstasy and acting as if she were filled with the Holy Spirit. But she was so deeply under the sway and control of the principal demons that she managed to disturb and deceive the brethren for a long time by performing astonishing and preternatural feats, and she even promised that she would cause the earth to quake: not that her devil had such power that he was able to cause an earthquake or disturb the elements by his own efforts, but that, as an evil spirit, possessing the gift of foreknowledge and therefore perceiving that there was to be an earthquake, he sometimes pretended that he was going to do that which he saw was going to happen.[95]

Firmilian is insistent that the persecution of 235 which he is describing was local to Cappadocia and Pontus (unlike the recent one under Decius) and he is clear about its origins (not the emperor, but the reaction of the pagan population – including the governor Licinnius Serenianus [*PIR*² L245] – to a series of local earthquakes)[96] and about its victims (Christian congregations, not exclusively church leaders). The general air of superstitious hysteria engendered by the natural disasters is significant – as equally is the long period free from persecution that the region had enjoyed (to our knowledge,

[95] For commentary see G. W. Clarke (1989) 263ff.

[96] Origen in his commentary on Matt. 24:7 (*GCS* 38 = Origen 11, Klostermann (1976) 75) has this personal observation to make on the signs for the coming end of the world: 'We have personal knowledge (*scimus autem et apud nos*) of an earthquake and destruction that occurred in certain areas. As a result, heathens without the faith claimed Christians were to blame for the earthquake – hence churches suffered persecution and were burnt – and even men who were considered wise similarly claimed publicly that severe earthquakes occur because of the Christians.' It is perfectly feasible that Origen, the guest of Firmilian in Cappadocia, is referring to these same events (hence we have the added detail of the burning of churches).

extending since the governorship of Claudius Lucius Herminianus and the confession of bishop Alexander). So far as we know this may well have been typical of the histories of the church communities in many regions of the empire.

All told, it is prudent to deduce scattered troubles in Palestine, Cappadocia and Rome at this period of 235–8 (and quite probably elsewhere) but no universal proscription of church leaders as Eusebius posits.[97] And we remain ignorant of any further troubles until over a decade later. Indeed Origen writing towards the end of the 240s confirms the general impression of the peace of this period for Christians (*c. Cels.* 3.15):

> That not even the fear of outsiders maintains our unity is clear from the fact that by the will of God this has ceased for a long time now. It is, however, probable that the freedom of believers from anxiety for their lives will come to an end when again those who attack Christianity in every possible way regard the multitude of believers as responsible for the rebellion which is so strong at this moment,[98] thinking that it is because they are not being persecuted by the governors as they used to be.
>
> (tr. H. Chadwick)

Likewise, writing with hindsight after the devastation of the persecution of Decius, Dionysius of Alexandria can also refer to the preceding principate of Philip as having been 'more kindly' (εὐμενεστέρα) towards Christians (*ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.9). Overall the record of persecution, as it survives for us, would indicate an increasing acceptance of the Christian presence in the empire as the first half of the third century progressed and a corresponding easing in the physical molestation of the Christian communities.[99]

But the chance survival of part of a letter of Dionysius of Alexandria (addressed to Fabius of Antioch *c.* 251/2), preserved by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41, acts as some brake in forming too confident, and too sanguine, a picture. Without it we would not know of marauding mobs of chanting native Egyptian fanatics (that is, in the view of the sophisticated Christian Hellene, Dionysius), rampaging through the streets and alleys of Alexandria, looting the houses of Christians, forced to flee, and lynching four victims (Metras and Quinta, stoned to death; Apollonia burnt; Serapion hurled to his death from an upper storey). This fierce and unruly pogrom (it is no official persecution) lasted, we are told, a long time (ἐπὶ πολύ: *ap. Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.8), starting a full year before the actual arrival of Decius' orders (that is, in late 248 / early 249). It is salutary to be reminded that we know

[97] Further discussion in G. W. Clarke (1966); Lippold (1975).

[98] The stasis referred to may well be that of T. Claudius Marinus Pacatianus, but there are other candidates.

[99] Lactantius also echoes the sentiment that the persecution of Decius erupted unexpectedly after long peace: *sed et postea longa pax rupta est* (*DMP* 3.5).

of this popular agitation only because Dionysius wishes to emphasize the spiritual standing of his Alexandrian church – before, eventually, lecturing the patriarch of Antioch on the need to forgive sins of apostasy, as the Alexandrian church is doing (*ap. Hist. Eccl.* VI.42.5ff., VI.44.1ff.). It is too easy to conclude (as many have) that by mid-century Christians have virtually ceased to be targets of popular outcry. The momentous events of the coming year are to witness repeat scenes in Rome, Alexandria, Carthage, Smyrna (and no doubt elsewhere).

III. PERSECUTION OF DECIUS

1. Summary

I first provide a very summary account of the course of the persecution, followed by some detailed sections justifying the construction of that summary. Sources are abundant, comprising principally the correspondence of Cyprian (especially *Epp*. 5–41) and his treatise *De Lapsis*, the letters of Dionysius of Alexandria (largely preserved as extracts in Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI and VII), the *Acta* of Pionios and the forty-five extant Decian *libelli* from Egypt.

By autumn 249 the emperor Decius was secured in power after his usurpation. It cannot have been very long afterwards that orders went out from Rome to all the provincial governors of the empire that there was to be a universal sacrifice to the gods of empire – possibly to be proclaimed on 3 January 250 at the public civic ceremony of the *vota solemnia*, the annually celebrated sacrifices for the emperor's personal welfare (though attractive, this is an entirely speculative setting). At any rate victims are attested before the month of January 250 was over.[100] On the face of it, this was a decidedly old-fashioned gesture – on the model of a *supplicatio* when in the distant past the people of Rome were bidden in times of public distress to come forward as a body to throng all the temples and shrines of the tutelary deities of the state – but the scale of the operation was entirely unprecedented: a religious rally by the inhabitants of the entire empire to win the favour of the gods who protected that empire – and in support of the new dynasty under whose sacred auspices the destiny of the empire now lay. This was to be the dynasty inaugurating Rome's second millennium (the millennial games and pageants having been celebrated with much pomp and fanfare the previous year, 248). So far as our evidence

[100] The earliest known victim is the bishop of Rome, Fabian, who was dead by 20 January 250. (*Lib. Pont*. 21 – 19 January; *Mart. Hiero*. XIII Kal. Feb. (20 January), *PL* XXX.440). Babylas, bishop of Antioch, died in prison (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.39.4): his anniversary was usually celebrated on 24 January (*Acta SS* Nov. vol. II.2 (1931) 59f.) – but his death could have been in 251 rather than 250. Certainly Dionys. Alex. *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.9 describes the edict as arriving in Alexandria promptly after news of the change of imperial rulers.

goes the gods to be so honoured were left unspecified, allowing for variants in local civic divinities – whether it be, say, the Nemeseion in Smyrna, the Serapaeum in Alexandria or the Capitoline triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva in the more Romanized *civitates* or indeed some more personal cult (Pionios' dialogue with the proconsul of Asia who vainly urges the Christian to offer sacrifice to whatsoever deity he cares to have in mind – to the air, if he likes – is a revealing vignette of this persecution, *Acta Pionii* 19f.). But a publicly accepted gesture of religious obeisance had to be done by pouring libation and tasting sacrificial offerings.[101] The emperor-cult was not directly involved, only insofar as it could (as in the past) be used as a means of testing Christian obstinacy – or proving apostasy.[102] Honour to the gods was the object, not necessarily entailing abjuration of private or local beliefs or cult practices (which were of course legion throughout the length and breadth of the empire, Christianity included). About Decius' edict there is, however, a foretaste of that autocracy which marks fourth-century government: directives are being issued from above affecting the lives of the entire empire as the central authorities attempt to grapple with the problems of commanding and controlling an unwieldy and extremely diverse empire. There is here a presage of those centralist pressures for conformity and homogeneity. Christians, certainly, would have seen it as a dramatic, indeed drastic, departure from their own experience of the more *laissez-faire* attitude towards their religion that had characterized the previous years, the preceding regimes now appearing benign by contrast.[103] For there has been a significant shift: it is now the religious sentiment of the imperial court – rather than that of the local populace – that is to determine the well-being or otherwise of Christians. It is a watershed moment. And the sources are repetitious in declaring the suddenness and unexpectedness of the outbreak of persecution for Christians.

But it is clear that an attack on Christianity as such was not the object of the legislation. However, bishops by this date could be figures of prominence, especially in the major metropolitan cities, known to command sizeable congregations. They are promptly put under pressure to lead their followers to the pagan altars.[104] Christians, therefore, quickly become victims

[101] In *Ep*. 55.2.1 Cyprian uniquely describes in mitigation the renegade bishop Trofimus and his flock as *thurificati* (i.e. offerers of incense) in contradistinction to the more heinous *sacrificati* (i.e. offerers of sacrifice).

[102] Thus *Acta Pionii* 8.4 (Polemon, the temple verger, urges Pionios: 'Make sacrifice at least to the emperor'), *Acta Pionii* 18.14 (the apostate bishop Euctemon swears by the emperor's *tyche* that he is not a Christian).

[103] The likely source of the popularly held belief (which does not guarantee historical veracity) on Philip's Christianity, reflected in Dionys. Alex. *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.10.3; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.34; *Orac. Sibyl*. XIII.88 (where see the commentary of Potter, *Prophecy* 267f.).

[104] Thus in Alexandria a *frumentarius* was despatched to seek out the bishop, Dionysius, the selfsame hour that the imperial proclamation was issued by the prefect, Appius Sabinus: Dionys. Alex. *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.40.2.

by their refusal to comply (Jews appear to have been exempted, as by now traditional in Roman religious matters).[105] And the sequel shows as the year 250 progressed that in most cases various pressures to conform were imposed (tortures, confiscations, exile, periods of imprisonment with varying degrees of deprivation) rather than the (relatively rare) imposition of the death penalty. Here, as before, the (variable) mood of the local populace (which it was the course of prudence to assuage), or the patience (or piety) of the governor, could be determining factors. Though incontestably a period of intense anxiety and extreme apprehension for most confessing Christians, the persecution of Decius – the first of the 'General Persecutions' – was in fact less lurid than many modern accounts (and later *Acta*) might lead us to believe.

One of the remarkable features of the orders is certification – the issuing of certificates (*libelli*), signed by official witnesses, bearing testimony to the recipients' having complied with the orders, and no doubt protecting them from further harassment (not unlike the issuing of taxation receipts). Copies of forty-five such certificates have been recovered from Egypt.[106] There are no good grounds for believing that only Christian suspects were required to produce such documents. The bureaucratic implications must have been immense and, in many less urbanized or bureaucratized districts, well-nigh insurmountable. We are forced to conclude that Decius' intentions were far from idle: the depth of traditional piety involved ought not to be underestimated. To issue those certificates and to supervise the sacrificial actions panels of local commissioners were established, varying in composition from place to place.[107] A fixed date (*dies . . . praestitutus*, Cypr. *de Lapsis* 3) was also set locally by which time the local inhabitants were to have presented themselves; thereafter the commissioners would have had to deal with late-comers, defectors or defaulters drawn to their attention. The recalcitrant were left to languish in prison, their cases referred to a higher magistrate awaiting trial. All indications are that after a lapse of twelve

[105] *Acta Pionii* 3.6, 4.2ff., 13f. preserve a memory in which Jews could not have been molested in the same way as were Christians. Would those Christians invited into the Jewish synagogues be hoping for exemption from Decius' orders (*Acta Pionii* 13.1)? (Cf. Domnus in Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.12).

[106] See Knipfing (1923), editing forty-one (nos. 35–6 re-ed. at *P. Mich.* III.157–8); the further four are published in *PSI* VII.778; Schwartz (1947) = *SB* VI.9084; *P. Oxy.* XLI.2990; XVIII.3929. The phraseology of the *libelli* is standardly patterned: the petitioners declare that they had 'always and without interruption sacrificed to the gods' and now in accordance with the edict's decree they had 'made sacrifice and poured a libation and partaken of the sacred victims'.

[107] In the Egyptian villages the panels range, on our extant documents, from two commissioners plus a secretary to a single local magistrate (*prytanis*); in Smyrna the commission appears to have been composed of 'the temple steward Polemon and those appointed with him' (*Acta Pionii* 3.1); in Spain bishop Martialis appeared before a *procurator ducenarius*, Cypr. *Ep.* 67.6.2. In the large city of Carthage the examiners consisted of 'five prominent citizens joined to the city magistrates', Cypr. *Ep.* 43.3.1 (*quinque primores . . . magistratibus . . . copulati*) whereas in the smaller African town of Capsa a single magistrate oversaw the operation, Cypr. *Ep.* 56.1.1.

months from the date set for the sacrificial rites, the various commissions were dissolved, Christians still imprisoned were released, and exiles were recalled: refugees begin to return and those who had lain concealed in hiding feel free to emerge. By March 251 bishops were planning publicly to hold post-persecution council meetings. By that date it was clear all danger had passed. And this was well in advance of Decius' death in June 251.

We can guess that Decius would have been surprised by his posthumous reputation in the Christian tradition – for Lactantius he is an *execrabile animal* (*DMP* 4); matters of state more pressing than the fate of a relatively few Christian recusants had claimed his attention. And as for his religious programme generally, he may even have regarded it as not unsuccessful. After all, so many pagans as well as lapsing Christians throughout the empire had done honour to the empire's gods (though it is difficult for us to penetrate a theology which might regard gods as honoured by a *false* declaration of continuous piety, as lapsing Christians would have had to profess).

2. *The orders*

Who were enjoined to perform the sacrificial rites – all citizens or all inhabitants (servile population included) of the empire? The wording in several passages of Cyprian certainly leaves the impression that all inhabitants, regardless of sex, age and citizen-status, were probably involved. *Ep*. 15.4 reveals that entire households, having lapsed, were seeking readmittance to communion 'up to twenty and thirty and more at a time who claim to be the relations, in-laws, freedmen and domestics of the person holding a certificate of forgiveness' (issued by one of the martyrs). *Liberti et domestici* could well encompass the servile classes. A similar inference could be drawn from *Ep*. 55.13.2: the case of a Christian who sacrificed in person as proxy 'for his entire family, thereby protecting his wife, his children and his entire household (*domum totam*)'.[108] Even babies were not exempted (*de Laps*. 9, 25).[109] This is a religious rally on the grandest of scales, and we have recorded by way of corroboration evidence of the subsequent persecution for Spain, Gaul, Italy, Sicily, Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Pontus and Asia.

[108] The *nutrix* of *De Laps*. 25 is as likely as not a slave. Sabina (*Acta Pionii* 9.3ff.) was indeed a slave – but, being a runaway, efforts were made to conceal her true identity. Dionysius describes the numerous martyrs in Alexandria as comprising 'men and women, both young men and old, both girls and aged women, both soldiers and civilians, both every race and every age', *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.20. For the grounds for excluding slaves from the terms of the edict, see Selinger (1994) 105f.

[109] Curiously, we do not hear of soldiers as confessors or martyrs (save the five voluntary martyrs at Alexandria, *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.16, 22ff.) – neither are soldiers specified in Valerian's Second Rescript at the end of the decade.

The Egyptian *libelli* so far published were issued between mid-June and mid-July 250: that is a good six months since the promulgation of the edict, at least in some other parts of the empire. Do *libelli*, therefore, belong to a second and more intensive stage in Decius' persecution when such certificates were required? Possibly so. But the evidence for Rome indicates that certification was required there by at least March: Numeria, in bribing her way out of actually sacrificing before Easter (7 April 250), had thereby committed a sin entailing her exclusion from communion (Cypr. *Ep*. 21.2.1, 3.2). She must have acquired an incriminating certificate (compare the description in Cypr. *Ep*. 55.14.1f.), an action regarded by many (at least in the west) as tantamount to apostasy. Similarly by May 250 Cyprian can mention grades of apostasy (i.e. *libellatici vs. sacrificati*) in *Ep*. 15.3.1 (glossed in *Ep*. 20.2.2 as 'those who had stained their hands and lips with sacrilegious contagion or had none the less contaminated their conscience with impious certificates'). This he mentions casually, not as a recent new wave of perils for Christians: there is already by May 250 a significant and importunate group of purchasers of *libelli* in Carthage. Certification was part of the routine of this persecution in his experience.

It is possible, given the locality of the known Egyptian *libelli* (Theadelphia, Alexandru Nesus, Philadelphia, Oxyrhynchus, Arsinoe, Narmouthis, Thosbis), that it took some time for Decius' orders to penetrate into these areas up country and for a local date then to be set for their implementation (there are parallel delays in the promulgation of Diocletian's first edict against Christians – 23 February 303 in Nicomedia, 5 June 303 at a town near Carthage). If this is so, there is one corollary: Christians up in this locality could well have had advance warning of the coming trial from their brethren down on the coast and have had every opportunity to make themselves scarce. This reduces considerably the likelihood of finding any apostate Christians among the finds of the Egyptian *libelli*.

3. Implementation of the orders

Our sources allow us to glimpse scenes of the commissions at work. We see the appointed magistrates assailed by crowds anxious to prove (correctly or not) their religious loyalties (*De Laps*. 8, 25); at times among the crowds Christians of prominent station are pushed forward, urged on by pagan inciters to demonstrate their compliance (Dionysius *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.11). Smoking altars are set up around the forum to help cope with the numbers, but characteristically, in the larger and Romanized town centres, long lines of slowly moving processions wind their way up to the altars set before the Capitoline temple (Cypr. *Ep*. 8.2.3; 21.3.2). When the pilgrim reaches an altar, he (or she) places on it a portion of ritual meat in offering,

pours there a little wine in libation, and tastes a morsel of the sacrificial meats provided. (We hear of some apostates so eager to establish their pagan loyalties that they brought their own *hostia* and *victima* with them (*De Laps*. 8)). Our pilgrim now presents a *libellus* (possibly in duplicate)[110] to the commission; it is often, for the illiterate – or the speaker of a native language only – prepared by a local notary. It is read out (*publice legitur*, Cypr. *Ep*. 30.3.1), the petitioner acknowledges it as his or her own (Cyp. *Ep*. 30.31; 55.14.1), and one or more of the commissioners then duly sign it as witnesses in the appropriate place on the document.

Our sources also allow us to see clandestine evasions of the orders. For what very many Christians did was not to perform the actual pagan rites enjoined upon them but to bribe the official or officials concerned, and purchase their *libellus.* They could thereby secure immunity from the edict's penalties, and, they thought, retain their Christian faith unimpaired (see Cypr. *Ep*. 55.14). Writing a good generation or so earlier, Tertullian testifies that bribing one's way out of the clutches of a persecutor was common practice for a Christian, and one which, with his rigorous temperament, he personally disapproved of (*de Fuga* 5.3, 12–14). Clearly others did not.

In the minds of the *libellatici*, or purchasers of *libelli*, in the persecution of Decius, there was simply not much difference between passing money over to a *praeses* or to an intending *delator*, and thus securing freedom from threatened molestation (as Tertullian testifies Christians had done in the past), and passing over money, either in person or through a deputy (Cypr. *Ep*. 30.3.1; 55.14.1 for deputies), to a local official thus securing a *libellus* and thereby freedom from molestation from Decius' edict. But to the legally minded ecclesiastical authorities, at least in the west, what was purchased was significant (for the east our sources are comparatively meagre).[111] For a Christian it was tantamount to a formal declaration of apostasy, and by acknowledging a *libellus* as his own a Christian was, technically, guilty of denying his faith. He joined the ranks of the *lapsi*, the fallen (so, firmly, *de Laps*. 27f.).

[110] Two identical *libelli* have survived for Aurelia Charis (Knipfing (1923) nos. 11, 26): one copy for the municipal archives? One example appears to have archive numbering: see the commentary by J. R. Rea on *P. Oxy*. LVIII.3929 n. 22. Certainly the finds at Theadelphia, nineteen in number and at the same spot, suggest we are dealing with official copies, promptly rendered redundant by the end of the persecution, and discarded before being numbered and glued together for the municipal files. One group written on papyrus of the same shape and quality was written out by the same scribe's hand. One example is endorsed with the title ἀπογρ(αφή), suggesting that an application was required by at least the head of every household on the analogy with the census, the κατοικίαν ἀπογραφή.

[111] Though Dionysius of Alexandria did discern different degrees of failure among the fallen in his lost work (addressed to Those in Egypt) 'On Repentance' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.46.1). He also wrote to the church in Armenia 'On Repentance' (VI.46.2) which, Jerome asserts, again discerned degrees of sinfulness (*de Viris Illustr*. 69) – does this imply the province of Armenia Minor was also subject to Decius' edict?

What many other Christians did, in order to escape detection by authorities, or delation before a commission, was to take to flight. Bishops fled from distant provinces to be lost in the crowds of Rome (Cypr. *Ep*. 30.8.1); and we hear, for example, of sixty-five refugees from Carthage who were cared for by the two sisters of Celerinus in Rome (Cypr. *Ep*. 21.4.1). In turn, Christian refugees fled to the crowds of Carthage also; they required special funds for their needs (Cypr. *Ep*. 7.2 (*peregrini*)), and they might find shelter in Christian homes, as displaced fugitives and exiles (*extorres et profugi*), in large numbers (Cypr. *Ep*. 55.13.2). Gregory Thaumaturgus took to the safety of the Pontic hills (relying on Gregory Nyssa, *PG* 46.945), and likewise many Egyptians fled to 'the Arabian mountain' for refuge, and subsequent perils (Dionys. Alex. *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.42.2ff.).

When the persecution died down Cyprian could muster for his African council, held in the first half of 251, a 'copious number of bishops' and these bishops were 'whole in soul and body' (*Ep.* 55.6.1). The charity of hospitable fellow-Christians had ensured that even the main figures in the church, the bishops, had managed to escape in safety and without spiritual compromise. There is little evidence to suggest that any systematic search was made for them. The authorities appear to have relied on delation as the main weapon for subsequent detection; and if inhabitants were poor, insignificant, and unobtrusive, they were most unlikely to be the victims of delation. And very many Christians *were* poor and insignificant, and they escaped. They were the *stantes,* the steadfast; they are the silent, and characteristic, heroes of the persecution of Decius.[112]

4. The victims

When a recusant was detected by or reported to a commission, when a well-known Christian was arrested by searching soldiers or was hounded by his neighbours to sacrifice and publicly refused, when an enthusiastic Christian defiantly flaunted his refusal to comply, or when a person who had initially sacrificed subsequently presented himself voluntarily in order to repudiate his earlier actions, then the task of the local officials was clear. After verifying the facts, and possibly putting some pressure on the recalcitrant to relent (cf. *Acta Pionii* 15ff.), they referred the case to the local governor, to be dealt with as he came on the rounds of his assize *conventus.* For however tempted they might be in such a case to act *ultra vires,* the matter was strictly beyond the legal competence of such minor magistrates; the penalties liable

[112] Cyprian, a person of eminence in hiding, can insist that his (lower-class) clergy should carry on their work in Carthage if they are *mites, humiles, quieti, taciturni*, that is, if they do not excite attention e.g. *Epp*. 5.2.1; 14.2.1. Likewise Dionysius (away in Libya) can report that four of the presbyters continue to work secretly in Alexandria whereas two others 'being more prominent in the world' have gone off wandering in Egypt (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.24).

(not laid down perhaps with specificity) could be capital. After his initial ordeal, and confession, the Christian could face a period in prison, awaiting trial, followed by appearance before the governor's tribunal and eventual sentence. At the trial the judge might exercise his rightful discretion and dismiss the case,[113] or the accused might be sentenced to some form of exile (along with confiscation of his property). However, as apostates (to honour the gods) were wanted rather than martyrs, torture and further periods in prison under conditions of varying stringency might be imposed. Under such circumstances obstinacy might be repaid in the end by death in prison, or, in relatively rare cases, by a death sentence, or by eventual dismissal as a hopeless case.

(a) Eastern provinces

It is difficult to assess how far we may with any assurance extrapolate from our surviving evidence to undocumented areas. Nevertheless, patterns are discernible even in such erratic evidence as we do have.

Concerning the area about which he might best be informed, and about events that occurred only about a decade perhaps before his own birth, Eusebius can report that the bishops of Antioch in Syria (Babylas) and of Jerusalem in Palestine (the aged Alexander) both died in prison as unrepentant confessors (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.39.2ff.). Origen (domiciled in Palestinian Caesarea) survived his long months of imprisonment; despite the dungeons, tortures, chains and rack, which Eusebius found described in detail in numerous letters of Origen's, he nevertheless outlived the emperor Decius. We are left to wonder whether there can have been in this general area any other resistance heroes the memory of whom had faded so quickly, within half a century, in the local church tradition. The absence of the death penalty is noteworthy.[114]

Further northwards in Smyrna (province of Asia), we encounter the arrest on 23 February 250, of a group of Christians discovered praying together in a house, namely the presbyter Pionios, together with another presbyter (Limnos) and three of the laity (Sabina, Asclepiades and Macedonia);[115] we observe their refusal to sacrifice after appearing before the commission in the city's forum, and their incarceration. In the face of provocation and pressures from officials, soldiers and populace of Smyrna alike, they adamantly await the arrival of the proconsul. Trial and tortures end with Pionios' condemnation to death (by fire) on 12 March 250, along with a

[113] Some instances are Optatus (Cypr. *Ep.* 29.1.1); Aurelius (Cypr. *Ep.* 38.1.2); Saturninus (Cypr. *Ep.* 21.4.2); Celerinus (Cypr. *Ep.* 39.1.1ff.); Dioscorus (Dionys. Alex. *ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.15f.) etc.

[114] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.39.5. Note that in Origen's case 'the judge eagerly strove with all his might on no account to put him to death'.

[115] Another presbyter Limnos and a Macedonian woman turn up, already in prison, in *Acta Pionii* 11.2: some conflation and confusion is to be suspected.

Marcionite Christian. We are not told of the fate of his other companions, nor of the three others they discover already in prison. Here the local citizenry voice the threat of death – or females to the brothels – at the outset; there prevails an atmosphere charged with religious hostility (though some of the *agoraioi* are made out to be solicitously sympathetic, *Acta Pionii* 5.2ff.). In such a setting the proconsul judges in the end that little quarter should be given, nor was it expected.

Up in the more northerly district of Pontus the stress in the vague and fulsomely rhetorical narrative of Gregory of Nyssa (in his life of Gregory Thaumaturgus) is on the search for Christian fugitives, arrests, imprisonments and tortures (*PG* XLVI.944ff.). One martyr's name only is given, Troadius (a young man of prominent station), and he was seen in a miraculous vision dying 'after many tortures' (*PG* XLVI.949); this does not sound like execution but death as a result of tortures applied to induce apostasy.

The remaining eastern evidence comes from Egypt and derives from a first-hand account – excerpts from three letters by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria at the time, as preserved by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.40.1ff.; VII.11.20ff.). In a few brief pages we meet (for Alexandria), five 'volunteer martyrs' (Ammon, Zeus, Ptolemy, Ingenuus – all soldiers – and Theophilus), five Christians sentenced to death by fire (Macar, Hero, Ater, Isidore and Nemesion), four by quicklime (Julian, Cronion, Epimachus and Alexander), four by beheading or the sword (Besas, Ammonarion, Mercuria, Dionysia) – altogether eighteen named Alexandrian victims, a nineteenth (woman) being left unnamed, *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.18, plus the instance of a hired steward (Ischyrion) beaten to death by his outraged employer, a government official (outside Alexandria).[116] Throughout, statements and illustrations abound of desperate fugitives and refugees, prisoners heroically enduring tortures, and the angry mob violently harassing notorious Christians (the wealthy and the prominent). What has to be recalled here is the religious atmosphere that has been prevailing in Alexandria. That smouldering mood of bigotry and virulent hostility revealed in the savage pogroms of the previous year was resuscitated by the advent of Decius' edict and appears to be reflected in the apparently high number of Alexandrian victims condemned to death for their religious intransigence. How far this mood prevailed in Egypt generally outside the city of Alexandria we do not know, but we do have Dionysius' general word for it that 'very many others throughout the cities and villages were torn to pieces by the heathen' (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.42.1). The forty-five *libelli* surviving from the rubbish dumps of the towns and villages of upper Egypt begin to acquire a moving, and human, context.

[116] On these, see Rousselle (1974) 237ff.

(b) Western provinces

Although our evidence from Spain and Gaul implies that the edict of Decius was enforced there (Cypr. *Epp*. 67, 68), we do not chance to have in our meagre records certain knowledge of Decian martyrs from these localities. The same is true for Sicily (Cypr. *Ep*. 30.6.2), whereas an odd note seems to preserve the names of two Decian victims in Campania (Capua) – Augustine and Felicitas.[117]

In Rome, however, pope Fabian certainly died a martyr's death, in late January of 250. But no detailed account survives of his *gloriosus exitus* (Cypr. *Ep*. 9.1.1); it may have been due to torture, or simply the sudden shock of the adversities of Roman prison life. Thereafter, though imprisonment, privations and tortures were undoubtedly the lot of a number of Christians arrested in Rome, we have to wait very many months before there is any word of Christian deaths. There are indeed none by the time Cyprian wrote Letter 28 (August? / September 250), but some had occurred by Letter 37 (§3; winter of 250/1). The Roman presbyter Moyses died subsequently to that letter, after a confinement lasting some eleven months (*Liber Pontif*. ed. Duchesne 21); many of his companions lived on to enjoy release from their prison only a short while later (see Cyp. *Ep*. 49, *Ep*. 54.2.2). Here, in what was unquestionably the largest Christian community in the west, defiant Christians are not automatically punished with death. The pattern matches much of our other evidence. Christians were not being extirpated, only being induced, by variable means and at variable levels of intensity, to conform, and even then some of those apprehended were simply dismissed in despair.

The rich details provided by the pages of Cyprian present much the same picture for Africa: flight, trials, exiles, confiscations, imprisonments, tortures – and a mob lynching (*Ep*. 40.1.1) – are all there to be sure, with all their attendant fears and horrors, but deaths are relatively few and none is certainly by way of legal condemnation. The best commentary is to read Letter 22 which supplies all of the named victims (seventeen all told)[118] apart from the pair Castus and Aemilius who died undergoing tortures and very probably at this period (*de Laps.* 13). But it remains a humbling

[117] Chronicle 395, *Chron. Min.* 1.738: *hac persecutione Cyprianus hortatus est per epistolas suas Augustinum et Felicitatem, qui passi sunt apud civitatem Capuensem, metropolim Campaniae*. And note *Mart. Hiero*. for *xv Kal. Decemb*., which reads: *In Capua civitate, natalis sanctorum Augustini, Eusurii, Felicitatis* (*PL* xxx.482).

[118] See especially §2.2: 'And so, my very dear brother, send our greetings to Numeria and Candida. [We grant them peace] in accordance with the command of Paulus and of the other martyrs whose names I add: Bassus (died in the [?] debtor's prison [*in pignerario*]), Mappalicus (under interrogation), Fortunio (in prison), Paulus (after interrogation), Fortunata, Victorinus, Victor, Herennius, Credula, Hereda, Donatus, Firmus, Venustus, Fructus, Iulia, Martialis, and Ariston – all by God's will starved to death in prison. You will hear that we too will be joining their company within a matter of days. For it is now eight days – up to the time I write to you – since we have been shut up again. And for the five days previous to that we received but a small amount of bread and a ration of water.' (For commentary, see G. W. Clarke (1984): 336ff.)

reminder of our ignorance, and of the haphazard nature of our testimony, that had Cyprian not had occasion to include a copy of Letter 22 with his correspondence, we would have been left largely unaware in any detailed and personalized way of the harsh realities of the sufferings being endured in Carthage.

Overall, to judge from the list of the victims we know, certainly by no means all Christians 'died in prisons dark, by dungeon, fire and sword'. Far from it. But the memory of the nightmare, if not of the details, of this persecution lived vividly on, and understandably so.

And everywhere the churches were left in the aftermath with the devastation of the fallen within their ranks. For Cyprian 'the wild tempest had overwhelmed not only the majority of our laity' but 'it had included in its destructive wake even a portion of the clergy' (*Ep*. 14.1.1). In Smyrna not only had the bishop apostatized (*Acta Pionii* 15.2) along with 'many of the Christian brethren' (*Acta Pionii* 12.2) but Pionios was urged 'to obey and offer sacrifice like everyone else' (*Acta Pionii* 4.1) and the proconsul could declare that 'many others have offered sacrifice and are now alive' (*Acta Pionii* 20.3). Alexandria in turn saw many defections especially among the more socially eminent including those in official employ (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.41.11). May we take Smyrna and Alexandria as typical of the cities in at least the eastern empire? Even whole communities had been led by their bishops into apostasy (Cypr. *Ep*. 55.11.1f. (Trofimus, in Italy), Cypr. *Ep*. 59.10.3 (Repostus, in Africa Proconsularis)) and apostate bishops subsequently fought for reinstatement (Cypr. *Epp*. 65, 67) or joined schismatic groups (Cypr. *Ep*. 59.10.2). Decius' religious rally had left behind a long-lasting legacy of disorder and disarray within the Christian ranks, with dissensions over the proper conditions for readmitting the fallen bitterly dividing the churches everywhere, and with bishops challenged for spiritual leadership by surviving (and, by definition, inspirited) confessors.

IV. PERSECUTION UNDER GALLUS

Dionysius writing from Alexandria in the early 260s addressed a festal (presumably Easter) letter to Hermammon and the brethren in Egypt: this was penned during 'the peace of Gallienus' (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.22.12) and expanded on the congenial (but rhetorically unexceptional) theme that emperors enjoy peace, health and prosperity (as, currently, does Gallienus) whilst they engage the favours and prayers of Christians but that they are beset with wars, plagues and disasters when they persecute them (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.1; VII.10.22ff.; VII.22.12ff.). This reading of the imperial history of the past decade was illustrated not only from the recent histories of Decius, Valerian and the Macriani, but also from the reign of Gallus, Decius' immediate successor (mid-251 to mid-253). Consistent with this perspective Gallus is blessed – tendentiously – with an initial period 'when

his reign was progressing happily and affairs were going according to his wishes' but subsequently he was unwise enough to 'drive away the holy men who were mediating before God for his peace and well-being. Consequently when he banished these men away, he also banished away their supplications on his behalf' (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.1).

After carefully clearing Egyptian Christians of any taint of complicity in the (now defeated) cause of the Macriani, Dionysius concluded his whole argument resoundingly:

> And I am moved to make a further review of the length of days in the imperial reigns. For what I observe is that it has taken only a brief time for those who were utterly ungodly, though once such renowned names, to become nameless, whereas he [= Gallienus], being more pious and god-loving, has already left behind the seven year mark and is now actually completing his ninth year, during which let us now celebrate the feast.
>
> (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.23.4)

Unfortunately Dionysius leaves entirely vague the identity of the holy men and what precisely Gallus did to them when he is said to have 'hounded them out' and 'banished' them (ἤλασεν, ἐδίωξεν). Whilst such vagueness is not untypical of the panegyric mode in which his festal letters are couched, were they fellow *Egyptian* heroes we could reasonably expect some named identities. However, we can supply two candidates – from overseas (Rome).

Cornelius, the bishop of Rome, was exiled to Centumcellae (Cyprian does not know of his confession until late spring 253) and there he died whilst apparently still in office, at least before 25 June 253 (the commencement date of his successor's pontificate).[119] That successor, Lucius, was also promptly relegated, immediately upon his election to office, sharing his relegation with companions (Cypr. *Ep*. 61.1.1). Cyprian can write not too long afterwards congratulating them on their release (*Ep*. 61). Their recall may possibly lie behind Valerian's (much exaggerated) reputation for initially regarding Christians with favour (as witnessed by Dionysius of Alexandria in the same – tendentious – festal letter to Hermammon, *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.10.3).[120] We are without information as to the circumstances which gave rise to these relegations, but the periods of exile of these 'holy men' would indeed have coincided with the collapse and downfall of Gallus' principate sufficient to lend credence to Dionysius' loaded version of history.

[119] Cypr. *Ep*. 60 (congratulating Cornelius on his confession); *Chronog. 354* in *Chron. Min.* I.75 (banishment and death at Centumcellae); *Liber Pont*. XXII (Duchesne (1955–7) I.150, reflecting the worthless *Passio*). Cyprian does not appear to learn of Cornelius' confession until about May, 253 (see G. W. Clarke 1986: 8ff.).

[120] A possible context is a conciliatory gesture, recalling exiles generally, upon the legitimation of Valerian and Gallienus as emperors: compare the recent case of Philip: *CJ* IX.51.7 (*generalis indulgentia nostra reditum exsulibus seu deportatis tribuit*).

Elsewhere, in a letter written in the summer of the previous year, 252, Cyprian addresses Cornelius (at that time still in Rome) whose church can be regarded at the time as greatly flourishing, i.e. not threatened with difficulties (*florentissimo illic clero tecum praesidenti*, *Ep*. 59.19). And yet Cyprian has this to say of himself: 'In recent days, also, just as I am writing this letter to you, there has been once again popular outcry in the circus for me to be thrown to the lion: this has been occasioned by the sacrifices which the people have been ordered by a public edict to celebrate' (*ob sacrificia quae edicto proposito celebrare populus iubebatur*) (*Ep*. 59.6.1). Obviously Cornelius (the addressee) and the Roman church are not included in the troubles: this is a local outburst, the edict presumably proclaimed by the local proconsul. One can imagine orders for a public expiation against the plague, at a ceremony in the circus from which the notable figure of the leader of the Christians – popularly blamed for the visitation of the plague through their failure to worship 'Roman gods', e.g. *Ad Demet*. 2, 5 – was enragingly absent.

The following year (253) we do hear in Carthage of anxious premonitions of a threatened persecution, manifested by frequent ominous signs and minatory visions (Cypr. *Epp*. 57, 58) but so far as we know these apprehensions were never actualized: *Epp*. 57, 58 are datable to May 253 at the onset of another summer bringing with it the threat of further deaths in Carthage by the devastating plague (see the contemporary descriptions in *De Mort*. 14, Pontius, *Vit. Cyp*. 9) – and the prospect of similar terrifying scenes in the circus of Carthage.

We know of no troubles elsewhere. There was no 'persecution of Gallus', no continuation of Decius' edict, merely the continuation of intermittent local troubles and isolated incidents to which especially prominent church leaders were constantly liable under the stress of local circumstances – and at a particular season of social and political instability and insecurity. Following on their unnerving experiences under Decius it was, however, for many Christians a time of heightened apprehensions.[121]

V. PERSECUTION UNDER VALERIAN AND GALLIENUS

So far as we are able to judge, Valerian and Gallienus started off their principate with the same general attitude of *laissez-faire* towards Christians (as likely as not it was no delicately modulated policy, simply that other and more pressing matters of state commanded their attention).[122] That

[121] Lactantius notably fails to dilate on any 'persecution of Gallus' though it would have been congenial to his theme (*DMP* 4f.).

[122] This enabled Dionysius of Alexandria to pen his celebrated (but contentious) version of the benevolence of these opening years of Valerian: 'we have the opportunity . . . to reflect how his affairs stood so long as he was gentle and cordial towards the men of God: for there was no other emperor among

did not mean, however, that Christians were assured of going unmolested. They were still individually liable to hostile attack. For example, a papyrus of 28 February 256 (*P. Oxy.* XLII.3035) reveals orders to arrest from the Egyptian village of Mermertha one 'Petosorapis, son of Horus, Christian': that could mean that the man's Christianity provided the grounds for his arrest.[123] But in all events, in the course of the following year, 257, as the regime now approached the completion of its first *quinquennium*, that *laissez-faire* imperial attitude modified. The date is summer of that year; the orders conveyed to the proconsul in Africa by imperial *litterae* were implemented on 30 August in Carthage (*Acta Procons. Cypr.* 1.1). While we are in ignorance of the precise and immediate circumstances which may have triggered off the dispatch of these *litterae*,[124] we do chance to have two precious documents which convey at a more general level the official reasoning that lay behind them.

(1) Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in the course of defending his actions under persecution against defamation from a brother bishop named Germanus, has occasion to quote the *ipsissima verba* from the official court records of his trial before Aemilianus (at the time vice-prefect of Egypt)[125] in Alexandria. Dionysius was accompanied by a fellow-presbyter (Maximus), three deacons (Faustus, Eusebius, Chaeremon), and 'one of the brethren who were in Alexandria at the time from Rome' (= Marcellus ?). (There seems to have occurred already a court appearance followed by an adjournment while Dionysius and his clerical companions were left time to think things over.)

But listen to the actual words which were spoken by both of us just as they are recorded in the official proceedings:

Dionysius, Faustus, Maximus, Marcellus and Chaeremon having been brought in, Aemilianus, the vice-prefect, said: 'And I also talked with you off the record,

his predecessors – not even those alleged to have been openly Christians – who was so sympathetically and favourably disposed towards them as he manifestly was, welcoming them as he did at the start with the greatest warmth and friendliness. Indeed his whole household was not just filled with God-fearing men; it was a very church of God' (*ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.10.3).

[123] Eusebius – seldom strong on precise chronology before his own day – places the martyrdom of Marinus in Caesarea (Pal.) at a time 'when the churches everywhere were at peace'; Theotecnus is the bishop. By implication Eusebius places the event after the 'peace of Gallienus': but the narrative mentions emperors (plural). Is it feasible that this might mean Marinus' death occurred in this period 253–7? (*Hist. Eccl.* VII.15).

[124] Dionysius certainly assigns – unverifiably – the cause to the fanatical evil counsels and wicked profanities of Macrianus the elder (conveniently defeated and discredited at the time of writing) – his diabolical powers were being thwarted by the 'pure and holy men' i.e. Christians. Gallienus' father Valerian is thereby indirectly exonerated of full blame whilst Gallienus himself goes carefully unmentioned in the whole affair, *ap.* Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.10.4ff. For a full study of the persecution of Valerian (and references to other literature), see Schwarte (1989) 103–63.

[125] L. Mussius Aemilianus: *PIR*[2] M757; Pflaum, *Carrières* II.925–7 (no. 349); J. R. Rea on *P. Oxy.* XLIII.3112.

discussing the clemency which our emperors have displayed towards you: they have in effect granted you the power to save yourselves, if only you are willing to adopt that which is according to nature, worshipping gods that preserve their empire and abandoning those that are contrary to nature.'

'What, then, is your response to this? I do not imagine that you are going to show yourselves ungrateful for their clemency, seeing that what they are urging you to do is to adopt the better course.'

To this Dionysius replied: 'It is not true that all men worship all gods but every group worships certain gods in whom they believe. So in our case there is the one god, the creator of the universe, the one who in fact entrusted the empire into the hands of the most pious Augusti, Valerian and Gallienus. This is the god whom we both venerate and worship and to whom we offer prayers without ceasing for their empire, petitioning that it may continue unshaken.'

Aemilianus, the vice-prefect, said to them: 'Well, then, who is stopping you from worshipping him as well, if indeed he is a god, along with the gods that are according to nature? You were ordered to worship gods – gods that everyone knows.'

Dionysius answered: 'We do not worship any other.'

Aemilianus, the vice-prefect, said to them: 'I perceive that you are being at once ungrateful and unappreciative of the generosity of our august emperors. You shall, therefore, no longer stay in this city: instead, you will be despatched to the regions of Libya, at a place call Cephro. This is the place I have selected, in conformity with the command of our august emperors.'

'And on no account will it be lawful for either you or anyone else to hold assemblies or to enter the "cemeteries", as they are termed. But should anyone be shown not to have been at this place I have ordered or is detected at any meeting, he is going to bring himself into jeopardy. Rest assured: this will be stringently enforced.'

'Be off, therefore, to the place to which you have been ordered.'

(*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.6ff.)

The official concerns, we can observe, are for worship to be given to known gods (not 'unnatural' ones) who preserve the empire and for public conformity to be displayed as part of the process of winning that preservation of the state (the 'unnatural' religious assemblies of Christians are, as a corollary, to be forbidden). Dionysius' attempt to sidestep the imperial demands is telling: Christians already pray for the continued security of the empire without ceasing, and to the one God that matters. Maintaining *pax* with the divine was understood by both sides to be the underlying objective. And both sides appear to agree in closely interpreting the course of contemporary history theologically.

(2) The court records (dated 30 August 257) are also preserved for Cyprian's appearance before the proconsul in Carthage.[126]

[126] A version of these *Acta* appears to have been in circulation in Numidia within months of the event (referred to in Cypr. *Ep*. 77.2.1), and Pontius, *Vit. Cypr*. 11 (written shortly after Cyprian's martyrdom)

The proconsul Paternus said to Cyprian the bishop: 'The most revered emperors Valerian and Gallienus have honoured me with a letter in which they command that those who do not practise Roman religion must observe Roman rites. Accordingly I have made inquiries in your connection. What is your answer to me?'

Cyprian the bishop said: 'I am a Christian and a bishop. I know no other gods beside the one, true God who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. This is the God we Christians serve, to this God we pray day and night for you and for all mankind, and for the well-being of the emperors themselves.'

The proconsul Paternus said: 'And so you persist in this way of thinking?'

Cyprian the bishop answered: 'A good way of thinking which brings knowledge of God cannot be changed.'

The proconsul Paternus said: 'Will you be able, then, to go into exile to the city of Curubis, in accordance with the orders of Valerian and Gallienus?'

Cyprian the bishop said: 'I go.'

The proconsul Paternus said: 'They have honoured me by writing not only about bishops but also about presbyters. I want you to tell me, therefore, who are the presbyters dwelling in this city?'

Cyprian the bishop answered: 'By excellent and beneficial legislation you have outlawed informers. Hence I am unable to reveal or denounce them; but they are to be found in their own cities. Our rules forbid anyone to surrender himself voluntarily and you strongly disapprove of this as well; they may not, therefore, surrender themselves but they will be discovered if you search for them.'

The proconsul Paternus said: 'I shall certainly make a search for them today from this community.'

Cyprian the bishop said; 'If you make inquiries they will be discovered.'

The proconsul Paternus said: 'I shall discover them.' And he added: 'They also command that no meetings are to be held in any place nor shall they enter the cemeteries. If, therefore, anyone does not observe this salutary command, he will suffer capital punishment.'

(*Acta Procons. Cypr.* 1)

We are able to discern the same stress on public conformity in acceptable ritual action (*Romanas caerimonias recognoscere*),[127] and Cyprian's defensive insistence that Christians pray without ceasing for the well-being of the emperors' persons (*pro incolumitate imperatorum ipsorum*) indicates what he, too, perceived to be the imperial motivation behind that stress on ritual conformity. Higher clerical orders only – involved in performing the 'unnatural' Christian *caerimoniae* – are concerned, viz. bishops, presbyters (deacons, as well – Dionysius' companions included three deacons), and Christians' ritual assemblies themselves and their sacred grounds are proscribed. There is a growing sense that the Christian *caerimoniae*, far from being mere harmless aberrations, are positively offensive to the 'natural' gods.

can refer to transcripts of this trial (*et quid sacerdos Dei proconsule interrogante responderit, sunt acta quae referant*).

[127] For explication of this phrasing, see Freudenberger (1978).

We do not chance to have a great deal of evidence for the actual implementation of these orders, save for Africa Proconsularis (the case of Cyprian), Egypt (the case of Dionysius and his five companions), and Numidia (the two exiled bishops Agapius and Secundinus in *Acta Marian. et Jacob*. 3). Much will have depended on the initiative and zeal of the individual governor, the eminence of local clerics (too much in the public eye to allow them to be overlooked), and, of course, popular hostility against Christians in a particular area which could lead to the reporting of Christian lawbreaking or of the whereabouts of Christian clergy. Governors, however indifferently they felt towards religious matters or however anxious they were to avoid needless trouble, could not let themselves be seen too blatantly to disregard entirely the emperors' wishes: they had careers to foster. At least in one sector of Numidia the grinding hardships and ordeals that were to confront Christian clergy and laity alike were painfully real. Cyprian's *Epp*. 76–79 (written whilst Cyprian was still in exile at Curubis) reveal not just exile but condemnation *in metallum* of bishops (nine are named) along with (unnamed) presbyters and deacons – together with laity (including women and children, *Ep*. 76.6.2). Deaths have occurred (*Ep*. 76.1.2). So far as we know this first stage of the Valerianic persecution singled out higher clergy only: lower clergy and laity would become involved only if they infringed (under threat of capital penalty) the regulations regarding assemblies and cemeteries – which we must presume these Numidian Christians, laity and clergy alike, have done.[128] We are simply left to extrapolate from these samples for other regions of the empire.

The version we have of Gallienus' later rescript of toleration certainly implies that Christian places of worship (*topoi*) might be subject to sequestration (and Christian cemetery grounds might be seized, as we gather from the further imperial response which Eusebius paraphrases in *Hist. Eccl.* VII.13 *ad fin.*). The *litterae* of 257 did not merely convey a clear licence from the emperors, if a governor chanced to be so inclined, to outlaw Christian officials and corporate Christian worship: more positive action was being demanded.

But the last decade had given Christians practice in the skills required for evading detection, and the elaborate international network of the brotherhood (witness Cypr. *Ep*. 80) further assisted underground survival. Even those actually apprehended for exemplary treatment and exiled continued their proselytizing activities (so Dionysius declares at Cephro, *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.12f.); they even participated in the (forbidden) assemblies (so Dionysius – defensively – claims at Colluthion, *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.17); they were assailed by Christian visitors, laden with their gifts

[128] Molthagen (1970) 88–92 argues (unpersuasively) that the ban on gatherings of Christians operated only if the clergy failed to comply with the call to sacrifice.

(as Cyprian enjoyed at Curubis, Pont. *Vit. Cypr*. 12; cf. Dionysius both at Cephro, *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.12 and at Colluthion, *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.17); they might continue lavishly to minister to the Christian poor (see Pont. *Vit. Cypr*. 13) or send sustaining support to fellow confessors (Cypr. *Epp*. 76–79).

The Roman senate appears to have written to Valerian in the east requesting official guidance for dealing with such public defiance of the imperial wishes (as far as we know, the clergy of Rome had all so far managed to survive unharmed). We learn from Cypr. *Ep*. 80 of the contents of the imperial reply:

> 1.1. But you should now be informed that the men whom I had expressly sent over to Rome are back; they were to find out the truth and report to us the terms of the rescript concerning us, for there have been rife a wide variety of unconfirmed rumours.
>
> 1.2. The truth of the matter stands as follows.
>
> Valerian has sent a rescript to the senate, directing that bishops, presbyters, and deacons are to be put to death at once but that senators, high-ranking officials, and Roman knights are to lose their status as well as forfeit their property, and that if, after being so dispossessed, they should persist in remaining Christians, they are then to suffer capital punishment as well. Furthermore, that matrons are to be dispossessed of their property and despatched into exile and that any members of Caesar's household who had either confessed earlier or should have done so now, are to have their possessions confiscated and are to be sent in chains, assigned to the imperial estates.
>
> 1.3. Moreover, the emperor Valerian has added to his address a copy of the letter which he has written to the governors of the provinces concerning us. We are daily awaiting the arrival of this letter . . .
>
> 1.4. You should be further informed that Sixtus was put to death in the cemetery on 6 August and, along with him, four deacons. Indeed, the prefects in Rome are daily pressing on with this persecution: those who are brought before them are being condemned, with their estates forfeited to the imperial treasury.

The fact that the senate – it would appear – had written to the emperor requesting guidance in dealing with prominently recalcitrant Christians (whether notables of the church or of society and of Caesar's own household) suggests there were conscientious enemies of Christianity to be found within the conservative upper social circles of Rome: Valerian himself need have been no different. (Porph. *Vit. Plot*. 16 echoes the resentment felt at the spread of Christianity, and other outlandish sects, in contemporary Rome at the expense of the 'old philosophy'.) And we need to remember that the Christian intelligence network would have known of the senate's referral months before the imperial response came back from the east – hence long weeks of apprehensive waiting by Christian communities (Cypr. *Ep*. 80.1.1). The virulence of the mood of hostility is reflected in orders which

entailed the recall and retrial of clergy already sentenced under the first stage (thus the African bishops Agapius and Secundinus brought back from exile to their execution, *Acta Marian. et Jacob*. 2.5ff., as likewise Cyprian himself),[129] or harsher treatment for already confessed (and presumably sentenced) *Caesariani*. But the most devastating illustration of the violent change in temper comes with the stark news of the execution on the spot of pope Sixtus and four of his deacons at the cemetery of Callistus in Rome (§1.4). This heralds the bloodiest persecution known before the days of Diocletian.

An ingredient in Valerian's decision may have been reaction to the affront cast upon the imperial dignity and Roman law by open Christian recalcitrance. But an administrator, however hotly outraged, however hastily he may have been obliged to act whilst in the midst of military campaigning, would still have realized the grave consequences of these orders to be distributed throughout the empire. This was persecution, because it was thought it mattered that Christian religious leaders should be extirpated and that Christians in positions of prominence should not be allowed to be seen publicly to repudiate 'Roman ceremonies' with impunity. The proconsul in Africa, putting into effect the new ordinances on 14 September 258 in Carthage, provides our most immediate gloss; he could well echo some of the phrases in the preamble of the imperial rescript itself:

> Galerius Maximus conferred with his judicial council and then with great difficulty declared: 'You have long lived with sacrilegious views and you have gathered to yourself many vicious men in a conspiracy. You have set yourself up as an enemy to the Roman gods and to their sacred rites. And the pious and most revered emperors Valerian and Gallienus, Augusti, and Valerian, the most noble Caesar, have been unable to bring you back to the observance of their own sacred rituals.'
>
> 'Therefore, having been apprehended as the instigator and ringleader in atrocious crime, you are yourself going to be made an example to those whom you have gathered together through your criminal actions. The authority of the law shall be ratified by means of your blood.'
>
> He then read out the verdict from a tablet: 'It is the sentence that Thascius Cyprianus be executed by the sword.'
>
> Cyprian the bishop said: 'Thanks be to God.'
>
> (*Acta Procon. Cypr*. 4)

For the Roman governing circles, at least, it still remained incomprehensible that Roman citizens should fail so signally in their civic duties of honouring their Roman gods and acknowledging their sacred rites ('civic duties' – rather than 'civil rights' – was certainly their inherited mode of thinking).

[129] Governors would appear to have had some advance advice, recalling exiles, in readiness, to closer locations: thus Cyprian from Curubis to house detention in his Carthaginian *horti* (*Acta Procons. Cypr*. 2.1), Dionysius from Libyan Cephro to Colluthion, not far from Alexandria and other Egyptian confessors to villages in the Mareotic *nome* (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.11.1ff.). See also Whitehorne (1977).

The comportment of Cyprian, himself of the local curial aristocracy but now a Christian bishop, highlights this clash of perceived duties – and ideological stances. Cyprian had spent a whole year in anxious expectation of this moment before the proconsul's tribunal. His inspired words, uttered a year before as confessor, had been promptly transcribed, treasured, and given wide circulation and lavish laudation (witness *Ep.* 77.2, written from mines in Numidia; and cf. Pont. *Vit. Cypr.* 11). A vision of his as confessor had been relayed in detail and interpreted as prophetic of this very day (so Pont. *Vit. Cypr.* 12f.). In recent weeks he had spent long days with his assembled clergy meditating with them on this very moment of his *agon* (*Ep.* 80.1.1), and then, in confident expectation of the end, he had rallied the brethren with a series of rousing exhortations (Pont. *Vit. Cypr.* 14 *ad fin.*). He had also contrived, by eluding the proconsul's agents, that he should be seen to go forward to take his seat as assessor on the celestial tribunal (as he would have to put it) in the midst of his own Carthaginian church (*Ep.* 81.1f.): for the church was in the bishop (*Ep.* 66.8.3) and the witnessing people would thus become partners in the graces, and the *gloria*, of their own inspirited bishop.

The entire Carthaginian congregation (*universus populus fratrum*), so prepared and exhorted, thronged to witness the noble spectacle; they all kept vigil outside his quarters throughout the night, then accompanied him to the place of execution. There Cyprian enacted an *exemplum* of conscious dignity, a Christian *nobile letum*, at last putting into deed the words he had so often preached. The brethren spread out cloths and handkerchiefs to catch the drops of his precious blood; the *cultus* of St Cyprian, bishop and martyr, had begun.

> So Cyprian suffered and his body was laid out nearby to satisfy the curiosity of the pagans. But at nightfall his body was moved from there and, accompanied by tapers and torches, it was conducted with prayers in great triumph to the burial-ground of Macrobius Candidianus the procurator, which lies on the Mappalian Way near the fishponds. And there it was buried.
>
> (*Acta Procons. Cypr.* 5.6)

Within twelve months fellow martyrs could be numbered throughout the empire securely attested all the way from the west (bishop Fructuosus and his two deacons Augurius and Eulogius, beheaded in Tarraco, Spain 21 January 259) – the location being supplied by Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 6), through the central Mediterranean (eventually, in Rome, all told, the bishop – one of his presbyters, all of his seven deacons, a sub-deacon, a reader and a doorkeeper)[130] as far as the east (Priscus, Malcus, Alexander and a Marcionite woman fed to the beasts in Palestine, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.12).

[130] Cypr. *Ep.* 80.1.4 combined with *Liber Pont.* 25 (Duchesne (1955–7) 1.155).

But it is the south, in the African provinces, which is especially rich in testimony. Thus the Passion of Montanus and Lucius records (for Africa Proconsularis) the deaths in prison of two recently baptized Christians (Primolus and Donatianus, ch. 2); a presbyter, Victor, ch. 7.2; Quartillosa, her husband and her son, ch. 8; bishop Successus, Paulus and their companions, ch. 21.8; as well as Lucius, Montanus, Flavianus, Julianus and Victoricus (presumably all clerics), ch. 2. And in Numidia in the Passion of Marian and James we encounter many in prison (in Cirta) to be sent on eventually for trial (and death) before the governor at Lambaesis: altogether there are the bishops Agapius and Secundinus, ch. 3; James a deacon, Marian a lector, along with others of the clergy, chs. 10, 11.3; lay martyrs, chs. 5.10, 9, 10, including Aemilianus, an equestrian, ch. 8 (a unique attestation for one of the specific lay categories of victim) and Tertulla and Antonia, ch. 11. The terms of Valerian's rescript of 258 had given rise to a deeply divisive and bloody conflict throughout the empire.

We are entirely dependent on Eusebius for our knowledge how that division and conflict was resolved.

> But not long afterwards Valerian underwent slavery at the hands of the barbarians, and his son, succeeding to the sole power, conducted the government with greater prudence, and immediately by means of edicts (*programmata*) put an end to the persecution against us. He granted free power to those who presided over the word to perform their accustomed duties, by a rescript (*antigraphē*) which runs as follows: 'The Emperor Caesar Publius Licinius Gallienus Pius Felix Augustus to Dionysius and Pinnas and Demetrius and the other bishops. I have ordered that the benefits of my bounty should be spread throughout all the world, namely that they should depart from the places of worship. Therefore you too are entitled to make use of the provisions contained in my rescript, so that none may molest you. And this thing which it is within your power to accomplish has long since been granted by me. Therefore Aurelius Quirinius, the *procurator summae rei* (?), will observe the provisions granted by me.'
>
> Let this, which for the sake of greater clearness was translated from the Latin, be inserted. And there is also another ordinance of the same emperor, which was issued to other bishops, giving permission to recover the sites of the cemeteries, as they are called.
>
> (*Hist. Eccl.* VII.13).

Valerian's ignominious capture is best dated to early summer 260.[131] Eusebius certainly places the revoking, by imperial edicts (*programmata*), of the previous orders against Christians as an immediate (*autika*) reaction to the disaster. We know no more than that – and this may be Eusebius' own interpretation, a theological reading of the dire event by the imperial authorities. That is a fair surmise, but there were no doubt proffered also

[131] The evidence is conveniently reviewed by Potter, *Prophecy* 331ff.

prudential counsels to avoid at all costs exacerbating internal strife and divisions (as Valerian's second rescript had manifestly been doing) in an empire that must have seemed at the time perilously fragmenting – and perhaps to disassociate the now sole emperor from policies identified with his father Valerian.

Dionysius and his fellow bishops have petitioned the emperor and the imperial response which they receive[132] allowing freedom of worship asserts that the ordinance has been operative 'long since' (ἤδη πρὸ πολλοῦ): given the successive revolts and civil war in which Egypt has been embroiled (Macrianus and Quietus, Aemilianus (260–1)), the ordinance has not yet been effective there. The Egyptian bishops now have a document guaranteeing their (delayed) rights – and Eusebius has a copy of a further imperial response, assisting bishops in the recovery of their (confiscated) burial grounds.

It is possible to make too much of Gallienus' ordinance: in strict legality Christians are now only back to where they were before Valerian's orders were issued – that is, they are still potentially liable, *qua* Christians, to fall foul of the law. But in revoking those earlier orders, by the very act of having positively to permit unmolested Christian worship, Gallienus was in effect also conceding a major degree of official toleration: some forty years of relative peace follow from this significant move. To those minds inclined to read the events of 257–60 theologically, the Christians' god may now have appeared to be a god of vengeful power – to be treated with due caution.

For a full decade that effective toleration appears basically to have held, so far as our knowledge goes – apart from the case of the soldier Marinus of Caesarea (Pal.)[133] – until under Aurelian (270–5) there was a strong and persistent rumour (Eusebius and Lactantius are both reporting within their youthful personal experience) that the emperor was intending to initiate a persecution, an intention thwarted at the very last moment by the emperor's death (275). Lactantius, *DMP* 6.2 dramatically has the letters to governors issued but not yet reaching the more distant provinces, while Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* VII.30.21 has the hand of the Divine Justice staying the emperor's arm as he is about to pen his signature to the decrees! Unfulfilled rumours are by nature unverifiable and all we can say is that it would not have been out of character for Aurelian to have thought, and planned, like a Valerian before him – or, eventually, a Diocletian and a Galerius after him. Constantine,

[132] Strictly speaking they have obtained an imperial *subscriptio* to their *libellus*: should we conjecture a personal presentation of that petition by one or more of the bishops before the imperial court? That would have constituted a symbolic moment.

[133] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.15: though we have names involved – governor Achaeus, bishop Theotecnus, Christian senator Astyrius – the date cannot be fixed securely; cf. n. 123 above. Similar individual cases could well have occurred elsewhere.

Oratio ad Sanctos 25, can later rank Aurelian with Decius and Valerian as persecutors who deservedly met with miserable deaths.

In the (earlier) dispute over the church house at Antioch – did it belong to the (now deposed) Paul of Samosata or to the (newly installed) Domnus? – no doubt the petition to Aurelian by the party of Domnus appealed to the ordinance of Gallienus, an imperial predecessor, allowing bishops unmolested access to their places of worship (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.30.19; cf. VII.13). Aurelian assigned the building 'to those with whomsoever the bishops of the doctrine (*tou dogmatos*) in Italy and Rome were in communication'.[134] From our perception it marks a significant moment: the realities of the civil place of the Christian churches within the social organization of the empire are being officially recognized – and a presage set for Constantine forty years later in his dealings with the Donatists. But for contemporaries, with a growing church now a familiar, if still minor, presence in most communities (especially urban), the significance may not have been visible: the civil place of the churches had simply long been a social reality.

VI. THE GREAT PERSECUTION

Mani (b. 216) and his disciple missionaries, the narrow band of high-achieving 'Elect' and their devoted faithful, the 'Hearers', had in the course of the third century made remarkable proselytizing progress both inside and outside the permeable boundaries of the Roman world, especially in the eastern empire. Violently outspoken opposition had come both from the Christian orthodox (as well as from pagan philosophers) from within the empire[135] as also from inside the Persian empire, from zealous Zoroastrian clergy, led by the Magian official Kartir, with not only Mani himself (d. 276) and his followers but orthodox Christians as well persecuted.[136] In (very probably) late March 302 Diocletian replied from Alexandria to an anxious inquiry and report (*sollertia tua serenitati nostrae retulit*) forwarded by the proconsul of Africa concerning these upstart Manichees. Not only the ferociousness of the measures to extirpate the infectious poison but the grandiloquent preamble on the religious, moral and political grounds (typically, not disaggregated) for leaving traditional religion peacefully

[134] For full analysis, Millar (1971).

[135] Examples are Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.31 (possibly a later insertion?); the late third-century circular letter, perhaps issued from the chancery of Theonas, bishop of Alexandria, warning the faithful against being deceived by the 'madness of the Manichaeans', who require 'menstrual blood for the abominations of their madness', *P. Ryl.* III.469, ll. 30ff. (ed. Roberts (1938) 42); the neo-Platonist Alexander of Lycopolis, *Tractatus de placitis Manichaeorum*.

[136] Brock (1978); Lieu (1992) esp. 79ff.; Brunner (1974) 105f. (l. 30: 'And the Jews and Buddhists and Brahmans and Nazarites and Christians and Maktag and Manichaeans in the kingdom are being smitten').

undisturbed are highly revealing of the temper and the thinking current in the imperial court.

> We have heard that the Manichaeans, concerning whom your Conscientiousness (*sollertia tua*) has reported to our Serenity (*serenitas nostra*), have set up new and hitherto unheard of sects in opposition to the older creeds so that they might cast out the doctrines vouchsafed to us in the past by divine favour, for the benefit of their own depraved doctrine. They have sprung forth very recently like novel and unexpected monstrosities from the race of the Persians – a nation hostile to us – and have made their way into our empire, where they are committing many outrages, disturbing the tranquillity of the people and even inflicting grave harm on the civic communities (*civitates*): our fear is that with the passage of time, they will endeavour, as usually happens, to infect the modest and tranquil Roman race, people of an innocent nature, and our whole empire with the damnable customs (*consuetudines*) and the perverse laws (*leges*) of the Persians as with the poison of a malignant serpent.
>
> (*Coll.* xv.3.3f.)

Whilst the Persian connexion is clearly a major determining factor in Diocletian's reaction, the preceding paragraphs make plain that his fundamental objection is to the sacrilegious disturbance of what has been established since antiquity (*quae semel ab antiquis statuta et definita*), laid down by the immortal gods for the benefit of mankind: 'ancient religion ought not to be criticized by a new-fangled one' (*neque reprehendi a nova vetus religio deberet*). The vulnerability of Christianity to this enunciated line of thinking is obvious, and the savage measures enjoined should have given Christians pause, however hateful to them may have been the 'heresy' now under attack:

> We order the authors and leaders of the sect [= the Elect], to be subjected to a very severe penalty, namely, to be incinerated in fiery flames, along with their abominable scriptures: but their followers [= the Hearers], who are persistently obstinate we order to be punished with death, and we ordain that their property be confiscated to our treasury. If any persons of the official classes, or of any rank, no matter what, or of superior status (*si qui sane etiam honorati aut cuiuslibet dignitatis vel maiores personae*), have betaken themselves to this unheard of, base, and utterly infamous sect, to this doctrine of the Persians, you will see that their property is attached to our treasury and that they are themselves committed to the mines of Phaeno or Proconnesus. In order that this abomination of wickedness be rooted out completely from our most blessed age, your Devotion will not delay to obey with all haste the orders and regulations of our Tranquillity.[137]
>
> (*Coll.* xv.36–8)

Christian apprehensions at this harsh treatment of what would have been seen by many as simply yet another variant of a Christians sect were no

[137] Actual Manichaean victims are lost from the record, as also are any caught up in the ensuing Great Persecution.

doubt exacerbated by the fact that it was only a year or two before (in all likelihood)[138] that the emperors Diocletian and Galerius had become infuriated at repeated failures during the taking of the sacred auspices: this was put down to the malign effect of Christians present, making the sign of the cross on their foreheads. In enraged reaction, not only those attending the rites but all serving in the palace were required to sacrifice (on pain of flogging) and letters were then despatched to the army commanders requiring their soldiers to sacrifice (on pain of dismissal). The eastern imperial courts and the soldiers who served under their auspices were being purged of the offending Christians.[139] Forty years of relative peace since the toleration of Gallienus were coming to an end.[140] But this imperial mood of moral and religious outrage, combined with a passion for disciplined conformity, was no sudden novelty. A few years previously, for example, in 295, an edict was issued from Damascus[141] on the moral offence of incestuous marriages within degrees of kindred long forbidden by ancient Roman law, marriages roundly declared to be a sacrilegious abomination and a barbarian savagery by which men 'plunged into illicit unions with promiscuous lust no better than cattle and wild beasts without a thought for morality and piety'. The preamble didactically insists that it is the strict duty of the pious and religious emperors to venerate and preserve the chaste and sacred precepts of Roman law: 'For there can be no doubt that the immortal gods themselves will favour and be at peace with the Roman name, as they have always been in the past, if we have seen to it that all subject to our rule entirely lead a pious, religious, peaceable and chaste life in every respect.' And the edict concludes, declaring 'Our laws protect only what is holy and venerable, and accordingly the Roman majesty has attained to so great a plenitude by the favour of all the divine powers, for it has wisely entwined about all its laws with the bonds of piety and the observance of morality.'[142] The logic of this thinking, with its appeal to antiquity and religious uniformity – and prosperity – could be ominously turned against adherents of any deviant 'barbarian superstition'. But whereas it had been feasible for Roman authorities any time over the preceding forty years to draw the logical conclusions from these premises, it requires an explanation why it was eventually now, on 23 February 303 that the empire was

[138] The dating is put by Lactantius, *DMP* 10.6 as *interiecto aliquanto tempore* before Diocletian winters at Nicomedia in 302/3. Whilst Lactantius focuses on Diocletian's role in *DMP* 10.1ff., both emperors were in fact present (implied by Lact. *Div. Inst.* IV.27.4f.). The location is *in partibus Orientis*: was this in Antioch in early 299, or was it later in 301? See Barnes, *NE* 55, 63f.

[139] The (more partial and provincial?) version of Eusebius implies that Galerius had instigated a purge of his own entourage and army on his own 'long (*eti palai*) before the movement of the other emperors': *Hist. Eccl.* VIII app. 1; cf. VIII.1.7; VIII.4.2ff., with confessing Christian soldiers forfeiting their rank (or choosing to leave the army) and a few actually being executed.

[140] Note that in this interim, the *Acta* preserve accounts of Christian conscientious objectors, the most reliable of which are those of the recruit Maximilian, martyred on 12 March 295: the punishment is for refusal to serve (*Milita, ne pereas* (*Acta Maximiliani* 2)).

[141] By Galerius? See Barnes, *NE* 62 n. 76. [142] *Coll.* VI.4. (esp. 1, 2, 6).

plunged, by stages – but by no means uniformly or continuously – into a bloody decade of turmoil involving horrifying human pain and suffering as the Great Persecution against the Christians got under way. After all, the senior Augustus, Diocletian, had been in power now some eighteen years.

Both Lactantius and Eusebius (even more unequivocally) make Galerius, the Caesar in the east, the originator and author of the deviation in policy. Eusebius' version is without nuance (e.g. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.8.4; VIII.16.2; VIII app. 1–4), whereas Lactantius has a (maliciously slanted but basically credible) account of lengthy secret debates between Diocletian and Galerius (by nature, beyond documentation) during the winter months of 302/3, along with systematic consultation of court *amici* and advisers, civil and military – as well as pagan intellectuals hostile to Christianity (e.g. the anonymous philosopher of *Div. Inst.* V.2.3ff., Sossianus Hierocles in *DMP* 16.4, *Div. Inst.* V.2.12ff., 3.22) – with a reluctant Diocletian ultimately overpersuaded by an oracular response from Apollo of Didyma (Lact. *DMP* 11.3ff.; cf. 31.1). All we are able to say is that Lactantius, as eye-witness in Nicomedia, reflects informed rumour current at the time: it is about as close as we can hope to get. And it is the virtue of his version that the final decision is still made to lie with Diocletian, pressured though he may well have been by the ferocious Galerius (so depicted by the tendentious Lactantius).[143] A power struggle between a tiring Diocletian and his more junior colleague, the Caesar Galerius, centred on a policy issue in which Diocletian was inextricably entangled by the logic of his own premises, makes realistic sense.[144] The inherent weakness of Roman polytheism – pluralistic, fluid, assimilative, permeable – to maintain a consistent long-term policy was once more revealed.

On 23 February 303 the first edict against the Christians was posted up in Nicomedia, the current imperial residence in the east. The previous day the edict had been issued and, symbolically, the church building in Nicomedia, on high ground in view of the imperial palace, was searched for its scriptures (which were burned), plundered of its valuables and then razed to the ground. The terms of the edict now posted enjoined, *inter alia*, that church buildings everywhere were to be destroyed, that the scriptures and liturgical books should be burned and church plate and other valuables confiscated, that Christians who enjoyed social status or juridical privileges should be reduced to the status of *humiliores* (and be liable to torture), that litigants (including Christians) be required to offer sacrifice before any legal

[143] Note that Constantine, at the time in Nicomedia, later attributes the blame to Diocletian, *ap*. Eus. *Vit. Const.* II.50f. (Letter of 324), *Oratio ad Sanctos* 25. See also Davies (1989).

[144] There are standard accounts of the Great Persecution, the classic analysis being by de Ste Croix (1954), as well as the rich commentary of Moreau (1954) on Lact. *DMP*. For the political and religious context, consult Barnes, *CE* chs. 2 and 9. I make no attempt to provide any systematic coverage of reasonably authenticated victims.

action was heard, and that Christian (imperial ?) freedmen, if recalcitrant, should be re-enslaved.[145]

By spring 303 the edict was posted in Palestine, by early June it was already in operation in Africa.[146] The penalties for infringement were probably not specified: there were adequate precedents for governors to choose from for defiance of imperial orders and whilst Lactantius can report that Diocletian prevailed in 'ordering that the business be carried out without bloodshed' (Lact. *DMP* 11.8), this clearly would not prevent the exercise of the death penalty, at their discretion, when judges came to deal with any recusant. Not only were the Caesars to be seen putting their own households in order:[147] corporate church organization was under attack and, typically, the public presence of the church was to be erased whether in physical terms or in terms of the socially prominent. Whilst creating a tense atmosphere of peril and undoubted anxiety this edict still left the church rank and file, being *humiliores*, not directly threatened unless involved in litigation, and even then various forms of evasion, ranging from the use of proxies to bribery, were time-honoured recourses available.[148]

This first edict was put into operation in both halves of the empire, although in Constantius' sphere (Britain, the Gauls) Lactantius insists that at most church buildings were destroyed and even this is explicitly denied by Eusebius.[149] Apologetic bias aside, Constantius could well have had little sympathy for the operation, an initiative of his eastern colleagues (Lact. *DMP* 15.6); likewise, there were governors later who could boast not having shed any Christian blood (Lact. *Div. Inst.* v.11.13). But there is no doubt about the effects in the territory of Constantius' western senior colleague, Maximian: in Rome (pope Marcellinus was a *traditor*, or even worse),[150] in Sicily (*Acta Eupli*, at Catania on 12 August 304),[151] in Spain (bishop Ossius of Corduba can claim to be a confessor, *ap.* Athan. *Hist. Arian.* 44.1) and above all, in Africa. As the handing over of the sacred scriptures for destruction (*traditio*) was regarded in the west as a most

[145] The major terms can be put together by combining Lact. *DMP* 13.1, cf. 15.5 with Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.2.4 and *Mart. Pal.* 1.1.

[146] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.2.4; *MP*(S) *pr.* (March/April); *Acta Felicis* (5 June at Tibiuca).

[147] This appears to be the meaning of Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.2.4: 'those in households (τοὺς δ'ἐν οἰκετιαῖς), if they persisted in their profession of Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty', referring presumably to the *Caesariani* (cf. rescript of Valerian, Cypr. *Ep.* 80.1.2).

[148] *P. Oxy.* XXXI.2601 (Copres uses as proxy his brother (a pagan?) to sacrifice, before pursuing a lawsuit about family property); cf. Peter of Alexandria (Easter 306) *can.* 5 (proxies), *can.* 6f. (use of slave go-betweens), *can.* 11 (bribery) (*PG* XVIII.473f.).

[149] Lact. *DMP* 15.7; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.13, cf. *Vit. Const.* 1.13 (although in *Mart. Pal.* 13.12 he does includes Gaul in the western areas that suffered the effects of persecution). Opt. 1.22 (CSEL XXVI.25f.): Donatist bishops declare flatteringly *immunis est Gallia* under Constantius.

[150] For the tangled story see Barnes, *CE* 38, and nn. on pp. 303–4.

[151] Euplus provocatively carries 'the holy gospels' which he refuses to surrender: arrested 29 April 304 and tried and martyred on 12 August 304 (the Latin version has him executed with his book of the gospels hung about his neck).

heinous sin, the post-persecution witch-hunts, especially prompted by the rigorist Donatists in Africa, have provided us with invaluable vignettes of the implementation of this edict. Thus the *Gesta apud Zenophilum* reveal the search made in Cirta on 19 May 303, not only of the church house (and an inventory made of its plate and numerous chattels) but also of the houses of the seven readers, confiscating all scriptures there found or surrendered (CSEL XXVI.186ff.). The *Acta Purgationis Felicis* clear Felix of Aptungi of charges of surrendering or burning the scriptures (CSEL XXVI.203f.), the Acts of the Council of Cirta, 4 March 305 (Aug. *c. Cresc.* III.27.30) disclose varieties of evasion (Donatus of Calama surrendering medical *codices*, Victor of Rustica four illegible gospels, Marinus of Aquae Tibilitanae some papers (*cartulas*), but not the scriptural *codices*) whereas Mensurinus could claim surrendering to the flames only heretical works (*quaecumque reproba scripta haereticorum*: Aug. *Brev. Coll.* III.13.25). The *Acta Felicis* show what might ensue when the bishop (in this case, of Tibiuca) refused to surrender: Felix was beheaded on 15 July 303 in Carthage: similarly Secundus, bishop of Numidian Tigisis, can mention the many martyrs who 'have been crowned because they did not surrender' (Aug. *c. Cresc.* III.27.30; cf. *Brev. Coll.* III.13.25, 15.27). This was certainly no idle affair.

Nevertheless it has to be emphasized that when Constantius succeeded Maximian as Augustus in 305, all active persecution ceased in the west. The persecution had lasted 'less than two years'[152] and deaths securely known (as opposed to later legend) are not many.[153] The following year (306) saw the actual recovery of church property and full freedom for Christians under Constantine in Britain, the Gauls and Spain (so Lact. *DMP* 24.9 asserts); whereas in the territory under Maxentius' control (Italy, Africa) Christians, though tolerated (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.14.1; Opt. I.18), had to wait a further five years until their properties were restored (311: Aug. *Brev. Coll.* III.18.34) in a last-minute bid by Maxentius to woo Christian support.[154] It is clear that, even so, this restoration had not been fully enforced by the time of the victory of the Milvian Bridge (28 October 312) – as the letter of

[152] Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 13.12: the last dated western martyrdom is that of Crispina, 5 December 304 at Theveste (Africa). (This provides the best evidence for the (doubtful) possibility that the fourth edict was ever enforced in the west.) By February/March 305 the Numidian bishops can hold vituperative meetings in Cirta in the house of Urbanus Donatus (the church being not yet rebuilt) to elect a new bishop to replace the *traditor* Paulus, now deceased (Aug. *c. Cresc.* III.27.30; cf. *Gesta apud Zenophilum*, CSEL XXVI.192f.).

[153] To those already mentioned (Felix, Euplus, Crispina, the Numidian martyrs reported by Secundus) add, for example, Saturninus and companions (numbering forty-six according to the Passion (*PL* VIII.689), although the young Hilarianus appears to survive; 12 Feb. 304, in Carthage, Aug. *Brev. Coll.* III.17.32); *CIL* VIII.6700 (19353) [Mactar], the martyrs of Milevis (number unspecified) who suffered *in diebus turificationis*. Together they form our best sample of the range of fatal victims, from which we can only speculatively extrapolate.

[154] African Christians were imperilled in 311, under the impression they were hostile to Maxentius, Opt. I.17f.

Constantine to Anullinus, proconsul of Africa, dated to the early months of 313 reveals (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* x.5.15ff.). For all these years Christians would have had to pass by their places of assembly seeing them in ruins and live with an uncertain future (spine-chilling accounts reaching them of events in the east which could equally well befall them also). The persecution had bequeathed, meantime, a rich legacy of disarray and disaccord, especially in Rome and North Africa, over disputed penitential regimes, elections and consecrations. But the Great Persecution proved in the end to be no long-lasting bloody affair for the western empire.

Not so in the east. The violent reaction to the treasonable tearing down by a Christian protestor (Euethius) of the edict posted in Nicomedia on 24 February 303 (Lact. *DMP* 13.2f.; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.5) and the savage reprisals that followed the two outbreaks of fire in the imperial palace in Nicomedia shortly afterwards, with a violent purge of Christian civil servants, eunuchs and slaves in the imperial service, set the contrasting tone, especially in the immediate environment of the emperors (Diocletian being active in conducting trials personally, Lact. *DMP* 14.3f., 15.1f.; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.6 – Dorotheus, Gorgonius and Peter being named: cf. *Oratio ad Sanctos* 25). But it is well to remember that whilst deaths with appalling suffering and tortures are a horrifying aspect of our received accounts of these persecutions, especially in the east, such savage legal treatment was not exclusive to Christian prisoners: it is simply one undeniable and brutal fact of the late Roman regime of law.

'Soon afterwards' was issued a follow-up edict (i.e. spring 303 ?), an imperial order (*prostagma basilikon*) to arrest and imprison church leaders everywhere (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.6.8f.; *Mart. Pal.* 1, *pr.*; cf. Lact. *DMP* 15.2). The sequel indicates that this could include anyone of clerical rank: this was a logical extension of the aim to attack corporate church organization and to erase the public presence of the church – as Valerian earlier had aimed to do. No evidence compels us to believe that this order was distributed to the western empire: it applied to the eastern only.

A further imperial letter (*grammata*) followed, as prisons became overcrowded, requiring Christians so arrested to sacrifice (and secure release) with tortures applied to those who resisted (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.6.10; cf. VIII.2.5; *Mart. Pal. pr.*). Every form of physical coercion was used to create recusants, at least in form, and thus to clear the gaols – as well as honour the gods (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.3; *Mart. Pal.*(S) 1.3–5).[155] Deaths were accordingly rare (cf. *Mart. Pal.* 1.4f.: in Palestine the deacon Zacchaeus and the reader and exorcist Alphaeus). Was this intended to be by way of a celebratory amnesty in anticipation of Diocletian's *vicennalia* (in late 303)? Despite Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.6.10 ('how could one here number the multitude of the

[155] See also on forced sacrifice Peter of Alexandria *can.* 14 (*PG* XVIII.505).

martyrs in each province and especially those in Africa and Mauretania'), this order, like its immediate predecessor, appears to have been applied in the east only.

In the second year of the persecution (304/5) and very probably in the early months of 304,[156] Eusebius reports that an imperial letter reached Palestine, a universal order (*katholikon prostagma*) requiring entire civic communities as a body to sacrifice (Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 3.1: reflected in Lact. *DMP* 15.4). No doubt, as was the experience with similar orders earlier under Decius, enforcement was haphazard, particularly given the lack of adequate civic registers, and many would have simply made themselves scarce, escaping detection especially into more rural areas or being hidden by pagan friends.[157] There was presumably, as was the case in the parallel orders of Decius, a time-limit set for its enforcement. The fourteen canons of Peter of Alexandria, a circular issued to Egyptian bishops for Easter 306, appear to have been composed in the aftermath of this new onslaught (and shortly before Maximinus repeated the exercise, more efficiently, in his own diocese). This episcopal circular was written in an endeavour to provide regulations over varieties of lapse, compromise and evasion. Certificates could be issued, but not generally (as appears to have been the case in Decius' orders), only as a means of protection for their possessors against further molestation from enforcing officials (see Peter of Alexandria, *can.* 5 (*PG* XVIII.473ff.)). Nevertheless this constituted outright repression of the Christian cult: defaulting Christians (now lay as well as clerical) could find themselves liable to capital penalties for failure to comply. The evidence is not compelling that this edict, certainly issued throughout the east, was ever promulgated in the west: if it was, it cannot have been enforced systematically.[158] There, the *Acta* of Crispina (Theveste, December 304) provide suspiciously isolated testimony for such a major upheaval (the

[156] The *Acta of Agape, Irene and Chione* (with four others, Agatho, Cassia, Philippa and Eutychia) take place at Thessalonica in late March / 1 April 304 apparently under this ordinance (note *Acta* ch. 3.2).

[157] The grandparents of Basil of Caesarea (Cap.) took to the Pontic hills (presumably to their family estates) for some seven years or so, Greg. Naz. *Or.* XLIII.6 (*PG* XXXVI.501a); the *Acts of Agape, Irene and Chione* 1.2, 5.5 (flight to the mountainous area out of Thessalonica); Meletius ('bishop of the churches in Pontus') was seven years on the run in Palestine, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.32.27f.; and for flight generally, Peter of Alexandria *can.* 13 (*PG* XVIII.501ff.), Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.2.1 and cf. *Vit. Const.* II.53 (quoting Constantine: Christians flee to safety and freedom of worship to barbarians beyond the imperial frontiers). For concealment by pagans, Athan. *Hist. Arian. Ad Mon.* 64 and cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.3.1. Athan. *Vit. Ant.* realistically depicts how Christian life could simply go on away from the urban centres (but note chs. 46f.). For Africa (303) see also *Gesta apud Zenophilum*, CSEL XXVI.186 (*fugivimus in montem Bellonae*).

[158] See n. 152. The best (but still unpersuasive) case for its general enforcement is mounted by Frend (1965) 502f.: individual governors may, nevertheless, have been in communication with the eastern court – just as the proconsul of Africa, Julianus, had consulted Diocletian on the subject of the Manichees (see above).

proconsul is made to claim, ch. 1.7: *omnis Africa sacrificia fecit nec tibi dubium est*).

We can only speculate how Diocletian and Maximian may have regarded their onslaught on Christianity at the time of their joint abdication on 1 May 305: higher matters of state, other than religious, will certainly have preoccupied their attention. But from their perception they would have seen the churches wiped from the landscape, the Christian leadership and organization broken, their revered texts destroyed, their followers cleared from the army and the imperial service, and many satisfying defections from all Christian ranks to the 'Roman gods' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.3.1 reckoning defections as 'countless' (μυρίοι)) – leaving still no doubt some unimportant but inevitable fanatical Christian diehards. That may have been the view from the eminence of the imperial courts: it need not have been sympathetically shared either by all of the governing classes or urban élites, let alone the general population (popular hostility being noticeably infrequent, with Gaza providing a rarely attested exception in Eus. *Mart. Pal.*(L) 3.1 (A.D. 304)).

Whilst the abdication of Diocletian and Maximian set in train events in the west that led ultimately to the triumphant liberation of Christians, leaving them free to court imperial patronage – and to foment quarrels – it was otherwise in the east. The newly appointed Caesar of the diocese of Oriens, Maximinus, promptly revealed his personal hostility towards Christianity by launching in 306 a vigorous onslaught, in a positive drive to reach down to the level of the general population and exploiting systematically freshly completed and detailed census rolls.[159] His orders (by *grammata*) required city magistrates to compel the whole population (men, women and children) together to make sacrifice and pour libation.[160] No doubt, as before, many Christians managed to evade the demands, especially in districts outside the major *civitates*; and it is a reasonable assumption that this (far more efficient) variation of the Fourth Edict was also issued in the territory of Galerius (the Danubian provinces and Greece, the diocese of Asiana and Pontica): it does, however, go unmentioned by Lactantius. At all events, the previously issued edicts against the Christians were still to be in force there for a further five years, and Eusebius accuses Galerius of relentlessly pressing on with the persecution of Christians (*Hist. Eccl.* VIII.14.9ff.).

Certainly in Maximinus' own territory the pressure for religious conformity continued: the narrative of Eusebius over the years 306–8 can record

[159] On these census rolls, see Barnes, *NE* 227f. and for a (hostile) description of the processes of registration, Lact. *DMP* 23.1ff.

[160] Eus. *Mart. Pal.* 4.8 (both recensions) graphically depicts the enforcement in Caesarea (Pal.).

for Palestine gruesome martyrdoms for every year under the governorships of Urbanus and then of Firmilianus (*Mart. Pal.* 4–8). Eusebius then records 'a short relief and calm' from persecution – including release of confessors condemned to working in the mines of the Thebaid (*Mart. Pal.*(S) 9.1) – lasting, it would appear, from summer 308 until autumn 309, whilst Maximinus was embroiled in imperial politics,[161] only to be broken without warning by further orders sent down by Maximinus through praetorian prefect and provincial governors to the city magistrates both to repair pagan temples and to enforce mass sacrifice (once again) by the entire population: additionally, items for sale at the markets were to be sprinkled with the blood and libations from sacrifices and those entering the baths were similarly to be ritually sprinkled (*Mart. Pal.* 9.2). In a valuable aside Eusebius remarks that even the heathens regarded these latter, provocative, measures as 'harsh and unnecessary' (*Mart. Pal.* 9.3). Reluctant city officials, away from the immediate environment of the Caesar, could go far in thwarting even the imperial will. Nevertheless Eusebius can go on to record (*Mart. Pal.* 9.4–13.10) a whole series of martyrdoms culminating in the horrific scene of 4 May 311 when Silvanus, bishop of Gaza, along with thirty-nine other confessors (deemed too old or infirm to continue working usefully in the copper mines of Phaeno) were executed by decapitation on a single day.

Persecution then ceased, for a few days earlier (posted at Nicomedia on 30 April 311) the dying emperor Galerius in the name of all his imperial colleagues (including Maximinus)[162] had issued a proclamation, couched in the form of a letter, ending persecution, allowing Christians a legal existence and the right of assembly, at the same time encouraging all men to worship the gods in the interests of the state. With this, prisons were opened, those condemned to the mines were released and confessors freed (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.1.7ff.; Lact. *DMP* 35.2). Persecution appeared everywhere now to be, joyously, at an end.

Among all the other arrangements which we are always making for the advantage and benefit of the state, we had earlier sought to set everything right in accordance with the ancient laws and public discipline of the Romans and to ensure that the Christians too, who had abandoned the way of life of their ancestors, should return to a sound frame of mind; for in some way such self-will had come upon these same Christians, such folly had taken hold of them, that they no longer followed those usages of the ancients which their own ancestors perhaps had first instituted,

[161] Adapting the chronology proposed by Barnes, *CE* 153.

[162] Though in our extant versions his name (later subject to *damnatio memoriae*) does not appear, it is clear that it was issued by Galerius on behalf of all three of his imperial colleagues (Lact. *DMP* 36.3); Maximinus, however, 'was by no means pleased with what was written, and instead of making known the letter set forth above gave verbal commands to the rulers under him to relax the war against us' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.1.1).

but, simply following their own judgement and pleasure, they were making up for themselves the laws which they were to observe and were gathering various groups of people together in different places. When finally our order was published that they should betake themselves to the practices of the ancients, many were subjected to danger, many too were struck down. Very many, however, persisted in their determination and we saw that these same people were neither offering worship and due religious observance to the gods nor practising the worship of the god of the Christians. Bearing in mind therefore our own most gentle clemency and our perpetual habit of showing indulgent pardon to all men, we have taken the view that in the case of these people too we should extend our speediest indulgence, so that once more they may be Christians and put together their meeting-places [*conventicula sua componant*], provided they do nothing to disturb good order. We are moreover about to indicate in another letter to governors what conditions they ought to observe. Consequently, in accordance with this indulgence of ours, it will be their duty to pray to their god for our safety and for that of the state and themselves, so that from every side the state may be kept unharmed and they may be able to live free of care in their own homes.

(Lact. *DMP* 34, tr. J. L. Creed)[163]

These dying words of Galerius underline clearly the theological thinking on which the persecution has been based and the civic duties inextricably associated in this thinking with traditional religion – along with a somewhat reluctant acknowledgement of the existence of the Christians' god and of the failure of the programme of persecution of that god's followers. The grudging tone is clear – nothing is said about the restoration of confiscated church properties.[164] But the unequivocal legitimization of the practice of Christianity by the senior Augustus is a landmark. Henceforth from the Balkans and the Danubian provinces westwards the Roman empire was released from persecution of Christians.

Here it would be well to pause and consider some of the implications of Eusebius' invaluable *Martyrs of Palestine*, his account of the Christian heroes of just one province up to this date of 311. The bald statistics first. There are cited ninety-one victims in Palestine itself over the years 303–11, thirteen of whom were condemned in 303–5 before the abdication of Diocletian,[165] and forty-four altogether in the last year (310/11) of the persecution under the military *dux* at the Phaeno mines. That leaves thirty-four deaths recorded

[163] Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.17.3ff. provides a Greek version for provincials, along with the preamble.

[164] The clause *ut . . . conventicula sua componant* should allow the construction of new meeting-places (and Eusebius' Greek version so understood).

[165] This tally of thirteen includes Thecla (whose ultimate fate is nowhere described *Mart. Pal.*(L) 3.1), and two Egyptians among the six young men who volunteered themselves (*Mart. Pal.*(L) 3.4). Agapius, condemned in the second year of the persecution (3.4), was not fed to the beasts – and ultimately drowned – until the fourth year (6). I have excluded Romanos, deacon and exorcist of Caesarea (Pal.), but executed at Antioch (2).

over the years 306–10 (including the year's respite 308/9).[166] If one subtracts from the total of ninety-one the forty-four victims from the mines in 310–11, the remainder is forty-seven and of these Eusebius' narrative reveals that some thirty-one either provocatively drew attention to themselves or volunteered themselves outright to the authorities. The authorities cannot be said to have been over-officious in seeking out the remaining sixteen. Even so Palestinian Christians may have been unlucky in their governors: Urbanus and then (even worse) Firmilianus are luridly depicted as virulent in their eager pursuit and punishment of Christians and it must be significant that Eusebius can report (after the last martyrdom at Caesarea on 7 March 310) that 'affairs had taken a quieter and more peaceful turn' in the province until the edict of toleration of Galerius became known (*Mart. Pal.*(S) 13.1), that would have coincided with the departure of Firmilianus. In addition Palestine was the recipient of many confessors from Egypt, sent to labour in the mines and quarries of Palestine:[167] these certainly helped to swell unusually the numbers of the victims put to death in Palestine, especially in the massacre of the confessors in the Phaeno mines (some two-thirds of the thirty-nine unnamed victims are more likely than not actually to have been Egyptian). That consideration would reduce the total of strictly Palestinian numbers by some twenty-six to (approximately) sixty-five over a total of some eight years, an average of eight martyrs per year. (Even so this latter computation still includes ten Egyptians martyred in earlier years in Palestine.)

That constitutes our best statistical guide to actual deaths in one province as some sort of model for elsewhere in the east. But other governors may have been even more vigorous in their pursuit of Christians[168] – and the presence of the imperial court, whenever it progressed, undoubtedly stimulated action in its immediate environment. And there is one important *caveat* to make on Eusebius' own figures. He is not necessarily giving the full tally but recording for posterity those with whom he was personally conversant:[169]

[166] This total is reached excluding Aedesius, a Palestinian executed in Egypt under Hierocles, *Mart. Pal.* 5.2f. It includes the Marcionite bishop Asclepius, *Mart. Pal.* 10.3.

[167] *Mart. Pal.* 8.1 (S and L) reports 97 Egyptians plus women and children sent to work in the copper mines of Palestine; *Mart. Pal.* 8.13 has a second batch of 130 Egyptians (some being sent on to Cilicia); *Mart. Pal.* 9.10 reports that 3 Egyptians (among other confessors) were seized and martyred; *Mart. Pal.* 11.6ff. records a further 5 Egyptian martyrs; *Mart. Pal.*(L) 13.1ff. reports that of the approximately 150 confessors in the mines of Phaeno in 410/11 over 100 were Egyptians (with Egyptian bishops Peleus and Nilus along with Patermuthius and Elijah, singled out for martyrdom). *Mart. Pal.*(L) 13.10 notes concerning the 39 unnamed martyrs executed at Phaeno on 4 May 311 that 'many of these were Egyptians'.

[168] Note, for example, the notorious Sossianus Hierocles (*PLRE* 1.432) in Bithynia (e.g. Lact. *DMP* 16.4) as well as in Egypt (e.g. Eus. *Mart. Pal.*(L) 5.3); likewise Clodius Culcianus (*PLRE* 1.233f.) in Egypt (e.g. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.11.4; *Mart. Pal.* 5.2; *Acta Phileae et Philoromi*).

[169] *Mart. Pal.*(S) 5.1 reveals Eusebius inserting briefly the account of the death of Ulpianus (at Tyre) not known to him personally, when the earlier (and longer) version was composed.

It is meet, then, that the conflicts which were illustrious in various districts should be committed to writing by those who dwelt with the combatants in their districts. But for me, I pray that I may be able to speak of those with whom I was personally conversant, and that they may associate me with them – those in whom the whole people of Palestine glories, because even in the midst of our land, the Saviour of all men arose like a thirst-quenching spring. The contests, then, of those illustrious champions I shall relate for the general instruction and profit.

(*Mart. Pal.*(L) *pr*. 8; cf. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.13.7)

Indeed, the narrative at various points casually discloses unnamed (and unnumbered) companions of confessors and martyrs (presumably not personally known to Eusebius), for example, *Mart. Pal.*(L) 1.1 (companions of Procopius, sent from Scythopolis to Caesarea), *Mart. Pal.*(L) 3.3 ('Agapius and his companions'), *Mart. Pal.*(L) 7.1 (unnamed confessors on trial, approached by Theodosia of Tyre), *Mart. Pal.*(L) 8.4 (unnamed Christians from Gaza and their companions, mutilated) etc. We cannot, therefore, be in any way certain that even for Palestine we have fully reliable statistics as some yardstick. Yet even these brute statistics go nowhere in reflecting the human suffering of confessors, enduring long years detained in the vile conditions of Roman prisons, the irregular bouts of gruesome tortures, young girls sent to brothels, the systematic maiming of batches of men, women and children condemned to the notorious drudgery and danger of Roman mines, some young men castrated, most others with one leg hamstrung and one eye gouged out and cauterized with branding irons – not to mention the mental anguish both of those who had succumbed to apostasy as well as of those who contrived to continue to escape detection. The Great Persecution amounts to more than the simple tally of the martyred dead.[170]

Eusebius reports that peace for Christians in the territory of Maximinus (now significantly enhanced to include the diocese of Asiana and Pontica) held for less than six full months (*Hist. Eccl.* IX.2.1). In his later *apologia* (December 312), Maximinus claims that he 'gave orders to each of the judges that none of them in future was to deal harshly with the provincials' (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9a.2) but the orders that he did issue *via* his praetorian prefect Sabinus (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.1.3ff.) failed, crucially, to allow Christians specifically rights of assembly (and of rebuilding churches) and customary ritual action (as the palinode of Galerius had importantly legitimated). The first breakdown of formal peace came with orders forbidding Christians to

[170] Numbers in Egypt and the Thebaid may well have been grossly higher than in Eusebius' Palestine, Culcianus being credited by Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.11.4 with 'thousands' (μυρίοι) of deaths, and executions in the Thebaid being reckoned (with suspicious allusion to the parable of the sower) in tens, twenties and sometimes in thirties, sixties and a hundred in a day, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.9.3. Such rounded figures defy precision. The population of the village in Phrygia – where all the inhabitants, as Christians, were burnt to death – cannot be quantified, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VIII.11.1, Lact. *Div. Inst*. V.11.10.

assemble in their cemeteries (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.2.1: autumn 311) and was soon followed by a concerted attack on prominent church figures (e.g. Peter of Alexandria, beheaded 26 November 311 and 'many others of the Egyptian bishops', Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.6.2; cf. VII.32.31; VIII.13.7; Lucian of Antioch, executed in Nicomedia, 7 January 312, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.6.3; cf. VIII.13.2), whilst Lactantius claims that Maximinus rather ordered confessors to have 'their eyes gouged out, their hands cut off, their feet amputated, their noses or ears severed' (*DMP* 36.7).

Meantime cities throughout the east were encouraged (so our sources declare, Lact. *DMP* 36.3; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.2.1; IX.4.1f.) to petition the emperor for special permission (and rewards) for expelling Christians from their territory, a process Maximinus defends in his *apologia* (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9a.6). Before long, bronze tablets recording these petitions along with the imperial reply were being loyally set up on display throughout the eastern cities – revealing the strength of polytheistic piety (and/or political opportunism) among the urban élites (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.7.1): Antioch (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.2.1); Nicomedia (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9a.6: initially declined on the grounds of the number of Christians dwelling there, *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9a.4); Arycanda in Lycia (a result of the petition of the province of Lycia and Pamphylia), *TAM* II.3.785 = *I. Aryk*. 12; Colbasa in Pisidia (6 April, 312);[171] Eusebius quotes the text for the city of Tyre (clearly a standardized one), *Hist. Eccl.* IX.7.3ff. This threat of permanent exclusion of Christians from their home cities (where they would be well known) had the potential to affect more deeply Christians' lives than many of the previous measures (which their survival clearly shows could be successfully negotiated one way or another); cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.7.15. This process was accompanied by a positive encouragement of polytheistic cults and priesthoods (Lact. *DMP* 36.4f.; Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.4.2) along with a sustained propaganda warfare against Christianity (imperial distribution of copies of the scandalous *Acts of Pilate* and of the (false) accounts by prostitutes of Damascus of Christian orgies: Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.5.1f.).

Some of the words of Maximinus' response to these petitions are worth quoting as a remarkable theological statement of pagan piety:

> For all these evils [= war, plague, tempest, earthquake], and evils even more terrible, have happened many a time before this, as everyone knows. And all these things happened at once because of the baneful error and vain folly of those unhallowed men [= Christians] when that error took possession of their souls, and, one might almost say, oppressed the whole world everywhere with its deeds of shame . . . Let them behold in the broad plains the crops already ripe with waving ears of corn, the meadows, thanks to opportune rains, brilliant with plants and flowers, and the weather that has been granted us temperate and very mild; further, let

[171] Mitchell, 'Maximinus'.

all rejoice since through our piety, through the sacrifices and veneration we have rendered, the most powerful and intractable air has been propitiated, and let them take pleasure in that they therefore enjoy the most serene peace securely and in quiet. And let as many as have been wholly rescued from that blind folly and error and returned to a right and goodly frame of mind rejoice indeed the more, as if they were delivered from an unexpected hurricane or severe illness and were reaping life's sweet enjoyment for the future. But if they persist in their accursed folly, let them be separated and driven far away from your city and neighbourhood, even as you requested; that so, in accordance with your praiseworthy zeal in this respect, your city may be separated from all pollution and impiety, and, following its natural desire, may respond with due reverence to the worship of the immortal gods.

(*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.7.9ff., tr. J. E. L. Oulton)

Ironically, this response, delivered to Tyre in summer 312(?), was accompanied by a year marked by drought, famine, plague and then war (in Armenia, where there were many Christians, Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.8.1ff.). And by autumn of that year, after Constantine's defeat of Maxentius (28 October), Maximinus was informed of 'a most perfect law in the fullest terms on behalf of the Christians' drawn up by Constantine and Licinius (so Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9.12; cf. IX.9a.12 ('edicts and laws'); Lact. *DMP* 37.1, 44.11f.). Maximinus, in false compliance, issued via his praetorian prefect to his governors in late 312 an apologetic account of his previous treatment of Christians, reiterating his (claimed) toleration of Christians ('if some desire to follow their own worship, you should leave it in their own power', *ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9a.1ff.). But, again, he crucially failed to specify for Christians rights of assembly and practice of customary rituals and permission to erect church-buildings (cf. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.9a.11). But the end was near, and in the spring campaign the following year (313) between Licinius and Maximinus, defeat shook Maximinus' faith in his pagan gods. 'Less than a whole year after the ordinances against the Christians' were set up on the bronze tablets in the eastern cities (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.10.12), Maximinus felt constrained at last to issue a law unequivocally restoring full freedom to Christians, along with restoration of property:[172]

That, therefore, for the future all suspicion or doubt arising from fear may be removed, we have decreed that this ordinance (*diatagma*) be published, so that it may be plain to all that those who desire to follow this sect and religious observance [i.e. Christianity] are permitted, in accordance with this our bounty, as each one wishes or finds it pleasing, to join in that religious observance which from choice he was wont to practise. And permission has also been granted them to build the Lord's houses. Nevertheless, that our bounty may be even greater, we have decided to decree this also: that if any houses or lands, which used formerly

[172] Issued in May 313 (after the defeat at Adrianople, 30 April, Lact. *DMP* 46.8f., as Eusebius believed, *Hist. Eccl.* IX.10.3); or should it be dated to earlier in spring 313?

to belong by right to the Christians, have by the injunction of our parents passed into the right of the public treasury or have been seized by any city – whether a sale of these has taken place, or they have been handed over to anyone as a gift – we have given orders that all these be restored to the Christians as their original right, so that in this also all may perceive our piety and solicitude.

(Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.10.10f., tr. J. E. L. Oulton)

But it was, in a sense, too late. When the victorious Licinius entered Nicomedia in June 313 he brought with him letters for the governors of the eastern provinces, the terms of which had been drawn up in the meeting held at Milan between Constantine and Licinius the preceding winter (February 313, Lact. *DMP* 45.1, 48.2); these terms will reflect the ordinances already applying in the west (including state compensation for any who may suffer by the restoration of church properties, previously confiscated). As this constitutes a major statement of the Constantinian (and Licinian?) view (at the time) of the place of Christianity within the empire, it deserves to be quoted in full.[173]

When I, Constantine Augustus, and I, Licinius Augustus, happily met at Milan and had under consideration all matters which concerned the public advantage and safety, we thought that, among all the other things that we saw would benefit the majority of men, the arrangements which above all needed to be made were those which ensured reverence for the Divinity, so that we might grant both to Christians and to all men freedom to follow whatever religion each one wished, in order that whatever divinity there is in the seat of heaven may be appeased and made propitious towards us and towards all who have been set under our power. We thought therefore that in accordance with salutary and most correct reasoning we ought to follow the policy of regarding this opportunity as one not to be denied to anyone at all, whether he wished to give his mind to the observances of the Christians or to that religion which he felt was most fitting to himself, so that the supreme Divinity, whose religion we obey with free minds, may be able to show in all matters His accustomed favour and benevolence towards us. For this reason we wish your Devotedness to know that we have resolved that, all the conditions which were contained in letters previously sent to your office about the Christian name being completely set aside, those measures should be repealed which seemed utterly inauspicious and foreign to our clemency, and that each individual one of those who share this same wish to observe the religion of the Christians should freely and straightforwardly hasten to do so without any anxiety or interference. We thought that this should be very fully communicated to your Solicitude, so that you should know that we have given a free and absolute permission to these same Christians to practise their religion. And when you perceive that this indulgence has been accorded by us to these people, your Devotedness understands that others too have been granted a similarly open and free permission to follow their own

[173] The addressee is a provincial governor. There is a Greek version (with minor variations) quoted by Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.5.2ff., no doubt the version promulgated in Caesarea (Pal.). Constantine was later to retreat from the principle, here enunciated, of religious freedom: see Barnes, *CE* 245ff.

religion and worship as befits the peacefulness of our times, so that each man may have a free opportunity to engage in whatever worship he has chosen. This we have done to ensure that no cult or religion may seem to have been impaired by us.

We have also decided that we should decree as follows about the Christians as a body: if, during the period that has passed, any appear to have purchased either from our treasury or from anyone else those places in which the Christians had previously been accustomed to assemble, and about which before now a definite rule had been laid down in the letters that were sent to your office, they should now restore these same places to the Christians without receiving any money for them or making any request for payment, and without any question of obstruction or equivocation, those who received such places as a gift should return them in the same way but the more speedily to these same Christians; both those who bought them and those who received them as gifts should, if they seek something from our benevolence, make a request of the deputy for their interests to be consulted by our clemency. All these places must forthwith be handed over to the body of the Christians through your intervention and without any delay.

And since these same Christians are known to have possessed not only the places in which they had the habit of assembling but other property too which belongs by right to their body – that is, to the churches not to individuals – you will order all this property, in accordance with the law which we have explained above, to be given back without any equivocation or dispute at all to these same Christians, that is to their body and assemblies, preserving always the principle stated above, that those who restore this same property as we have enjoined without receiving a price for it may hope to secure indemnity from our benevolence. In all these matters you will be bound to offer the aforesaid body of Christians your most effective support so that our instructions can be the more rapidly carried out and the interests of public tranquillity thereby served in this matter too by our clemency. In this way it will come about, as we have explained above, that the divine favour towards us, which we have experienced in such important matters, will continue for all time to prosper our achievements along with the public well-being. Furthermore, so that the character of this ordinance and of our benevolence can be brought to the knowledge of all, it will be desirable for you to publish this document everywhere above a proclamation of your own, and to convey it to the attention of everyone, so that the ordaining of this benevolence of ours cannot remain hidden.

(Lact. *DMP* 48.2ff., tr. J. L. Creed)

When this was posted in Nicomedia on 13 June 313, ten years of persecution effectively came to an end. This letter not unskilfully negotiates the tensions between, on the one hand, individual civil rights ('freedom of worship') and, on the other, traditional civic duties (the obligation to cultivate the divine power for the benefit of the state), a tension which underlay throughout the preceding century the clash between polytheistic state authorities supported by many of the civic-minded élite, and monotheistic Christian individuals. That tension now seemed to be resolved – for the moment. But for the future, an unresolvable factor remained – the exclusivity of Christianity.

But the shared theological viewpoint of the victorious Constantine and of the defeated Maximinus also hardly needs emphasizing: for both, divine power manifested itself in the daily events of history, and the potency, favour or disfavour of their divine champion could be read directly and unambiguously from those events. And in the aftermath the victorious side appears to have behaved no differently from what we could have anticipated from Maximinus. There was a purge of potential political and dynastic rivals and of Maximinus' close followers – and former persecutors (religion and politics being, characteristically, inseparable), victims including the notorious persecutors Culcianus (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.11.4) and Firmilianus (Eus. *Mart. Pal.*(S) 11.31), the widows of the persecutors Galerius and Diocletian (Lact. *DMP* 50f.), the wife of Maximinus (drowned in the same river Orontes into which she had ordered Christian women to be thrown: Lact. *DMP* 50.6), the pagan prophet Theotecnus of Antioch and his associates (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* IX.2f., IX.11.5f.; *Praep. Ev.* IV.2.10f.), even, it would appear, down to the priest of Apollo responsible for the oracle that had ultimately swayed Diocletian to initiate persecution (Eus. *Praep. Ev.* IV.2.11). And, correspondingly, rewards, privileges and favours began to be bestowed liberally on the ministers of the godhead responsible for the benefits of victory – just as Maximinus himself might well have done in different circumstances.

Now established in the east, Licinius was no rabid polytheist – but he was far from being a militant Christian either. It would appear that in his uneasy attempts over the succeeding years to compromise between contradictory pressures in religious policy he fatally yielded sufficient ground to allow himself credibly to be represented as an opponent of Christianity whose liberation from fear and intimidation Constantine could champion. Eventually (in suspicion of Christian disloyalty?) he purged his palace of Christians, and 'the soldiers in the cities' (= imperial civil service) were to forfeit rank if they persisted as Christians (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.8.10; *VC* 1.52, 1.54; cf. 11.20, 11.33). Later, 'in the final stage of his madness' (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.8.14) he provocatively harassed bishops, restricting visits to fellow bishops and forbidding synods and councils of bishops to convene (Eus. *Vit. Const.* 1.51) and requiring congregational meetings to be held outdoors, outside the city gates (1.53); Christian women were to receive instruction from women only and were to worship separately from men (Eus. *Vit. Const.* 1.53) and Licinius cancelled exemption from liturgies and tax privileges (granted to Christian clerics) (11.20, 11.30). If this series of harassing measures was not enough, one provincial governor went so far as to put to death the bishop of Amaseia and punished other Pontic bishops, destroying or closing churches there (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* X.8.14ff.; *Vit. Const.* 11.1f.). Whatever may have been the governor's motivation ('some of the bishops were plied with penalties

suitable for malefactors', Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* x.8.17 – were they suspected of treasonable disloyalty?), all these actions certainly provided Constantine with adequate propaganda grounds to launch a holy crusade (in 324) to liberate Christians from what could be represented as an immediate threat of widespread pagan persecution under Licinius (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* x.8.18f.; *Vit. Const.* II.2).

With victory won over Licinius, the victory of Christianity now seemed complete.

VII. CHRISTIAN LITERATURE OF THE THIRD CENTURY

The *realia* of third-century Christian life are largely lost to us, destroyed along with the church-buildings razed everywhere during the Great Persecution. So we are denied what we might have been able to read, for example, from the nature and appearance of Christian building complexes, cemeterial structures and *martyria*, along with their decorative schemes and symbols, from baptisteries and the use of liturgical spaces, from episcopal *cathedrae*, presbyteral seating and liturgical vessels and vestments – all that is gone, as are, by and large, all the sacred texts and lectionaries. It remains highly doubtful, for example, that a third-century dating can be archaeologically established with security for any Christian remains in Rome under (say) S. Clemente on the Esquiline and SS. Giovanni e Paolo on the Aventine, let alone S. Martino ai Monti on the Oppian and S. Crisogono in Trastevere. Similar scepticism applies also to the claims for third-century Christian sub-structures at Parentium (Poreč) and at Aquileia. Though we can be sure that church-houses and Christian meeting-halls will have varied greatly in size, arrangements and sophistication according to region and location, we are virtually totally dependent on literary sources and documentary texts for any description of their whereabouts and appointments. The one great exception is the chance survival of the church-house at Dura Europus (restricted in size and unelaborately decorated), buried during the siege-works of the 250s. Notable exceptions to these general observations on the survival of the material culture of third-century Christianity do include some foundation deposits in later buildings, e.g. under S. Sebastiano, and the papal crypt in Rome (in the catacomb of Callistus) – both sites relatively modest in pretensions – and some other early Roman catacomb areas (e.g. the Capella Graeca in the catacomb of Priscilla – though the precise dating is much disputed)), the *aedicula* under St Peter's (again, certainly no grandiose affair); and the Christos-Helios mosaic and other mosaics in Mausoleum M in the necropolis under St Peter's (which must at least antedate, but most likely not by much, the construction of the Constantinian basilica). Inscriptions, too, are

extremely rare, with Phrygia providing the outstanding, and largely rural, exceptions.[174]

But what does survive, in compensation, is a remarkable body of literature – far from all that was composed, however[175] – that illuminates the intellectual and spiritual lives of third-century Christians. We need to bear in mind, of course, that this is a product of the literate élite (inevitably a low percentage of the total community): there is the further difficulty of discerning how far the writers, whom we do still have represented, may have been isolated within their own Christian circles.

One category of writing continues on from the second century and can be construed as a process of self-definition as Christians endeavour to delineate their own particular identity with all its attendant ambiguities – they wish to be part of their Graeco-Roman society but at the same time to be distinguished from it, they wish to inherit as part of their patrimony the Jewish Old Testament but at the same time distinguish themselves from their Jewish brethren with whom they share these same texts and this same past in common, they wish to define their ('orthodox') doctrine and practice in opposition to a myriad Christian variations represented as breakaway sects and deviant heresies – with most of whom they share at the same time a great deal in common.

Hence the industry of apologetic writings, well represented across the century in the Latin west by the writings of Tertullian, Minucius Felix, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius and in the east by the great work of Origen's *contra Celsum*. These writings show an increasing tendency to represent Christians morally as ideal members of Graeco-Roman society, attaining in practice the philosophically approved virtues to which pagans merely aspire in theory and whilst they uniformly reject crude polytheistic idolatry, they assert a theological monotheism with which, philosophically, many non-Christians might have much sympathy. But it nevertheless remains unclear how far these works merely satisfied the sense of self of a Christian readership – or reached beyond, to a non-Christian audience.[176] It may be significant that in the Greek east, where Christianity appears as the century progresses increasingly more established as an accepted constituent of society, no urgent need was felt to pen this particular category of literature beyond mid-century until Methodius responded

[174] The exiguous evidence is surveyed by Snyder (1985), overgenerous in its chronological inclusions. For the documentary, literary and archaeological evidence for pre-Constantinian church-building (with full bibliographical references), see White (1990–7). For the material under St Peter's, Toynbee and Ward-Perkins (1956) is still fundamental. On the survival of early Christian texts, see Roberts (1979), and on the inscriptions from Phrygia, see Tabbernee (1997).

[175] The swift survey below largely neglects lost writings (and survival is very haphazard, often reflecting later preoccupations), so some distortion is inevitable. The terminus adopted is, roughly, the period of the Great Persecution.

[176] See Gamble (1995) and Edwards, Goodman and Price (1999).

specifically to the polemic of Porphyry (now lost)[177] and Eusebius of Caesarea to that of Hierocles as well as that of Porphyry (in several voluminous works).

This apologetic endeavour can also be viewed as part of a wider movement towards the cultural accommodation of Christianity to its Graeco-Roman setting away from its semitic origins, reformulating and representing Christianity in hellenic terms and in acceptable Graeco-Roman rhetorical discourse, a process vital for the long-term survival of Christianity in its adopted setting. The Christian literary output of the third century ought to be regarded, therefore, not so much as separable from the mainstream of the contemporary Graeco-Roman rhetorical culture but rather as a significant constituent of that third-century culture, itself in the process of transformation.

Another carry-forward from the second century is the *adversus Iudaeos* genre – again somewhat more represented in the west by works of Hippolytus, Tertullian, Novatian and Anon. *adversus Iudaeos* though there is also much on the theme in the *contra Celsum*, in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*. It is possible that in the east Judaism in many places in the diaspora felt more comfortably integrated in its social setting – and hence may have been perceived by Christians less as a dramatic threat. Even so, there is a manifest urge to establish a separable identity for Christianity and to lay claims to the inheritance of the biblical past. And certainly in both regions the output in the *adversus Haereses* genre showed no diminution whether in compendium form (e.g. Hippolytus and later, Victorinus of Pettau) or, most voluminously, against individual leaders, doctrines and sects, whether in specific treatises (Tertullian being particularly prolific here) or in a veritable flurry of epistolary exchanges and conciliar debates and resolutions. Not all is attack, however: sometimes it is defence, as in the case of Dionysius of Alexandria's 'Refutation and Apology' or the 'Apology for Origen' by Pamphilus and Eusebius. It is worth remembering that such polemic and controversy was indeed frequently the vehicle for arriving at dogmatic definition (we are dealing with a religion in which [right] *belief* is a crucial feature) and that this activity would seem to have been (to judge by the literary output) much more an obsession with Christian writers at least than ever was martyrdom and persecution.[178] The chance survival of Origen's *Discussion with Heracleides* provides us with a particularly illuminating and lively vignette of this characteristic preoccupation of the third-century church.

To be sure, the potential threat of persecution, under which Christians lived their third-century lives, clearly waxed and waned, given the record of

[177] Jerome, *de Viris Illustr*. 83.

[178] Almost all writers of the third century in one mode or another were engaged in this activity of doctrinal controversy, whether directly or indirectly.

what we can reconstruct of events but it is difficult for us to assess in what way such a threat (erratic or not) may have psychologically impinged on Christians' daily consciousness. Here and there, particularly after the 250s, there would be surviving confessors – especially enrolled among the clergy – to remind communities visibly of the stark realities of persecution. Certainly we can trace the output of protreptic literature 'On Martyrdom' to periods of actual or perceived persecution (indeed they are often our major source of information), notably Tertullian at the beginning of the century, Origen in the 230s (Maximinus Thrax), Cyprian and Dionysius of Alexandria (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.46.2) in the 250s, and Phileas of Thmuis at the time of the Great Persecution. But the supreme spiritual valuation placed on confession and martyrdom – even if the theology of martyrdom scarcely progressed from what was already set in the second century – produced other forms of popular literature. Accounts of heroic martyr-*acta*, some much closer to the forensic protocols than others, circulated widely – in this Africa is peculiarly productive. Whilst there are non-Christian predecessors to this genre,[179] much stimulus was gained by the self-awareness of the confessors themselves, alert to the fact that they would be remembered liturgically on their anniversaries and that their inspired dreams, words and deeds would be popularly recalled as models of Christian heroism year after year. And it is also out of Africa that we gain our first Christian biography – stimulated precisely because the subject was (as the work proudly proclaims) the protoepiscopal martyr of Africa, Cyprian of Carthage (Pontius, 'Life of Cyprian'). Soon this genre will spawn fourth-century narratives of ascetic lives, the mirror-image of third-century martyrs' lives. A sub-set of this literary category of martyrdom would be Eusebius' *Martyrs of Palestine* – and even perhaps Lactantius' tractate *On the Deaths of Persecutors*, reviving an old apologetic theme. Persecution may well have loomed larger in the mind than the historical phenomena may seem to have warranted, but this literature should nevertheless be read against a background of many other activities.

The composition of liturgical handbooks and church orders, as well as of church prayers and hymnodies,[180] represented for us by Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* in the west and the *Didascalia Apostolorum* in the east, reveals deep concern for liturgical ceremonies to be conducted not only with decorum and propriety but also according to approved procedures and regulations and for the orderly appointment, behaviour and comportment of congregations and their clergy in its various grades of offices and duties.

[179] Musurillo (1954), and for a collection of Christian texts, Musurillo (1972).

[180] For example bishop Nepos in Egypt (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.24.4); Harmonius in Edessa (Soz. *HE* III.16); Paul of Samosata at Antioch (*ap*. Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.30.10); Christian hymn with musical notation (*P. Oxy*. XV.1786, end of third century); Thecla's hymn in *Logos* 2 of the *Symposium* of Methodius of Olympus (Musurillo (1958) and Debidour and Musurillo (1963)).

The *Didascalia* also shows concern for dealing appropriately with sinners in various categories as well as with the indigent, the widowed and the orphaned. These are not productions characteristic of a beleaguered church in crisis panicked before persecuting demons. Neither are all those tracts and homilies directed towards the moral life and spiritual guidance of Christians which occupied so much of the penmanship of Tertullian and Cyprian (exemplifying the strong pastoral bent of western churchmanship) and of which we also have examples from Hippolytus, Novatian and Origen and have lost those of Dionysius and Pierius of Alexandria. In all their pages of exhortations, it is worth noting, we do not find injunctions to go out and preach to the heathen: this is no church driven by a missionary imperative to incorporate those outside, rather by the urge to build up the moral probity and spiritual development of the Christian gathering.

What clearly preoccupies much scholarly endeavour in the third century is the canon of the sacred text – the establishment of the text itself, the proper methodological approaches for its exegesis (allegorical, typological, literal), with much theologizing increasingly done by way of biblical commentary and homily. In all these endeavours Origen is, of course, the outstanding and prodigiously productive exponent followed by Lucian and Dorotheus, both of Antioch, Hesychius (of Alexandria?) and Pamphilus of Caesarea. Dionysius and Pierius, both of Alexandria, along with Methodius of Olympus also contributed to the genre of biblical commentary – as did Hippolytus, Victorinus of Pettau and Reticius of Autun in the west. All this activity indicates the increasing sophistication of ecclesiastical scholarship for which we have a valuable description in Origen's method of instruction in Gregory Thaumaturgus' *Panegyric to Origen* (VII. 93ff.).[181] Eusebius' *Onomasticon*, a gazeteer on the place-names in Scripture, is another important by-product of this biblical scholarship. These works should be seen in combination with the output of dogmatic writings as evidence for the strenuous intellectual life in the élite levels of the third-century churches, writings such as Origen's pioneering *De Principiis*, Theognostus' *Hypotyposeis* (Photius, *Bibl.* 106.86bf.), Methodius' treatises, the literature generated by those involved in the trinitarian dispute with Paul of Samosata, for example Malchion of Antioch (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.29.2; Jerome, *de Viris Illustr.* 71), the (largely lost) doctrinal works of Peter of Alexandria and, in the west, Novatian's *De Trinitate* and to some extent Lactantius' *Divinae Institutiones*. Christianity has succeeded in attracting the energies of some of the great scholarly and cultivated minds of the third-century Graeco-Roman world, with Alexandria in particular and then Caesarea in Palestine emerging as premier centres of Christian learning as well as of speculative theology – and destined to bequeath a legacy of controversy and rancour.

[181] Crouzel (1969).

And following on from the endeavour of the second-century Christian apologists to lay claim to a distant past anterior to that of the Greeks ('Plato as Atticized Moses'), Sextus Julius Africanus importantly attempted to synchronize biblical, Jewish, hellenistic and Christian events (down to 221) in his *Chronographiai*. Likewise Hippolytus composed a *Chronicle* of world history from the creation down to the year of its composition (234). These attempts at creating a Universal History we see further advanced in Eusebius' early work, his *Chronography* and *Chronological Canons*, correlating sacred and profane history: Christians can now firmly place themselves within new historical horizons in an ancient and venerable religious tradition, linked to a far distant past.[182] The culmination of this line of inquiry is Eusebius' *Church History*, the earliest version of which may have been composed even before the outbreak of the Great Persecution (i.e. books I to VII).[183] For all its shortcomings it is a remarkable achievement, in essence compiling documentary evidence on a path-breaking new historical theme bearing witness to a now mature Christian self-consciousness.

Finally we must recall that so much ecclesiastical life was conducted around the Mediterranean by means of correspondence, whether by routine letters of communion (and excommunication) and by letters of recognition, by encyclical reports of synods and councils, by the exchange of ideas (and disagreements), by (at least in the case of Alexandria) regular festal letters announcing the date of Easter. Here we have lost so much. For example, Eusebius was able to compile a collection of over a hundred letters by Origen (*Hist. Eccl.* VI.36.3): we have extant but two, one to Gregory Thaumaturgus, one to Julius Africanus. But of Gregory's own correspondence (cf. Jerome, *de Viris Illustr.* 65) we have only the 'Canonical Epistle' and of Julius Africanus' correspondence we have but two examples (one of which is fragmentary). Thanks to Eusebius' *Church History*, books VI and VII, we have preserved most (but not entirely all) of what we have remaining of the great epistolary output of Dionysius of Alexandria (all in fragments except for one brief letter). Thereafter, for example, we have scraps only of all of the papal correspondence throughout the century, one letter (translated) of Firmilian of Cappadocian Caesarea, three letters attributed to Novatian, one brief letter and some fragments from Peter of Alexandria[184] (plus the Letter of the four Egyptian bishops). It makes us all the more grateful to have at least the collection of over eighty documents associated with Cyprian of Carthage to remind us of what we have lost and of the vigour of church life at this level of ecclesiastical society. It is a sobering thought that our

[182] The calculations for establishing the cycle of Easter dates also continued to occasion computational research: e.g. Hippolytus (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VI.22.1); Anon. *de Pascha Computus* (CSEL III.1 248–71; Ogg (1955); Dionysius of Alexandria (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.20.1); Anatolius (Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* VII.32.13ff.).

[183] On Eusebius' works, see Barnes, *CE*.

[184] See Vivian (1988) 53ff., 139ff. On the letters of Antony, see Rubensen (1995).

view of third-century church life would be transformed were we to possess other decades illumined in the same lively light as we have for the decade 248–58 covered by the Cyprianic correspondence.

It distorts perceptions of third-century Christians to leave them in constant fear of persecuting dungeons, fire and sword. Other serious matters also preoccupied their minds and engaged their energies.

CHAPTER 19

ART AND ARCHITECTURE, A.D. 193–337

JANET HUSKINSON

I. INTRODUCTION

This period (193 to 337) is one of the most significant in the history of Roman art, yet paradoxically it is perhaps the most elusive to evaluate: the sources are patchy, the art itself varied and often apparently discontinuous in style and form, and scholarly opinion on it frequently divided. In short, the sum of its parts does not always seem to match the importance of the whole.

In art historical terms its importance derives from the fact that this is a transitional period: it follows the high-point of the mid-second century and ends just before the full consolidation of the late antique art in the later fourth and fifth centuries (described in the following volume). But its forms and styles are more heterogeneous than in either of these periods, which makes them more problematic to discuss. First, there is a risk of doing so primarily in terms of what came before or after, particularly since the period contains elements which are the conclusions of certain trends, and others which are beginnings. A case in point is the crucial question of how to evaluate the shifts in form and style from naturalism to abstraction which occur increasingly in later Roman art, that is whether they signify artistic decline or, more positively, changed priorities. As discussed more fully in *CAH* XIII (Elsner (2000) 739–42), this debate is central to the evaluation of art in the later fourth and fifth centuries, yet it inevitably draws on examples from this period in its arguments, often colouring them with its teleology. This makes it particularly important to be clear that we are looking at the art of this period for itself, and in its own terms.[1]

Second, there is the question of subjectivity in scholarly descriptions and analysis. The particular qualities of the art of this time (perhaps more than in many others) are open, in the last analysis, to subjective judgement,

[1] See J. R. Clarke (1979) 88 on how Blake (1940) and Becatti (1961) evaluated third-century black and white mosaics (in terms of decline): 'One is left with the feeling that somehow these mosaics are of poorer quality than those of the preceding century, precisely because they seem to fail in the very ways in which second-century mosaics achieve distinction.'

since the defining signs of 'transition', 'regionalism' or even the 'anxiety' seen as so characteristic of the third century may ultimately lie in the eye of the beholder. This can lead to some categorical assertions: Breckenridge, for instance, writing about imperial portraiture states that 'At sometime during the rule of the Severan dynasty the transition was made between classic and late antique art. The exact moment is a matter of choice and emphasis.'[2] This may promise some reassuring certainty, but in fact there are unlikely to be exact moments from which to choose. For in the full range of visual arts the transition between the classical style to the early medieval and Byzantine is not a straight line of evolution but a series of zigzags which moves backwards and forwards from versions of one style to another: there is no single moment when the boundary is conclusively crossed, though with the development of Christian art and the emergence of a more homogeneous style in the mid-fourth century it is reasonable to say that the transition has been largely made. Social anxiety is another case: the third century in particular is often described as a time of crisis and uncertainty, for individuals as well as for the state, and of a more urgent searching after spirituality. This view is also adopted by art historians, especially when describing portraits;[3] but there can be a real danger of developing a circular argument since looking out for anxiety and spirituality without establishing clear diagnostic criteria inevitably predetermines how the art is to be read, which may in turn preempt its usefulness as evidence about contemporary society.

A central question to be asked of the art and architecture of this period is how far they show real transition of style, in the sense of showing some continuous and organic (if disjointed) progression, and how they reconcile traditions from the past with innovations suited to a fast-changing world. Towards answering this, the chapter will offer a brief survey of some of the main issues and developments, and then go on to look in closer detail at three particular cases.

II. ART AND ARCHITECTURE, A.D. 193–337: A SURVEY

The reflexive relationship between art and society is particularly evident in this period, with art reflecting social developments and also shaping them.[4]

Art and architecture had a major role in creating the imperial image and in establishing a new Christian empire. In turn, the production of art

[2] Breckenridge (1981) 503–4; cf. Mathew (1943) 65: 'But the fact of a third century transition is patent, and the period from AD 253–268 remains one of its most significant episodes.'

[3] E.g. Bianchi-Bandinelli (1971) 3; McCann (1981) 624. For an argument for the importance of historical context: Smith (1997).

[4] For a concise summary and review of modern scholarship on factors governing the development of art in the third century: Wood (1986) 11–25.

was affected by particular political events and social changes. Economic uncertainties limited resources of skills, materials and patronage at times,[5] while political changes – barbarian incursions, secessions, partition of the empire – all contributed to marked variations in prosperity and stability across the empire which inevitably show up in artistic production. So for the mid-third century public monuments are few, leaving private portraits, sarcophagi and mosaics as the major sources, but in the fourth century the balance is redressed, with more public building and imperial commissions. The increasingly structured society, in which individuals were subordinated to the group, had an impact on the development of style and form (as for instance has been argued for the later part of the period by L'Orange),[6] while the enhanced status of the emperor and court ceremonial led to new themes in iconography and building types.[7] Intellectual and religious movements also affected the development in art of this period. Neo-Platonism, for example the work of the philosopher Plotinus, stressed the value of inner qualities and concepts, in contrast to external appearance and perception on which naturalistic art had been based.[8] The growing importance of Christians as patrons of the arts, visible from the mid-third century, was enhanced by the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313, which restored certain property rights to them and gave freedom of worship to all. Before then Christian religious art was limited in effect to funerary contexts – catacombs and sarcophagi – but the Peace of the Church opened the way for new themes and iconography as well as new media. In short, this period involved a number of powerful situations that affected the production of art across a range of fronts: their influence as external factors in the formation of style and iconography and in the actual creation of monuments should not be underestimated.

As for internal factors in their development, the art and architecture of this period have some persistent interests which are visible through all their diversity. Above all, there is the tension between flat surface and fully modelled forms which is explored in many ways and across different media. In portrait sculpture, for instance, it underlies some apparently substantial changes in style, from classicizing portraits of Gallienus (for example) in which volume is suggested by subtle modelling of forms (Fig. 1), to the more abstract styles of tetrarchic portraiture where volume is indicated more as a geometric solid, with features marked more as linear surface patterns (Fig. 2). Technique had an important part in this, especially the use (throughout the third century) of the running drill to heighten chiaroscuro

[5] Shortage of skills is often cited as a cause of a perceived 'decline' in standards; for evidence for shortages of architects and craftsmen in the early fourth century, see Constantine's moves to exempt them and their families from public service etc: *CTh* XIII.4.1–2.

[6] L'Orange (1965). [7] MacCormack (1981). [8] Elsner (1995); cf. (2000) 751–5.

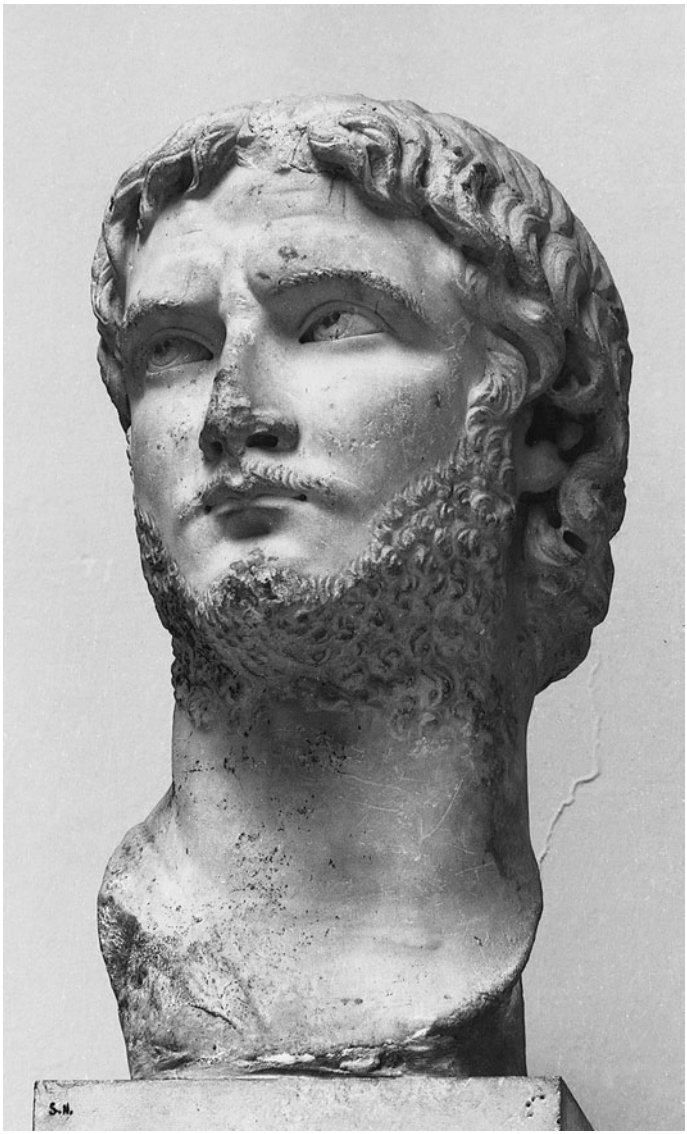


Fig. 1 Portrait of Gallienus from the Roman forum, A.D. 260–5

effects and indicate volume without actually modelling it. Another medium which tussled with this question was mosaic, where figured scenes, with their own depth and volume, were applied to the flat surfaces of walls, vaults and floors (see below); in this period it increasingly abandoned interest in the third dimension, evolving flat, all-over designs for floors, and setting

Fig. 2 Two tetrarchs from porphyry group, Venice

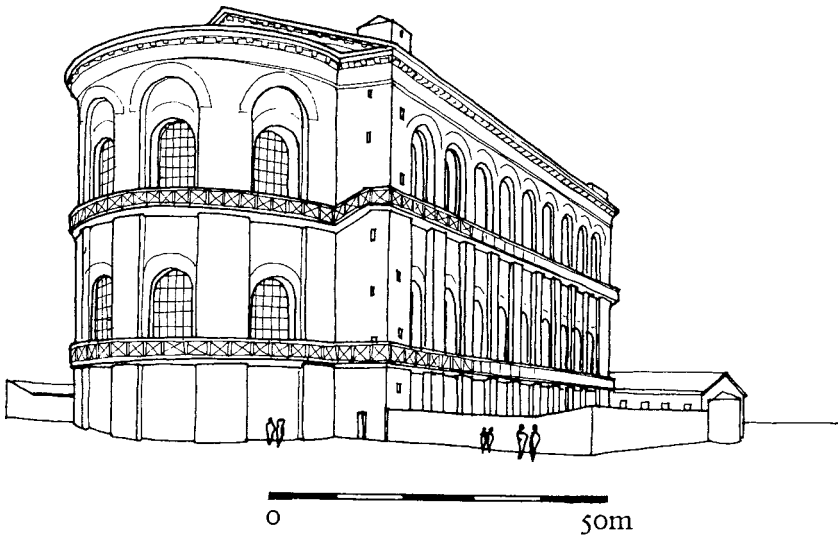


Fig. a Trier basilica: reconstructed view of exterior

figured scenes on walls and vaults against plain, light backgrounds.[9] In architecture too, it is possible to see a similar tension which is expressed in terms of the building's form and its decoration: typical of this is the early fourth-century basilica at Trier (Fig. a), where the austerity of the exterior offset the elaborate decoration and ceremonial which happened within.[10]

In many ways this tension makes a more straightforward viewpoint for observing the changes in the art and architecture of this period, than do other approaches which centre on 'classical' and 'non-classical' features and their relative prevalence, since these still tend to contain judgemental overtones derived from notions of 'decline' (see above). Instead, this view involves two fundamentally different styles of artistic representation, one concerned with the illusion of depth and modelled volume, and the other that is two dimensional and linear. Furthermore, they can be linked to another dichotomy which is explored in the art of this period, that is between the representation of the perceived world through the naturalism of the Greek tradition, or as concept through more schematic forms. (Witness the contrasting forms of the reused Hadrianic roundels and the Constantinian friezes on the arch of Constantine in Fig. 6.)

[9] E.g. late third-century vault mosaic in Mausoleum M of the cemetery below St Peter's (with a yellow ground, presaging the gold of the fourth and fifth century to suggest ethereal light): Dunbabin (1999) 249–50, fig. 265.

[10] Ward-Perkins (1981) 442–5.

Fig. 3 Arch of Septimius Severus, Rome

The first part of the period, roughly co-terminous with the Severans, was characterized by the continuation of stylistic developments which had begun to emerge in the later second century. Many of these were already visible on the column of Marcus Aurelius which was completed around A.D. 193 after the emperor's death. Prominent was the coloristic treatment of surfaces and a move away from the balanced compositions and figure-style of Hadrianic classicism, with dramatic poses and use of frontality; surfaces and structures were broken-up or recast as if to defamiliarize long-established forms. These traits all appear, and to heightened effect in Severan art. On public monuments they are found, for instance, in the treatment of scenes in the panels on the arch of Septimius in Rome (erected in A.D. 203: Fig. 3), in the two dimensionality of the imperial figures on the arch of the Argentarii (dedicated A.D. 204: Fig. 4), in the deeply cut reliefs which decorated the Severan basilica at Lepcis, and in the frontal figures of the emperor and his sons in the triumphal procession from the arch at Lepcis

Fig. 4 Panel from arch of Argentarii, Rome, showing Septimius Severus and Julia Domna sacrificing

(A.D. 203).[11] They can be seen too on one of the finest pieces of private art, the so-called Badminton sarcophagus depicting the triumph of Dionysus and Seasons: smooth, polished surfaces contrast with the deep-cut background and the drilling of rougher textures like the hair.[12] In terms of architecture this time has been described as 'the highpoint of Roman construction'.[13]

[11] Kleiner (1992) 329–32 and 340–4. [12] McCann (1978) no. 17. [13] By DeLaine (1997) 10.

Fig. 5 'Ludovisi' sarcophagus

The Severan emperors built extensively and grandly in Rome (especially after the fire of A.D. 191).[14] The huge baths of Caracalla were built between A.D. 212 and 216 to a rigidly symmetrical plan around a central axis. Their imposing spaces were decorated with a magnificent collection of sculptures, many specially commissioned for the baths and including colossal statues (such as the 'Farnese Hercules') and copies of hellenistic masterpieces (such as the Punishment of Dirce, the so-called 'Farnese Bull').[15]

From the Severans to the last quarter of the third century the picture is more changeable. Some of the most striking pieces of this period are portraits of soldier emperors such as Maximinus Thrax and Philip the Arab, which derive their power from a combination of modelled volumes and detailed linear treatment of features such as the eyes, hair and beard.[16] In contrast, portraits of Gallienus show a range of styles, rather as those of Septimius Severus had done, but bringing back a softer classicizing treatment of form (cf. Fig. 1). This retrospective philhellenism of Gallienus led some scholars in the past to speak of a Gallienic renaissance, which linked back to the art of Augustus and Hadrian,[17] but again it is probably more useful to see this as a sign of the restless changes that took place in the visual arts of this time. These are also captured in the great 'Ludovisi' battle sarcophagus of the mid-third century which is decorated dramatically with figures carved in high relief (Fig. 5).[18] Temporal structures have been broken up: instead of a sequence of coherent narrative episodes the battle is shown as a series of individual engagements which are used as a foil to the single victorious figure who presides almost iconically at the centre.

From the last quarter of the third century the momentum grows towards what is described in *CAH* XIII (p. 736) as 'one of the great transitions in the history of western art'. Forms become flatter, figures acquire an almost iconic status, and context and the intrinsic meaning are often powerful forces in shaping their form. In portraiture the images of the tetrarchs express these features almost to the extreme, as is illustrated by the famous group at Venice (Fig. 2). Worked in porphyry (a hard stone from Egypt much favoured for imperial statuary at the time), the figures are expressed as abstract, geometric forms, on to which details are inscribed, rather than moulded, in a series of schematized patterns. Any sense of personal individuality is sacrificed for the group effect. These features continue in the reliefs created for the arch of Constantine about fifteen years later. In the scene of Constantine giving money (to take an example) (Fig. 6) the static figure of the emperor, frontally enthroned, fills the whole width of the panel at its very centre, while the people below appear as a uniform mass,

[14] Benario (1958), but cf. Thomas and Witschel (1992) n. 6; DeLaine (1997).
[15] DeLaine (1997) and app. 4. for free-standing sculptures; see also Kleiner (1992) 338–9.
[16] For soldier–emperors: Wood (1986) 66–87.
[17] Mathew (1943). [18] Kleiner (1992) 388–9.

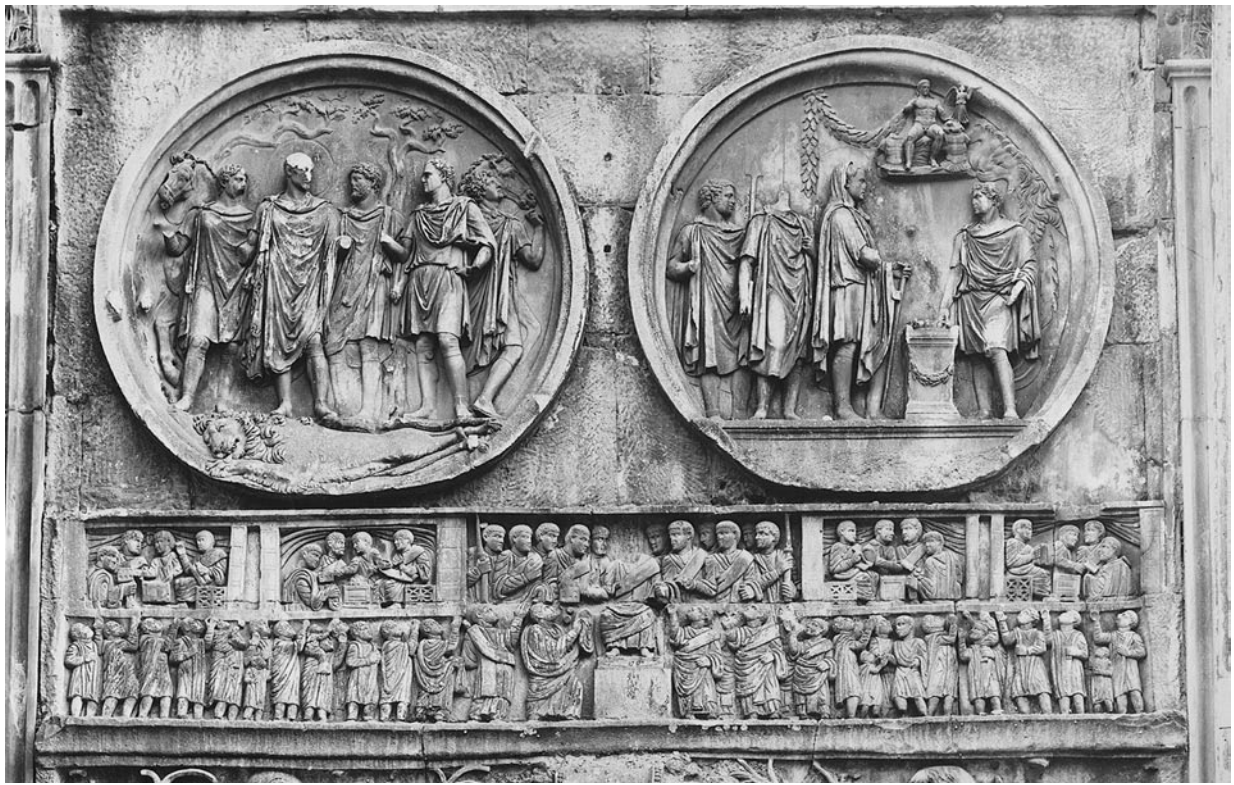


Fig. 6 Frieze from arch of Constantine showing Constantine giving money and Hadrianic roundels above

lifting up their hands towards him. This composition lays bare the inner significance of the event, emphasizing its important aspects and arranging figures according to the social hierarchy. Compared with the easy grace of the reused Hadrianic roundels placed above it there is an almost relentless sense of symmetry and patterning, emphasized by the stumpy figure-style and low relief-work. In the east these features were not so pronounced, because of the strong hellenistic traditions of illusionism. Thus the arch of Galerius erected at Salonica around 300 has a more rounded figure-style and uses ornamental borders and arcades to break up the registers of scenes; while an over-life-size portrait of Diocletian from Nicomedia has features (even beard and hair) fully modelled rather than delineated.[19] In architecture this period saw a resurgence of activity after the accession of Diocletian in 284, with large-scale buildings such as the great imperial baths built in Rome by Diocletian (*c.* 298–305/6) and Constantine (*c.* 320) and at Trier (in the early fourth century), and imperial residences, like that of Diocletian at Split (300–6), of Maxentius at Rome (307–12), and Galerius at Salonica (before 311). These are characterized by vast, strongly articulated spaces and symmetrical planning. Two constructions are particularly significant for the history of this period: the walls of Rome erected by Aurelian (emperor 270–5) which show the need to defend the capital itself, and the building of Constantinople as the seat of government from 330.[20]

To sum up: this period (193–337) can be described as transitional towards the Christian art of the mid-fourth century. In contrast to the homogeneous culture which that promoted, the art and architecture of this period are varied – so varied and so fast changing at times that it is hard at times to distinguish short-lived, directionless changes from those that are part of progressive developments. Events in the external world, social and political shifts and economic turmoil, could play strange games with style: there is interest in looking back as well as forward, and in asserting local styles over metropolitan, and also times when shortage of resources had a clear impact on stylistic developments.

Such issues can be examined in greater depth in the case studies which follow. They have been chosen to cover range of functions, public, private, domestic and religious, and from the viewpoints of style and theme. The first looks at a particular aspect of imperial art and architecture, namely how emperors used the past. It shows tension between the past conceived of as a source of good traditions, and the needs of innovation, which were particularly strong when new systems were introduced as under the tetrarchy

[19] Vermeule (1968) 336–50 (arch of Galerius), and fig. 169 (head of Diocletian: Istanbul Archaeological Museum inv. no. 4864).

[20] Ward-Perkins (1981) 415–66 for architecture in Rome and provinces.

or with the Christian empire. The second case centres on the decoration of Christian sarcophagi and the emergence of Christian religious motifs alongside traditional commemorative imagery. The final study looks at regionalism in developments in floor-mosaic, to illustrate influences across regions and various ways of exploring the relation between architectural space and its decoration.

1. Emperors, Rome and the past

Temporal themes had always played a central part in Roman imperial iconography as emperors since Augustus had worked to consolidate their present status by reference to the good times of the past and to even better times to come. But in this period they seem especially prominent. The political and economic uncertainties made it even more urgent to anchor the present to the stability of Rome's past, particularly for the many emperors of provincial origin, while the increasing presentation of the emperor as a symbolic, superhuman figure meant that themes of human time could be tied to the eternal and transcendent.[21] These themes were expressed through a sophisticated use of allusion and detail, combining costume, gesture, attributes and inscriptions to spell out the particular message of the image.

(a) Portraiture

The most immediate and personal way in which an emperor could associate himself with the past was through his portrait; by presenting himself in a form or style reminiscent of some earlier leader he could imply a dynastic connection or, more subtly, evoke for himself the predecessor's virtues. This was regularly done throughout this period, and in particular the dynastic implications of physical similarity were much exploited. For instance, Septimius Severus who claimed to have been adopted by Marcus Aurelius, incorporated the unmistakable physical characteristics of his predecessor in one of his various portrait types, and this was repeated by some of his own successors.[22] Similarly, in the early fourth century Constantine was to re-establish a dynastic note in portraiture by stressing likeness within generations of his own family and showing himself as 'neo-Augustus with a neo-Trajanic hairstyle'.[23] On the other hand the tetrarchs used physical similarity for the opposite effect, to represent the contemporary relationship between themselves rather than dynastic or ideological connections

[21] See Brilliant (1963) 163–211.

[22] For Septimius' 'Marcus Aurelius' type: McCann (1968) 103–6; imitated by later Severans; e.g. also in portraits of Caracalla (Kleiner (1992) 322), Macrinus (Wood (1986) 31).

[23] E.g. on coinage of A.D. 313: Kleiner (1992) 434.

with the past; by denying physical differences in their appearance they portrayed themselves as a united group in which individualism had no place (see Fig. 2).[24]

Emperors could claim for themselves the virtues of past leaders, by putting up statues to them (as Severus Alexander is alleged to have done[25]) or through details of their own image. Beards, hairstyles and other attributes all became important iconographical links between past and present, as emperors incorporated into their portraits hall-mark features of noble predecessors. 'Good emperors' such as Marcus Aurelius[26] and Augustus[27] were obvious choices for imitation, as was Alexander the Great who evoked a Greek heroic past.[28] But not all the models were 'good' or indeed far back in the past: one of the major influences on imperial portraiture in the first half of the third century was the image of Caracalla. His death by assassination could not have made him an ideal role model for an emperor, yet his distinctive portrait, with its forceful head and thick-set, scowling features, found many imitators (Fig. 7). Presumably immediate successors like Macrinus, Elagabalus, and Severus Alexander drew on it for dynastic reasons, while emperors such as Maximinus Thrax and Philip the Arab took it as an image of power and military strength.[29]

Style was another means of evoking qualities linked with specific periods of the past, although precisely to what ends often remains unclear. A case in point is the sparse and linear style adopted by 'soldier emperors' such as Maximinus Thrax and Philip the Arab which has been likened to the realism of late republican or Flavian portraiture.[30] There are some strong stylistic resonances here with these earlier styles, but it is sometimes unclear whether such visual references were conscious or not, as 'revivals' of form and style were so much part of the art of this time. A telling case is the portraiture of Gallienus, which alluded so widely to men and styles of the past (notably Alexander, Augustus, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius and the culture of classical Greece) that the idea of physical resemblance to the emperor himself seems at times to have been lost.[31] Yet this range of allusions shows how reference to the past had a dynamic role in the construction of the imperial portraiture of this period even if its meaning was sometimes diffuse or unclear.

[24] Rees (1993).

[25] *SHA*, *Alex. Sev.* 28.6 alleges that Alexander, whose background was Syrian, filled the forum of Nerva at Rome with colossal statues of past deified emperors to prove himself 'Roman'.

[26] See n. 22 above; also imitated by Gallienus: Wood (1986) 101.

[27] As imitated by Gallienus: Wood (1986) 46; by Constantine, Kleiner (1992) 438.

[28] Caracalla: Wood (1986) 29; Severus Alexander: *SHA*, *Alex. Sev.* 25.8–10; Gallienus: Wood (1986) 91, 101 (and Fig. 1 here).

[29] Portraits of Caracalla and their imitation by successors: Wood (1986) 27–48; Kleiner (1992) 361–72, 396 (for further bibliography).

[30] Wood (1986) 13–17 for stylistic revivals.

[31] Breckenridge (1981) 506–8; Wood (1986) 101.

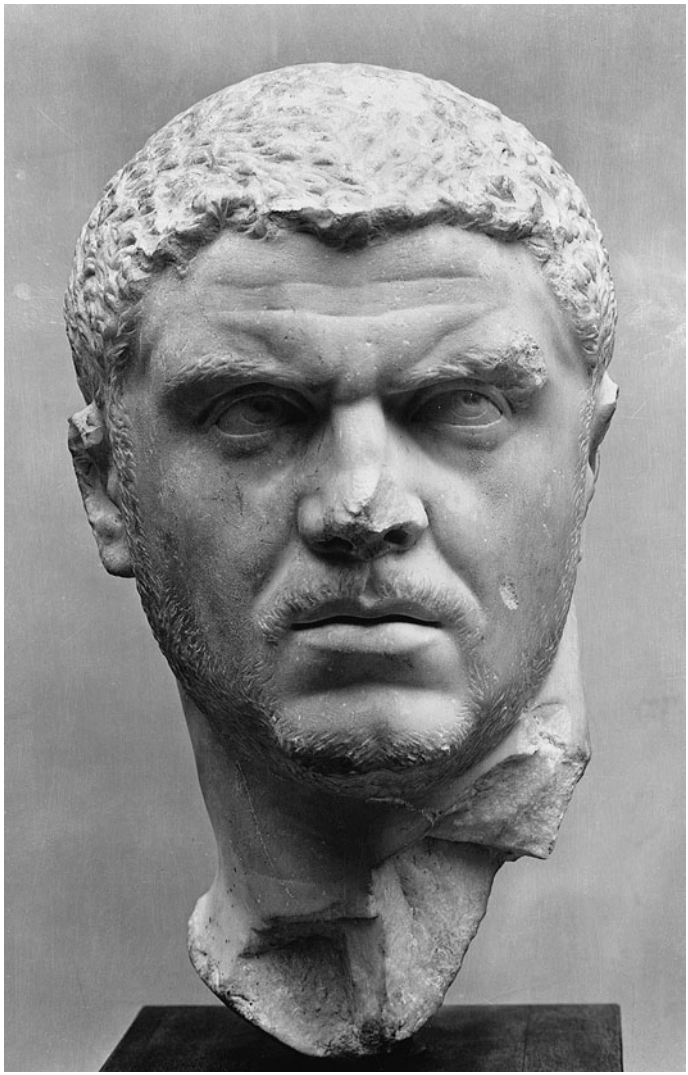


Fig. 7 Portrait of Caracalla

Rewriting imperial history could also involve the destruction of images. Emperors and other powerful people who had suffered *damnatio memoriae* might have their portraits destroyed in order to remove them from the historical record. Two reliefs on the arch of the Argentarii in Rome show just how thorough this process could be even when group portraits

were involved.[32] These had shown Septimius Severus with members of his family sacrificing, in two scenes each with three people, but following the *damnatio* of Plautianus (the powerful praetorian prefect and father-in-law of Caracalla), then of his daughter Plautilla, and finally of Septimius' younger son Geta, their figures were erased one by one, to leave only the emperor and his wife in one panel (Fig. 4), and the solitary figure of Caracalla in the other.

(b) Coins and medallions

Coins and medallions provided particular scope for allusions to the past, not simply through the imperial portraits they carried, but also in the choice of reverse types and their accompanying inscriptions. Although the quality (especially of coins) deteriorated markedly in the second half of the third century, the medallions took over some of the commemorative function of imperial monumental sculpture, which by the mid-third century had largely disappeared.

As in imperial portraits, central themes are to do with consolidation of power through dynastic rule and military victory, with the emperor emerging as a figure who transcends human time.[33] Yet the past has a place in this view, as if to suggest that history was summed up in present experience. Thus past events, such as the anniversaries of emperors, were a regular occasion for commemoration. In A.D. 248 the millennium of the city of Rome was marked with a celebration of the secular games, including lavish displays of wild animals in the Colosseum, and these events were marked by a special issue of coinage by Philip I. The inscription *Saeculum Novum* which occurs on some of the coins shows that the event was not entirely retrospective, but looked to a new future beginning in the present.[34] Such ideological links can also be seen in references back to the reigns of earlier emperors; coins and medallions issued by Gallienus recall Augustan ideals and institutions. A new age is being evoked by reference to an old.

Yet as in imperial portrait sculpture of the later third and early fourth centuries this move seems slow and discontinuous. While break-away regimes established in Gaul by Postumus in 260 and by Carausius in Britain in 287 also allude to a Roman past on some of their coinage,[35] some early issues of

[32] For *damnatio memoriae*: Pekáry (1985) 134–42, especially 138 (for Severan cases); for the arch of the Argentarii: Hannestad (1986) 277–80.

[33] E.g. Brilliant (1963) 177–8 for transcendent victory images. For dynastic e.g. Hannestad (1986) fig. 156; also Toynbee (1944) 154–5 for military dress, and 195 for victory themes on medallions.

[34] Hannestad (1986) 286; Toynbee (1944) 103.

[35] E.g. Postumus, double *sestertius*, Trier A.D. 260, using Hadrianic type to show emperor as restorer of the provinces: Carson (1980) no. 905; Carausius, *denarius*, London A.D. 287 showing the Roman wolf and the twins, inscribed RENOVAT ROMA: Carson (1980) no. 1127.

the tetrarchs appear to break from such retrospection: a gold medallion produced in Trier, probably in A.D. 293, does away with the concept of obverse and reverse and treats each side equally with a pair of virtually identical portraits.[36] In so doing it squeezes out any chance for references to the past and sets the symbolism firmly in the present. But a graphic illustration of how old and new worlds were to be combined in the imagery of the victorious Constantine is provided by a silver medallion issued sometime around A.D. 313–15 (to commemorate his victory at the Milvian Bridge, or his *decennalia* later).[37] The reverse shows an *adlocutio* scene with the inscription *Salus Rei Publicae*, which are both from traditional imperial triumphal imagery. Yet details of the portrait on the obverse set past, present and future together in a specific contrast: while the emperor's shield bears the image of Romulus and Remus as twins, his helmet is decorated with a roundel containing the Greek letters chi-rho, the monogram of Christ. This way of interpreting the present by reference to a past event as a prefiguration (here the implication is Constantine will refound the original city of Rome under Christ), is akin to the kind of exegetical reading of the past by types, that becomes so typical of Christianity.[38]

(c) Buildings

Emperors also associated themselves with the greatness of the past through public building, restoring places of historic significance or erecting new buildings to traditional design. As a background to interpreting this activity in Rome it is important to remember that between the Severans and Diocletian, there was little new public building in Rome itself. Although political and economic instability was a major factor in this dearth, it was also the case that many emperors in this period spent more time and energy elsewhere: Septimius Severus for instance, undertook major work at Lepcis Magna as well as new building in Rome, while during the tetrarchy when large-scale building in Rome resumed, there was also investment in other cities like Trier, Salonica, Sirmium and Nicomedia to serve as capitals. Finally, A.D. 330 saw the founding of Constantinople, the new Rome.[39]

In choosing to repair significant buildings which had suffered damage or decay, emperors could make ideological points and boost their reputation: in fact, the claim to have restored buildings seems to have been an important part of imperial rhetoric, as often the actual building work involved was

[36] From the Arras hoard. New York, The American Numismatic Society 44.100: Weitzmann (1979) no. 31.

[37] Munich, Staatliche Münzsammlung 86 627: Weitzmann (1979) no. 57.

[38] See Elsner (2000) 751–5 (*CAH* XIII).

[39] For Severan work in Rome, see n. 14 above; Lepcis: Ward-Perkins (1993); capitals: Ward-Perkins (1981) chs. 14–15; Constantinople: Krautheimer (1965) 46–9.

relatively slight.[40] Restoring an amenity to public use brought popular favour, as is suggested by various coin issues which commemorate the restoration of the Colosseum after fire and lightning damage on various occasions in the third century (for example, the special issue of coinage by Severus Alexander in A.D. 223).[41] Other cases suggest motives that were more political: the rededication of an Augustan arch for Gallienus and his wife implies a rededication to the ideals of the early empire.[42]

In new building, emperors could identify themselves with the glories of the past by imitating successful monuments of predecessors, evoking their munificence; thus the imperial baths built in Rome by Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Diocletian and Constantine followed the model set up by Titus and Trajan in the first and second centuries. Even in the provinces this kind of retrospective allusion might be made: at Philippopolis, the town he founded at his birth-place in Provincia Arabia, Philip the Arabian combined local styles of building design and decoration with others derived from earlier buildings in metropolitan Rome.[43]

But perhaps the most interesting new monuments were those designed to commemorate past people or events of one kind or another: two groups merit particular attention here. Commemorative arches erected in Rome by Septimius Severus (in A.D. 203) (Fig. 3) and by Constantine (A.D. 315) both make meaningful allusion to the past, and in particular to 'good emperors', through their design. Prominent on the Severan arch are four square panels depicting the emperor's Parthian victory. This arrangement is unique on Roman arches, and may be an attempt to replicate the type of continuous narrative scenes used on the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, making those emperors role models for Septimius himself.[44] On the arch of Constantine links with the past were confirmed through the thoughtful incorporation of material from earlier monuments (*spolia*) (Fig. b). This has been much discussed, particularly in the context of the 'decline' interpretation of late antique art.[45] But it is surely the case that these *spolia* were sculptural quotations of Rome's past imperial glory with which Constantine wished to associate himself. This becomes clear from the fact that they were taken from monuments of 'good emperors', Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius (of whom the last two are represented again as statues flanking Constantine in the scene of his speech from the Rostra after his triumphal entry into Rome). His claim on history was further

[40] Thomas and Witschel (1992). Another aspect is the topos of imperial modesty: according to the literary account, the emperor declined to take the credit due to him. Examples are Septimius Severus and his restoration of 'all the public shrines' (*SHA*, *Sev.* 23.1) and Severus Alexander, said to have preserved the name of Trajan on those bridges he restored (*SHA*, *Alex. Sev* 26.11).

[41] Carson (1980) no. 745. [42] Kleiner (1992) 375. [43] Freyberger (1992).

[44] See Kleiner (1992) 351. See also Brilliant (1967).

[45] See Kleiner (1992) 444–55 and 484 for full bibliography. The locus classicus for the 'decline' interpretation is Berenson (1954). Cf. Pierce (1989).

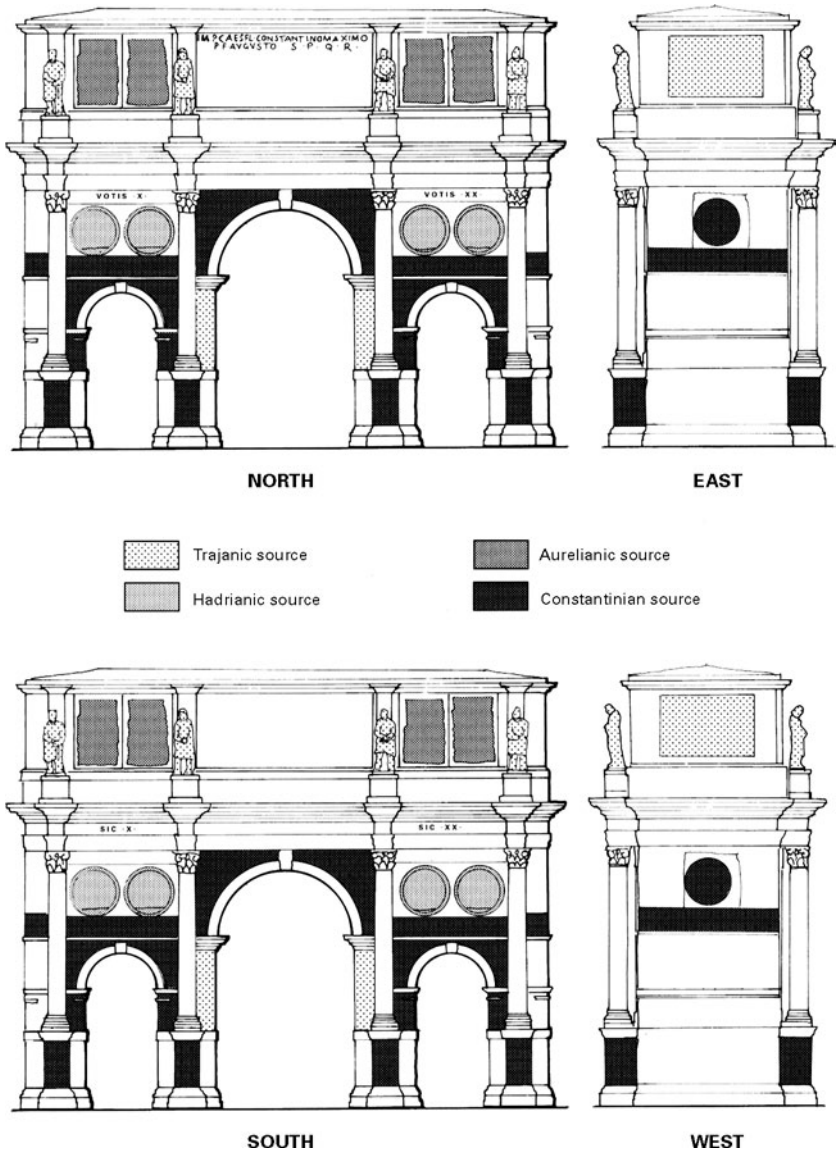


Fig. b Schematic plan of four faces of the arch of Constantine with the arrangement of the reliefs and their sources

asserted by replacing the heads of earlier emperors with those of himself or Licinius. With this reading the whole arch can be seen as a concerted design to link Constantine with the virtues of Rome's past.

In the second group of buildings Constantine yoked the Christian past to his present. He erected major churches in Rome and the Holy Land which served various immediate functions – commemorative, funerary and pilgrimage – and the greater purpose of building the Christian empire. In Rome the churches were often sited near the burial places of martyrs, or their shrines (such as S. Lorenzo and S. Agnese fuori le Mura, and the basilica of St Peter); others were built to accommodate the veneration of relics brought back from the Holy Land. In the Holy Land itself Constantine built on sites to commemorate the life of Christ and the saints and 'invented the notion of Christian archaeology', excavating Golgotha and the tomb of Christ to retrieve their Christian history.[46] But his most personal link with the Christian past was through his burial in the church he had built at Constantinople dedicated to the Twelve Apostles; although in many respects this building echoed the mausolea of other rulers such as Diocletian and Galerius, the implication was that Constantine himself was to be considered as the thirteenth apostle.[47] Constantinople itself combined the concept of a new Christian capital with the grandeurs of the Roman imperial past. Many traditional forms of art and architecture were used in its building, and earlier sculpture redeployed.[48]

His dual vision illustrates just how potent an ingredient reference to the past was in imperial imagery at this time. It could be used in different ways and through different media, and with different degrees of specificity but its essential purpose was to lay claim to the past in order to confirm the present and shape the future.

2. *Christian sarcophagi before Constantine*

Christian sarcophagi in the period before Constantine provide a useful focus for looking at general developments in the form and design of sarcophagi (which, with the dearth of major public commissions, are an important source of evidence for private art of the time), and they also document the emergence of a distinctively Christian iconography, representing as they do one branch of the funerary context from which it began. After

[46] Cameron in Bowersock, Brown and Grabar (1999) 10.

[47] For Constantine's churches: Krautheimer (1965) 27–41; and G. Armstrong (1967) for a list of churches attributed to Constantine as patron or founder. Cf. Kühnel (1987) for the creation of a New Jerusalem by building on the Christian holy sites of the old, and Wilken (1992). For Constantine's burial as thirteenth apostle, Mango (1990).

[48] For use of earlier statuary see Bassett (1991) and (1996): links were made to Greek culture and the historical traditions of Rome. For a critical reading of ancient literary sources on pagan and Christian elements in Constantine's Constantinople: Cameron and Hall (1999).

the Peace of the Church Christian sarcophagi underwent a major change, not so much in their iconography at first, as in size and quality; for the new stability encouraged wealthier Christians to patronize the arts for their private purposes, and this saw the production of some ambitious pieces in the second and third decades of the fourth century.

(a) General trends

Taking the period as a whole, sarcophagi cover a wide range in type and size. Certainly in the more expansive years of the early third and early fourth centuries there are monuments so impressive in terms of their quality and size that they may have been especially commissioned for a specific individual before his or her death (such as the 'Badminton' or 'Ludovisi' sarcophagi mentioned above; see also Fig. 5); but typical of the later third century are much simpler coffins which must have been produced in large numbers.[49] Many were imported into Rome (from where most examples in this section are taken) in an unfinished, pre-fabricated state from various places of marble production, for the finer details to be completed in local workshops or on purchase from the mason's stock.

By the second half of the third century decoration tended to follow certain formulaic designs or themes for representation, which, as I shall show, is a factor in the development of Christian iconography on sarcophagi. Two of the most common forms are strigillated sarcophagi (on which panels of 'S' shaped fluting are juxtaposed with one or more figured scenes), and sarcophagi where a central roundel containing a bust of the deceased is held aloft by two cupids (or Victories) with other figures or small scenes filling the remaining spaces. Since designs of this type needed single figures or small groups, attention switched from longer narrative sequences (as myths, for instance, demanded) towards abbreviated versions which showed only significant highlights. As for themes, personifications of the Seasons became very common as the third century progressed, presumably because they could convey central, but non-specific, ideas about natural cycles of regeneration in a multiplicity of visually attractive ways.[50] The theme of learning and devotion to the Muses retained the popularity it had enjoyed in the second century; and in contrast to the rather rarefied life which that evoked were various scenes of 'everyday life' which were developed during the later third century.[51] One of these was the meal which was to appear, like the theme of learning, in Christian contexts, but before then was often shown in conjunction with scenes of the hunt. The hunt was a subject which enjoyed great popularity in all branches of art at this time,

[49] E.g. Kranz (1984) no. 114; Amedick (1991) nos. 110, 145; *RS* 1.223 and 564.
[50] Kranz (1984).
[51] For learning and Muses: Wegner (1966) and Zanker (1995); for daily life: Amedick (1991).

epitomizing ideals of conspicuous bravery (often recalling mythological heroes) and the lifestyle of wealthy landowners, and in commemorating the dead it added notions about combating death and danger. Surprisingly perhaps, it did not appear on Roman sarcophagi until around A.D. 220, and then in various different images which ranged from the truly heroic (the lion hunt) to the supposedly realistic (boar and hare hunting, and trapping with nets). Representations of the lion hunt in particular tend towards an emblematic arrangement of figures with the victorious hunter shown at the centre of the scene in the moment of conquest which highlights the ideological content of the scene at the expense of its narrative. In contrast, the trapping of animals with nets, depicted from the end of the century, shows strong influences from 'realistic' contemporary art.[52]

From the mid-third century onwards, Christian elements begin to appear in the decoration of sarcophagi at Rome. At first they do so discreetly and sparingly, but within the next fifty years blossom to the point where they can assertively fill large, double-register sarcophagi. Later, this change may be partly explained by the Peace of the Church, but the other factor is the massive development of Christian imagery.

(b) The appearance of Christian iconography

On the earliest examples (which date from around A.D. 270) the Christian elements are usually restricted to figures of the Good Shepherd, carrying a sheep across his shoulders, and a woman standing with her arms raised in prayer (the *orans*). Both of these were based on existing figure-types which symbolized general virtues of philanthropy or (for the woman) *pietas*, but it is clear from their constant repetition in Christian contexts that for Christians they held more specific religious significance. Nevertheless their background in secular art meant that they would not have looked conspicuous, inserted as they often were into conventional schemes of sarcophagus decoration. They were often placed in the corner panels of strigillated sarcophagi, or set in pastoral landscapes, or in friezes of figures as on a sarcophagus from the *Via Salaria* where they are flanked by the figures of a philosopher and a listening woman.[53] This particular group, of philosopher and woman, is another significant addition to Christian iconography at this time, despite (or because of?) its popularity in contemporary non-Christian funerary art as an image of learning and the cultural life. It soon appears alongside Christian figures in a frieze, as here (or on the S. Maria Antiqua sarcophagus which includes biblical scenes), or in a separate panel on strigillated sarcophagi.[54] In this context the man has become a Christian teacher and the woman his attentive pupil, but it is clear that

[52] For hunt: Andreae (1980). [53] Landscapes: e.g. *RS* 1.2, 950, 961, 988; *Via Salaria RS* 1.66.
[54] S. Maria Antiqua sarcophagus: *RS* 1. 747.1; strigillated sarcophagus: *RS* 1.994.

the value of learning has been carried across into Christian funerary themes from its pre-Christian origins. This is confirmed by the continuation of other figures associated with the theme: the standing woman holding a scroll, or flanked by Muses, and the men and women seated with their Muse or philosopher companions all appear on sarcophagi of the late third century in the company of Christian figures.[55]

But the major development was the introduction of biblical scenes into the repertory of sarcophagus decoration, many of which were to do with miraculous deliverance. Most came from the Old Testament, such as Noah's salvation from the flood, the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lions' den, and the sacrifice of Isaac, while the raising of Lazarus from the dead is a New Testament story with an obviously similar significance. At one time scholars thought that these subjects (which also appear frequently in the catacombs) were inspired by particular prayers for deliverance from evil and from death; but it seems now that their appearance in art antedates the liturgical formulation of the prayers, making a formal connection less likely. As strong as the theme of divine deliverance is the hope for peace and refreshment (*refrigerium*) in the next world, which also occurs in contemporary Christian inscriptions and literature. Many scenes on pre-Constantinian Christian sarcophagi can be interpreted in this way, particularly the miracles which create refreshment (e.g. the striking of water from the rock, the conversion of water into wine at the marriage at Cana, and the multiplication of loaves and fishes), and the images of the pastoral paradise or of Jonah's rest under the gourd-tree.

One paradoxical aspect of early Christian art at this time is that although in many ways its meanings are set or shaped (for instance, through scriptural exegesis, or through typology whereby the deliverance of Jonah – for example – came to stand for Christ's resurrection), they are also open to receiving fresh readings through their placement in the overall design: juxtaposition could create connections between ideas and apparently disparate motifs.[56] Many of these biblical scenes were represented in a highly abbreviated way with one or two figures involved in a significant and recognizable action, and on frieze sarcophagi of the late third and early fourth century they would be placed in a long row of unseparated scenes, which ideological connections might shape into a particular pattern.

A frieze sarcophagus (*RS* 1.6; Museo Pio Cristiano 161) dated to the first quarter of the fourth century sums up many of these features. The lid is decorated with conventional motifs typical of the time, with boar-hunters on one side of the inscription and a portrait of the deceased on the

[55] Woman with scroll: *RS* 1.74, 396, 1004.1; flanked by Muses: *RS* 1.696; or with Muse or philosophers: *RS* 1.817 and 945.1.

[56] Cf. Elsner (2000) 751–5 (*CAH* XIII); Grabar (1969).

other. But on the coffin itself, front and sides, the scenes are unremittingly Christian and biblical. At first glance their arrangement looks random, but in fact there is a clear distinction between Old Testament scenes on the sides (Adam and Eve, representing the Fall, and the three young Hebrews awaiting deliverance from the fiery furnace) and New Testament on the front (miracles and scenes of the arrest of Peter: Fig. 8). There at the centre of a series of New Testament miracle scenes is the figure of a woman praying. Her head has been left prepared for the addition of portrait features, as if to claim the Christian salvation expressed in the biblical stories for a specific individual. Its religious iconography, extensive in its range of scenes but rather limited in theme, and its ordered arrangement of scenes looks ahead to the measured style of Constantinian frieze sarcophagi which continues into the mid-fourth century.[57]

3. Mosaics

One major aspect of the art of this period is its increasing regionalism, with cross-influences between provinces which may by-pass Rome. This development is not surprising given the variation in the economic and political fortunes of different parts of the empire: while some places suffered the destructive effects of barbarian incursions, others enjoyed a time of stable prosperity, and the status of Rome as a major artistic centre fluctuated over the period. Styles in the third century could still remain quite local, even though certain types of subject-matter (notably mythological) were reproduced with remarkably little variation across the empire. In contrast with the empire of the first century A.D. when it is possible to talk of various local élites emulating the tastes and practices of central Rome, the wealthy of this period saw themselves as sharing in the same general culture which linked them across the provinces.

Figured scenes in floor-mosaics are a good illustration of this, and the examples to be discussed now come from three regions of the empire where mosaic particularly flourished at this time, but in different styles: in central Italy black and white mosaics predominated, while in eastern Asia Minor and North Africa figured scenes were polychrome. Although these areas may be described in terms of the 'centre' and the 'periphery' of the Roman empire, it becomes clear that the dynamic does not necessarily radiate outwards from the centre but involves influences which cross backwards and forwards across these regions.[58] Important diagnostic features are the choice of subject-matter, the relation of the mosaic's design to the architectural

[57] Constantinian examples: *RS* 1, nos. 39 and 40.

[58] Traced in detailed studies by Levi (1947) and Lavin (1963), but primarily in the context of developments after this period, and the possibility of influences from outside the empire, i.e. the east.

Fig. 8 Early Christian frieze sarcophagus

space of the room, and the treatment of the floor as a surface (that is, how scenes with an illusion of depth and volume are integrated with the essential flatness of the floor). How to relate three dimensional figured scenes to the two dimensional surface of the actual floor was a dilemma which found various forms of resolution in the history of floor mosaic. Different regions had tackled it in different ways, for instance by confining the figured element to small scenes set against a wide, plain surface, by an overall 'carpet' of pattern, or by silhouetting black figures on a white ground; but in this period some of these long-established approaches begin to change.

(a) Ostia and central Italy

One crucial factor in the development of black and white mosaics, such as those of third century Ostia, was the relationship of the mosaic to its architectural context.[59] With the use of black on white the mosaic emphasised the flat, two dimensional nature of the floor, which was further enhanced by the free positioning of the figures without any containing frames. Thus in most cases the designs spread virtually from wall to wall in an all-over arrangement which echoed the architectural effects of vaulted ceilings. The black and white style was largely limited to this part of Italy where it had been prevalent since the first century A.D. It was not a 'cheap alternative' to illusionistic polychrome and was used even in imperial buildings at Rome such as the baths of Caracalla.[60]

For the late second and earlier third centuries A.D. Ostia provides many examples from new public buildings and houses refurbished in this time of prosperity, which show some lines of development.[61] While many motifs continue in use from the later second century (such as marine scenes and foliage scrolls) there is a new emphasis on human figures, which are rendered in a more abstract way. Internal white lines now tend to mark out a set of patterns on the black silhouettes to suggest the forms of the body, rather than modelling them as coherent, organic forms as before.[62] A similar move towards abstraction and disjuncture can be seen in the way figures are positioned on the floor; compared with many earlier compositions there is often less interest in an overall design and more in relating individual

[59] Clarke (1979) *passim*.

[60] DeLaine (1997) 24–31 (geometric and figured scene with aquatic motifs).

[61] Discussed principally by Blake (1940) 93–8 (who looks also at contemporary examples from outside Ostia, but in terms of decline); by Becatti (1961) and (1963); and by Clarke (1979) (in an analysis of style and architectural links). See also Dunbabin (1999) 60–5.

[62] E.g. baths of Seven Sages *c.* 207: Becatti (1961) no. 271, pl. CLV; and the *caupona* of Alexander Helix: Becatti (1961) no. 391 and Clarke (1979) 45, fig. 58 (here Fig. 9).

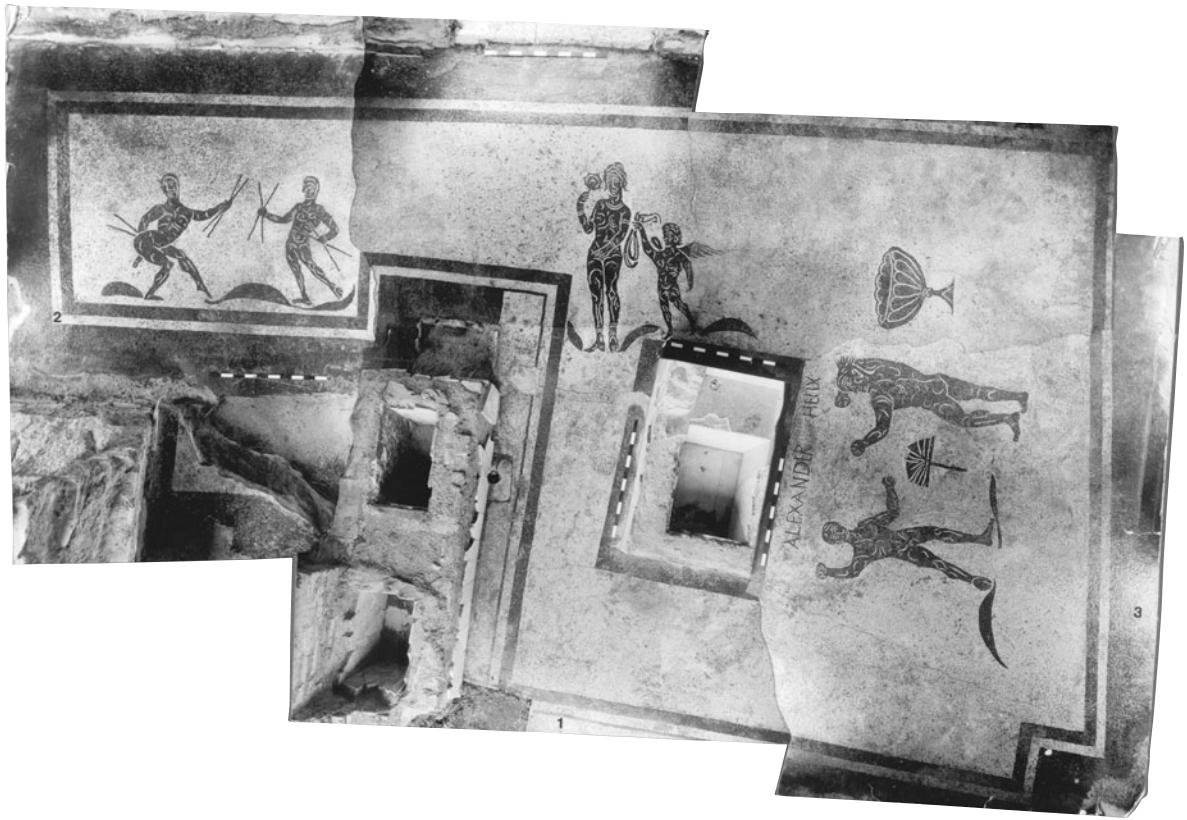


Fig. 9 Ostia, black and white mosaic

elements to the shape of the room and to its various possible viewpoints.[63] These trends are illustrated by the figures in the pavement of the *caupona* of Alexander Helix (Fig. 9).

By the start of the fourth century colour appears in a few Ostian mosaics but is often limited to discrete panels as in the House of the Augustales; these herald its full-scale use in some pavements later in the century.[64] Yet some ambitious figured mosaics in polychrome of the third century survive from Rome and its environs, notably the athletes and trainers from the baths of Caracalla and the gladiators on the pavement found near Tusculum.[65] Their figures are highly modelled, yet in physical terms (as opposed to psychological impact) they are rather unconvincing and suggest that Roman workshops were inexperienced with the fully modelled forms that elaborate polychrome demanded.

(b) Eastern Asia Minor

This could not be said of the situation in contemporary eastern Asia Minor (which includes the southeastern coast of modern Turkey, Syria and Cyprus), where there was a flowering of mosaics from the early third century on.[66] Here the hellenistic polychrome tradition flourished, with its highly illusionistic treatment of figures. To reconcile their three dimensional effects with the flat surface of the floor these figured scenes were usually small, and set against a background that was plain or of geometric patterns. By and large mosaics in this region consistently follow this tradition, whether they are found in long-established towns or newly Romanized areas, or in places like Palmyra where other art forms show strong local trends.[67] Although there were small-scale variations in local fashion or in the pace of changes, it is possible to see some developments across the region.[68]

One was a move towards more florid effects. Many mosaics of the Severan period show sharper contrasts in shade and colour to heighten dramatic effect, particularly in the modelling of bodies.[69] The framing of the figured panels became more elaborate: some Severan pavements at Antioch (e.g.

[63] E.g. emblematic elements in pavements of shops in the forum of Corporations, of end second to earlier third centuries: Becatti (1961) no. 391; *apodyterium* of the Terme del Faro, dated mid-third century: Becatti (1961) no. 320, pl. clxiv; Dunbabin (1999) fig. 63.

[64] Becatti (1961) no. 420, pl. xlii.

[65] Baths of Caracalla: Blake (1940) 111–12, pl. 28/9; DeLaine (1997) 28, fig. 17, 31 n. 5; 239–40 redating, and Dunbabin (1999) fig. 71, 68 n. 40. Tusculum gladiators: Blake (1940) 113–15, pl. 30.

[66] For a survey of the Near East generally Balty (1981) and Dunbabin (1999); Antioch: Levi (1947); Syria: Balty (1977); Cyprus: Michaelides (1987).

[67] Balty (1981). But Edessa mosaics are an exception: Balty (1981) 387–90. See also Balty (1981) 369–70, for mosaic in newly annexed territory, Mas'udiye, and 426 for Palmyra. Cf. Lavin (1963) 152 for how this fits in with wider questions of classical versus oriental influences in stylistic developments in this period.

[68] Balty (1977) 6.

[69] E.g. in illusionism of 'Buffet Table' at Antioch: Levi (1947) 127–36, pl. xxiv.

in the House of the Drinking Contest at Seleucia) used an architectural setting which emphasized the single viewpoint for the scene and its illusion of spatialrecession.[70] Ornamentation became richer, like the swags of fruit which surround the scene of Artemis bathing in the mosaic from Philippopolis of the mid-third century.[71] There was also a tendency for the figured panels to increase in size and to cover proportionately larger areas of the floor, altering the relationship between mosaic and architectural space: some of these scenes had many figures, but others were quite simple and limited in number.[72] One way of producing an all-over design, using smaller panels each with their own viewpoint, appears in the mosaic from the 'Constantinian villa' at Antioch where the floor was divided up to produce four trapezoidal panels containing hunting scenes.[73]

Subject-matter was primarily mythological, but from the late third century personifications of abstract qualities became increasingly popular.[74] Many such figures were identified by inscriptions, which came to proliferate; a particularly instructive example is the inscription on the mosaic from Mas'udiye which identifies the mosaicist in Greek and Syriac and the subject-matter (the river Euphrates), and also gives the date (A.D. 227/8).[75]

(c) North Africa

But the region in which floor mosaic was arguably most inventive at this time was North Africa, particularly in Africa Proconsularis where there were lively new developments which owed little to the hellenistic traditions of the east.[76] The original impetus seems to have come from Italy and many of the spatial arrangements found in the black and white style can be seen in polychrome versions in North Africa. In particular there are figured scenes which cover the whole floor-surface, freely arranged or set in compartments, as well as all-over patterns created by animals, plants or even peacock feathers.[77] Other motifs like vine scrolls or sea-scapes could be peopled with animals and human figures in varying degrees of realistic activity and with little or no interest in spatial recession. Figures were usually well modelled, but set against a plain background which allowed little or no suggestion of spatial illusion; depth was often indicated by height, an

[70] Levi (1947) 156–9, pl. xxx. [71] Balty (1977) nos. 5–6.

[72] Many figures: mosaic of Ge, Aion and Prometheus from Philippopolis: Balty (1977) no. 9. More limited composition: Meleager and Atalanta from Byblos: Balty (1981) 411–12, pl. xvi.2.

[73] Levi (1947) 226, pl. iii.

[74] E.g. allegorical figures of Eutekneia, Philosophia and Dikaiosyne on an early fourth-century pavement from Philippopolis: Balty (1977) no. 16.

[75] E.g. mosaics from the *triclinium* of the House of Aion, Paphos, Cyprus, dated to after 318–24: Michaelides (1987) 28–31. For Mas'udiye: Balty (1981) 369, pl. xii.1.

[76] For comprehensive discussions see Dunbabin (1978) and (1999).

[77] E.g. animals: Dunbabin (1978) 67, pl. 58 (Radès, 'animal catalogue' mosaic); plants: Lavin (1963) 213, pl. 31 (Carthage, Maison de la Volière); and peacock feathers: Dunbabin (1978) 271, pl. 169 (Sousse).

arrangement which works well in fitting the scenes to the space available on the floor.

For mythological scenes, which often used quite traditional compositions, these spatial possibilities offered a range of settings: the triumph of Venus was set in a small panel within a larger overall design at Timgad, but at Bulla Regia it appears free-floating, as it were, above a fish-filled sea.[78] Some narrative could be suggested by splitting successive episodes of a myth across superimposed registers (as in the Achilles mosaic at Tipasa).[79] Scenes which were created to depict the interests of rich patrons, like chariot races, hunts and amphitheatre shows, often have a similar approach to space. These added some vivid new topics to the repertory of subjects, tending to surpass myth in popularity. They adopted many of the compositional arrangements which had opened up the space of the room; figures were arranged in registers, or freely placed with multi-viewpoints, or in scenes with a birds'eye perspective which gave a total view (as in this scene of races in the circus from Carthage: Fig. 10).[80] Often these activities are represented in idealized terms, although a few are much more realistic in their treatment.[81]

These then are (briefly) the characteristics of these three main areas of mosaic design in the third century. What was the dynamic of influences between them? We have already noted that originally influences from Italian black and white design may have led to the North African treatment of the floor in an all-over, unified design, in contrast to the traditional hellenistic approach which had allowed for spatial illusionism but within self-contained panels. It is not surprising that it is North African influences which become strongest at this stage. Their combination of lively polychrome with limited illusionism seems to have had direct influence on some Italian mosaics of the early fourth century. Perhaps the clearest examples are in the great Sicilian house at Piazza Armerina, where subjects and designs have African equivalents, but there are other indications on the Italian mainland, such as the use of coloured figures against a plain white ground in the Esquiline hunt, and in the fish-filled sea of the pavement of the Theodoran basilica at Aquileia (A.D. 308–19).[82] During this period small signs of African influence can be found in mosaics of Asia Minor, for instance in the grouping of figures against a neutral ground in the Adana Orpheus mosaic, in the choice of subjects, and in the initiatives taken in

[78] E.g. Timgad: Dunbabin (1978) 155–6, pl. G. Bulla Regia: Dunbabin (1978) 250, fig. 148.

[79] Dunbabin (1978) 35, 41, pl. 12.

[80] Registers: e.g. Dunbabin (1978) 271, pls. 60–2, amphitheatre scenes from Sousse. Multi-viewpoints: Dunbabin (1978) 268, Magerius mosaic. Bird's eye perspective: e.g. circus mosaics: Dunbabin (1978) 89 (and Fig. 10 here).

[81] E.g. Carthage boar hunt: Dunbabin (1978) 252, no. 31, pl. 21 (early third century); and Cherchel agricultural activities: Dunbabin (1978) 254, pls. 102–4 (early third century).

[82] Piazza Armerina: Wilson (1983); Esquiline hunt: Blake (1940) 116–17; Lavin (1963) 258; Aquileia: Bianchi-Bandinelli (1971) 234, fig. 16.

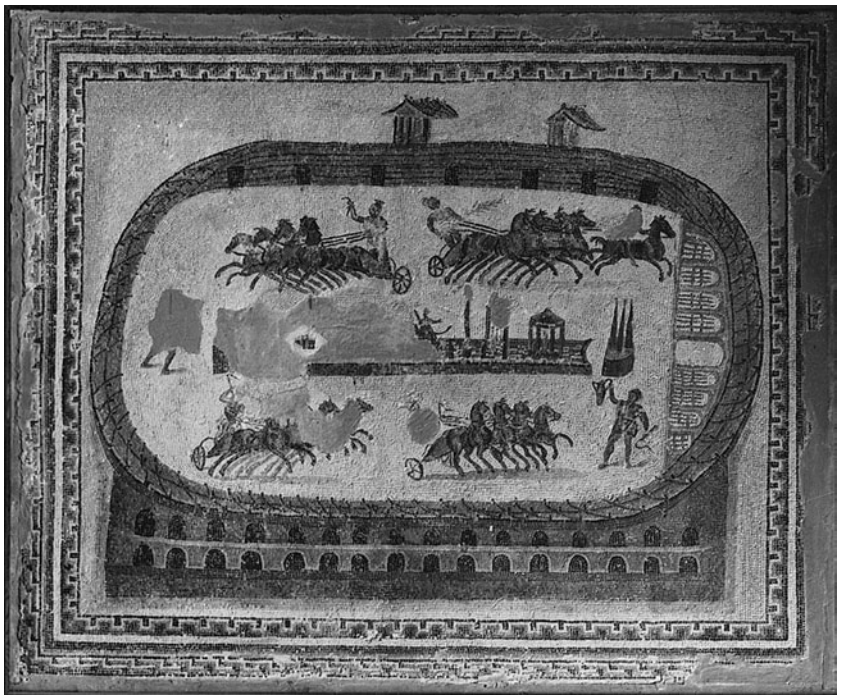


Fig. 10 North African circus mosaic from Carthage

the composition of the Constantinian villa hunt mosaic at Antioch.[83] But its major influences in that area lie outside this period, in its long-term impact on the illusionism of the hellenistic tradition which leads to the flat overall patterning and abandonment of frames that is so characteristic of mosaics, of Antioch for instance, in the fifth century.[84]

III. CONCLUSION

How far, then, do the developments traced in these studies represent transition in sense of progression? The use of the past as a theme in art and architecture was deeply embedded in Roman imagery, imperial and private, artistic and literary, and in this respect, this period is not exceptional, other than perhaps in the frequency of its use in the imperial context. By contrast, the development of Christian motifs on sarcophagi represents a new

[83] Adana Orpheus: Ling (1998) 59, fig. 41; re subjects: Balty (1981) 398–400 (was the scene of the toilet of Venus at Philippopolis laid by North African mosaicists?); Constantinian villa: see above n. 73.

[84] Lavin (1963) 273. Note that influences, especially from North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean are also to be found in other regions at this time, not discussed here: e.g. Spain: Ling (1998) 74–6.

start and a progression from which there is no turning back. This Christian funerary art uses contemporary designs and iconography as a framework for its own new imagery and interpretative approaches. The mosaics, however, are more divergent. On one hand they show the beginnings of a long-term move from hellenistic illusionism to flat, two dimensional compositions; yet in Italy the opposite starts to happen and black and white mosaic returns to colour. Both Christian art and these changes in mosaic anticipate major developments in the later fourth and fifth centuries that brought about a greater homogenization of artistic forms and styles; and in their range of responses all these case studies show the complex relationship between tradition and change that underlies this period of political as well as artistic transition.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

CHANGES IN ROMAN PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATION, A.D. 193–337

By the start of the period the administration of imperial territories had altered little from the overall pattern established under the Julio-Claudians. Italy retained its traditional autonomy outside the territorial administration, with the role of a few special agencies still defined by the twelve regions into which the peninsula had been divided by Augustus. Elsewhere the provincial system continued with only minor changes until the wholesale reorganization under Diocletian. A total of forty-four defined provincial territories were each administered by a single individual for terms of between one and three years. Governing a province involved uninterrupted residence within the bounds of the territory with responsibility for the conduct of civil and, where these existed, military affairs. Ten of these positions bore the traditional title of proconsul, nominated by the senate at Rome. Two (Asia and Africa) were chosen from among ex-consuls, and eight (Narbonensis, Baetica, Macedonia, Achaea, Creta et Cyrene, Lycia et Pamphylia, Cyprus and Sicilia) from among ex-praetors. Twenty-four senators at any one time served the emperor as provincial governor or legate (*legatus Augusti pro praetore provinciae . . .*), of which eleven (Britannia, Germania Inferior, Germania Superior, Hispania (Citerior) Tarraconensis, Pannonia Superior, Dalmatia, Moesia Superior, Moesia Inferior, Tres Daciae, Cappadocia and Syria) were selected from among ex-consuls and thirteen (Belgica, Lugdunensis, Aquitania, Lusitania, Raetia, Noricum, Pannonia Inferior, Thracia, Bithynia et Pontus, Galatia, Cilicia, Arabia and Palaestina) from among ex-praetors. The remaining eight territories were in the charge of members of the equestrian order appointed by the emperor, whose responsibilities varied greatly in importance, from the prefecture of Egypt (*praefectus Aegypti*) which ranked with a consular province, the procuratorial governors of Mauretania Tingitana and Mauretania Caesariensis, both with significant military responsibilities, to the charge of small districts in the western Alps (Alpes Maritimae, Alpes Cottiae, Alpes Graiae et Poeninae) or of the islands Sardinia and Corsica combined in a single administration. The names of many governors are recorded on inscriptions along with the traditional titles of their offices down to the time of Gallienus, when senatorial *legati* were in most cases replaced by equestrian *praesides*. That term, long employed by historical writers, had before the middle of the third century come into general use for all grades of governor, even on official records.[1]

[1] Names, titles and dates of provincial governors up to 284 are provided by Thomasson (1984) vol. 1; for officials under Diocletian and Constantine, see Barnes, *NE* 140–72, with revisions in Barnes, 'Emperors' 550–1.

Several changes were made to individual provinces under the Severan emperors. In Africa the Numidian command, hitherto held by an ex-praetor appointed by the emperor as legate of the legion at Lambaesis, and notionally a part of the province of proconsular Africa, was now constituted a separate province of Numidia, apparently in 193. In the aftermath of his victory over Niger in 195, Severus divided the great command of Syria into Coele ('Hollow') Syria, under the consular legate residing at Antioch, and the southern Syria Phoenice under an ex-praetor residing at Tyre. The newly annexed territories beyond the Euphrates were organized into provinces, first the smaller Osrhoene and then the major command of Mesopotamia, both under equestrian prefects. In the Balkans, probably in 196/7, Severus significantly enlarged Moesia Inferior at the expense of Thracia by shifting the boundary between the two southwards so as to move into the former the large urban territories of Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis. A division of Britannia into Britannia Superior, under a consular legate residing at London, and Britannia Inferior, under a praetorian legate (in effect the former commander of the legion) residing at York, may have been decided on in 197 (it is significant that Severus divided the provinces held by his rivals Niger and Albinus) but was evidently not carried into effect, from the evidence of the records of individual governors, until the year 214. In the same year the dividing-line between the two Pannonian provinces was shifted westwards to include Brigetio and thus raised the status of Pannonia Inferior to that of a two-legion consular command. Also in the year 214 the legate of the legion stationed in the remote northwest of Hispania Tarraconensis was transformed into the governor of a new province Hispania Nova Citerior, comprising the regions of Asturia and Callaecia, but the change was apparently reversed by Caracalla's successors in or after 217.[2]

Before the Persian storm broke under Valerian several minor changes had been made to provincial organization in the east. In 239/40 Gordian reinstated the native ruler of Osrhoene at Edessa (Abgarus, grandson of the formidable Abgarus VIII) and also conferred the title of colony on his capital. Under Decius the separate province of Pontus established in the last years of Severus Alexander was briefly united with Galatia (249–50) but then reinstated under Probus. The gathering process of provincial fragmentation is apparent also in Asia before 249 with the establishment of Phrygia and Caria as a separate province, foreshadowing further fragmentation of the great proconsular province of Asia that was to come under Diocletian. Under Probus there is an indication, but no more than that, of the Iberian-speaking communities in southwest Gaul being detached from the rest of Aquitania to form the province later known as Novem Populi.[3]

The principal source for Diocletian's provincial reorganization at the end of the third century is a seventh-century manuscript at Verona, now referred to as the Verona List (*Laterculus Veronensis*), which provides the earliest register of late Roman provinces according to the newly instituted grouping of dioceses. Since its republication in 1862, the date and nature of the list has been discussed on many

[2] Thomasson (1982) 3–61 (Numidia); Millar, *Near East* 121–3 (Syria); Gerov (1979) 212–40 (Thracia / Moesia Inferior); A. R. Birley (1981) 168–72 (Britannia); Mócsy (1974) 198 (Pannonia); Alföldy (1969) 49 and 208–9 (Hispania).

[3] Millar, *Near East* 151–2 (Osrhoene); Mitchell, *Anatolia* II: 158–9 (Asia Minor); Drinkwater (1983) 102 (Gallia).

occasions, with most opting for a date between 305 and 314. A current view is that the list is a single, homogenous document and was most likely compiled late in 314 or soon afterwards.[4]

The Severan provinces of Britain apparently continued unaltered for the first decade of Diocletian and Maximian under the rule of the separatist regime of Carausius and Allectus. The changes to the provincial administration of the island which appear in the Verona List may have been implemented soon after the recovery of Britain in 296 by Constantius Caesar. The diocese of the Britains (*dioecesis Britanniarum*) under the control of a vicar (*vicarius*) comprised four provinces, each with its own governor (*praeses*), Britannia Prima, Britannia Secunda, Maxima Caesariensis and Flavia Caesariensis. The latter two were evidently named in honour of the western emperors Maximian and Constantius and may thus be dated to the period 296–305. Conceivably London may have been titled Caesarea, since it appears to have figured prominently in Constantius' victory, while its later title of Augusta may derive from his elevation following the abdication of Maximian in 305. From analogy with other provinces, Prima and Secunda should each have been created out of the earlier Superior and Inferior. Since Maxima Caesariensis was the only one of the four known later to have had a governor with the higher rank of *consularis* there would seem to be little doubt that London was its metropolis. A dedication from Corinium (Cirencester) suggests that it was the residence of the governor of Britannia Prima. That leaves Flavia and Secunda to have been formed out of Inferior, with the former being perhaps immediately to the east and northeast of London. The latter may have been based on Eboracum (York) and continued the unified command of the north as far south as the Mersey–Trent line. Under Diocletian the *praeses* still retained military command but by the reign of Constantine army units in Britain were under the unified command of a duke (*dux*). If Lincoln was capital of Flavia it is likely to have included East Anglia, since command of the coastal defences between the Wash and Solent is known to have extended across more than one province (*comes litoris Saxonici per Britannias*).[5]

Most of the provinces of Gaul and Germany were subdivided and, along with two of the three small Alpine provinces, were grouped into two dioceses, Galliae in the north and Viennensis, named after the city Vienne (Vienna) on the Rhône south of Lyon. The former comprised eight provinces: Belgica Prima and Belgica Secunda formed out of Gallia Belgica, and Lugdunensis Prima and Lugdunensis Secunda formed out of Gallia Lugdunensis. Germania Inferior continued unaltered as Germania Secunda but Germania Superior was divided into Germania Prima and Sequania. Also included were the Alpes Graiae et Poeninae, most northerly of the Alpine provinces. The upper Danube province Raetia continued unaltered but was incorporated into the diocese that included northern Italy (*dioecesis Italiciana*). The seven provinces of Viennensis included a province of the same name formed out of the earlier Gallia Narbonensis along with Narbonensis Prima and Narbonensis Secunda. In the west there was a triple division of Aquitania into Novem Populi

[4] Bury (1923); a new edition of the text is presented by Barnes, *NE* 201–8 and 209–25 (divisions of Severan provinces), revised in Barnes, 'Emperors' 548–50.

[5] A. R. Birley (1981) 315–17; Amm. Marc. XXVII.8.7 and XXVIII.3.1 (Augusta / Londinium); *RIB* 103 (Corinium).

(this may have been created before Diocletian), Aquitanica Prima and Aquitanica Secunda. The Alpes Maritimae were included unaltered.[6]

The diocese of the Spanish provinces (Hispaniae) comprised not only all the former provinces of the Iberian peninsula but also one from Africa. Baetica in the south and Lusitania in the southwest continued unaltered but Tarraconensis (Hispania Citerior) was divided into three, Tarraconensis in the northeast, Gallaecia in the northwest and Carthaginiensis in the southeast. The diocese also included whatever remained of the province Mauretania Tingitana. The earliest record of governors (*praesides*) of provinces formed out of Tarraconensis dates to *c.* 300.[7]

On the middle Danube the diocese of Pannonia comprised seven provinces. In the west Noricum was divided along the line of its Alpine watershed between Noricum Ripense bordering the Danube in the north and Noricum Mediterraneum. The southern parts of the two Pannonian provinces were detached as separate provinces, Savensis (later Savia) from Pannonia Superior and Valeria from Pannonia Inferior, so-named in honour of the house of Diocletian. Superior and Inferior were subsequently designated Pannonia Prima and Pannonia Secunda. The large and mountainous province Dalmatia continued undivided, except for a small area in the south (roughly equivalent to the modern Montenegro) which was detached to form the separate province Praevalis (Praevalitana) which was included in the Moesian diocese. That separation acknowledged in administration the geographical reality of the barrier between east and west formed by the mountains of Montenegro and northern Albania.[8]

In the central Balkans the diocese of the Moesias contained eleven provinces and extended from the Danube to the island of Crete, now permanently detached as a separate province from its long-standing association with Cyrene. On the southern Adriatic the small area of Epirus, detached from Macedonia in the second century to form a procuratorial province, continued as Epirus Vetus in the south, roughly equivalent to the ancient Molossian kingdom. Epirus Nova on the Adriatic comprised the ancient region of Illyris between the rivers Drin and Aous (Vijose) west of the mountains which had been a part of Roman Macedonia since the first century B.C. Thessalia was also detached from the latter as a separate province but Achaea, which included the historic cities of Greece, continued unaltered, except for the separation of the Aegean islands as a separate province, Insulae in the diocese Asiana. Further north the historic region of Dardania was detached from Moesia Superior which, having also already ceded territory in the northeast (the area of Ratiaria) to the New Dacia of Aurelian, continued to be known as Moesia Superior or Margensis but was later designated Moesia Prima. Aurelian's Dacia had also included territory from both Thrace and Moesia Inferior. The use of the plural (Daciae) in the Verona List indicates that there were two Dacias, perhaps even from the time of Aurelian, Dacia Ripensis along the Danube in the north and Dacia (later Dacia Mediterranea) in the south. In the eastern Balkans the Thracian diocese comprised six provinces. North of the Haemus

[6] Barnes, *NE* 212 (Aquitania), 215 (Belgica), 217–18 (Lugdunensis, Narbonensis and Germaniae); Rivet (1988) 97–101 (Narbonensis); Wightman (1985) 202 (Belgica).

[7] Barnes, *NE* 218 (Hispania Tarraconensis).

[8] Barnes, *NE* 222 (Noricum), 223 (Pannoniae), 217 (Dalmatia); Saria (1954) 1673–5 (Praevalis / Praevalitana); Alföldy (1974) 199 (Noricum); Mócsy (1974) 273–4 (Pannonia).

(Stara Planina) the long Danube bank of Moesia Inferior was divided between Moesia Inferior (later Secunda) in the west and Scythia, the Dobrudja region in the east. The four remaining provinces were formed out of the Claudian province of Thracia, Europe – the Gallipoli peninsula and the coast up to the Bosphorus, Haemimontus – the Black Sea coast, Rhodope – the Aegean coast and the mountainous hinterland, and Thracia in the northwest.[9]

The dozen or so existing eastern provinces were all subdivided and then grouped into three dioceses, Asiana, Pontica and Oriens. In the first a much-reduced Asia continued to be governed by a proconsul resident at the ancient royal capital Pergamum. The province of Phrygia et Caria formed out of Asia in the 250s (see above) was now divided into three, Phrygia Prima, Phrygia Secunda and Caria. The provinces of Lydia and Hellespontus were created out of the northern area of Asia but the latter had been reunited with Asia by *c.* 330. The Aegean islands had been established as a separate province (Insulae) in this diocese by 294. Lycia et Pamphylia evidently continued as a united province (the omission of the former name appears to be a simple mistake in the Verona List) until separated in the middle of the fourth century. Pisidia, one of the three provinces formed out of Galatia, was included in the Asiana diocese but the other two, the small core province which retained its original name and Paphlagonia, formed out of northern Galatia and the eastern part of Bithynia, were included in the Pontica diocese. The subdivisions of the great military command of Cappadocia on the upper Euphrates also fell into two dioceses, Pisidia in Asiana, Cappadocia, Armenia Minor and Pontus Polemoniacus in Pontica. To the west of the last-named the area of the Lycus valley formed a separate province, known first as Pontus, later Diospontus and then Helenopontus.[10]

Eight of the earlier provinces were included in the great diocese Oriens, namely Cilicia, Mesopotamia and Osrhoena, the divided Syria Coele and Syria Phoenice, Palaestina, Arabia and Aegyptus. Cilicia was divided into Isauria in the west and Cilicia in the east. Mesopotamia and Osrhoena remained united (the list of the Council of Nicaea names Mesopotamia with its metropolis Edessa, capital of Osrhoena). An area along the Euphrates bank was detached from Syria Coele to form the province Augusta Euphratensis, while Syria Phoenice was divided into the coastal region Phoenice and the inland Augusta Libanensis. The island of Cyprus continued unchanged as a single province. The record in the Verona List of changes made to Palaestina and Arabia appears confused (*Arabia, item Arabia, Augusta Libanensis, Palaestina, Phoenice*, etc.). Combined with other evidence it appears that under Diocletian the southern area of Arabia (Arabia Petraea) was transferred to an enlarged Palaestina, leaving the northern region around Bostra to continue as the province Arabia, the second appearance of that name in the list. The first Arabia in the list is likely to have been the Arabia Nova created out of Palaestina *c.* 314/15.[11]

[9] Barnes, *NE* 216 (Creta), 216–17 (Dacia), 222 (Moesiae), 224 (Thracia); Papazoglu (1988) 90–4 (Epirus Nova and Thessalia); Mócsy (1974) 273–6 (Moesia Superior, Dardania and Dacia); Velkov (1977) 61–5 (Thracia and Dacia).

[10] Mitchell, *Anatolia* II: 158–63 with map (Asia Minor).

[11] Barnes, *NE* 221–22 (Mesopotamia and Osrhoene), 224 (Syria Coele), 223 (Phoenice). An earlier proposition that Arabia Nova had been created out of Aegyptus (Barnes, *NE* 213–15), has been discarded in the light of new papyrological evidence: Barnes, 'Emperors' 548.

No changes are known to have been made to Aegyptus before Diocletian. The Verona List names Libya Superior, Libya Inferior, Thebais, Aegyptus Iovia and Aegyptus Herculia in the diocese Oriens. The first two were divisions of Cyrene, now separated from Creta. Libya Superior, known later as Pentapolis, contained the heartland of Cyrenaica, Inferior the coastal strip between there and the Delta, with metropoleis at Berenice and Paraetonium respectively. The separation of Thebais (upper Nile) had evidently taken place before the end of the century with the rest of Aegyptus being divided between Iovia (western Delta) and Herculia (lower Nile and eastern Delta) by 314/15. The latter may have been renamed Mercuriana by Licinius, following his rupture with Constantine in 321.[12]

The four provinces of Africa were divided into eight, of which seven were grouped in the diocese Africa and the eighth, the isolated Mauretania Tingitana in the far west, being included in the diocese of the Spanish provinces. The Verona List includes a much-reduced Africa Proconsularis continuing under a proconsul at Carthage and in the south Byzacena, which had been established by 305. The name Zeugitana may be an epithet of either of the above or possibly a separate province. If this was the case then the old Africa Proconsularis would have been divided into four separate provinces, although Tripolitania, which was certainly a separate province before 305, does not appear in the Verona List. The Severan province Numidia was still undivided in 303, though it had ceded some territory around Theveste to Proconsularis by 295. In the Verona List the provinces Numidia Cirtensis (around Cirta in the north) and Numidia Militiana represents a division made after 303 but which had been reversed by 314. Mauretania Sitifensis was created out of the eastern part of Mauretania Caesariensis perhaps in 293. In the Verona List the names Mauretania Tabia Insidiana remain a puzzle.[13]

Under Marcus Aurelius the administration of justice in Italy, except in the city of Rome and its region, was assigned to *iuridici*, a title once applied to assistant governors in some larger provinces (Britannia and Hispania Tarraconensis) with specifically civilian responsibilities. In Italy each of the four *iuridici* was responsible for an area of the peninsula. The boundaries of these were altered after Severus and again around the middle of the third century but remained the administrative framework of Italy until Aurelian. Then the peninsula may have been divided into new regions each under the control of a *corrector*, who performed the duties of a provincial governor. Another possibility is that until *c.* 290 there were only two *correctores Italiae*, one for the centre and south (Italia Suburbicaria) and the other for the north (later known as Annonaria). The heading of the Verona List for the diocese Italiciana indicates a total of sixteen provinces but the list contains only eight names. Under Diocletian the regions of Italy were grouped into two dioceses, Italia in the north and Suburbicaria in the south. In the former were Raetia (the former province), the Alpes Cottiae, Venetia et Histria, Aemilia et Liguria, Flaminia et Picenum; in the latter were Tuscia et Umbria, Campania, Apulia et Calabria, Lucania (and Bruttium), Sicilia, Sardinia and Corsica.[14]

[12] Barnes, *NE* 211, and 'Emperors' 549 (Mercuriana).
[13] Barnes, *NE* 212 (Africa), 220–1 (Mauretania), 222 (Numidia).
[14] Barnes, *NE* 218–19 (Italia), 223 (Raetia).

REGION	A.D. 193	A.D. 235	A.D. 284	VL DIOCESE	VL PROVINCE	METROPOLIS	A.D. 337
(i) Britain	Britannia	Brit. Sup.		Britanniae	Britannia I	Corinium	
		Brit. Inf.		Britanniae	Max. Caesariensis	Londinium	
				Britanniae	Britannia II	Eburacum	
				Britanniae	Fl. Caesariensis	Lindum	
(ii) Northwest	Belgica			Galliae	Belgica I	Treveri	
				Galliae	Belgica II	Remi	
	Germania Sup.			Galliae	Sequania	Vesontio	
				Galliae	Germania I	Mogontiacum	
	Germania Inf.			Galliae	Germania II	Col. Agrippinen.	
	Lugdunensis			Galliae	Lugdunensis I	Lugdunum	
				Galliae	Lugdunensis II	Rotomagus	
	Alpes Graiae			Galliae	Alp. Gr. et Poenin.	Octodurum	
	Narbonensis			Viennensis	Viennensis	Vienna	
				Viennensis	Narbonensis I	Nemausus	
				Viennensis	Narbonensis II	Aquae Sextiae	
	Aquitania			Viennensis	Novempopuli	Elusa	
				Viennensis	Aquitanica I	Bituriges	
				Viennensis	Aquitanica II	Burdigala	
	Alpes Maritimae			Viennensis	Alpes Maritimae	Eburodunum	
	Baetica			Hispaniae	Baetica	Corduba	
	Lusitania			Hispaniae	Lusitania	Emerita Augusta	
	Tarraconensis			Hispaniae	Carthaginiensis	Carthago Nova	
				Hispaniae	Tarraconensis	Tarraco	
				Hispaniae	Gallaecia	Bracara Augusta	
	Maur. Tingitana			Hispaniae	Maur. Tingit.	Tingis	
(iii) Danube and Balkans	Noricum			Pannonia	Nor. Ripense	Ovilava	
				Pannonia	Nor. Mediterr.	Virunum	
	Pannonia Sup.			Pannonia	Pannonia Sup.	Savaria	Pann. I
				Pannonia	Savensis	Siscia	
	Pannonia Inf.			Pannonia	Pannonia Inf.	Sirmium	Pann. II
				Pannonia	Valeria	Sopianae	
	Dalmatia			Pannonia	Dalmatia	Salona	
				Moesiae	Praevalitana	Doclea	
	Moesia Superior			Moesiae	M.S. Margensis	Viminacium	
				Moesiae	Dardania	Scupi	

REGION	A.D. 193	A.D. 235	A.D. 284	VL DIOCESE	VL PROVINCE	METROPOLIS	A.D. 337
			Dacia Nova	Moesiae	Dacia	Ratiaria	Dac. Ripens.
				Moesiae		Serdica	Dac. Medit.
	Macedonia			Moesiae	Macedonia	Thessalonica	
				Moesiae	Thessalia	Larissa	
				Moesiae	Epirus Nova	Dyrrhachium	
	Epirus			Moesiae	Epirus Vetus	Nicopolis	
	Achaea			Moesiae	[Achaia]	Corinthus	Achaia
				Asiana	Insulae	Rhodi	
	Creta (et Cyrene)			Moesiae	Creta	Gortyna	
	Moesia Inferior			Thracia	Moesia Inferior	Marcianopolis	Moesia II
				Thracia	Scythia	Tomi	
	Thracia			Thracia	Rhodope	Traianopolis	
				Thracia	Haemimontus	Adrianopolis	
				Thracia	Europa	Heraclea	
	III Daciae		evacuated				
(iv) The East	Asia			Asiana	Asia	Ephesus	
				Asiana	Hellespontus	Cyzicus	
				Asiana	Lydia	Sardis	
				Asiana	Caria	Aphrodisias	
				Asiana	Phrygia I	Laodicea	
				Asiana	Phrygia	Synnada	
	Lycia et Pamphylia			Asiana	Lycia	Myra	
				Asiana	Pamphylia		
				Asiana	Pisidia	Antiochia	
	Bithynia et Pontus		Bithynia	Pontica	Bithynia	Nicomedia	
			Pontus	Pontica	Paphlagonia	Gangra	
	Galatia			Pontica	Galatia	Ancyra	
				Pontica	Diospontus	Amaseia	
	Cappadocia			Pontica	Pont. Polemon.	Neocaesarea	
				Pontica	Cappadocia	Caesarea	
				Pontica	Armenia Minor	Sebasteia	
	Cilicia			Oriens	Isauria	Seleucia	
				Oriens	Cilicia	Tarsus	
	Syria			Oriens	Syria Coele	Antiochia	Syria Coele
				Oriens	Aug. Euphratensis	Hierapolis	
		Osrhoena		Oriens	Osrhoena	Edessa	Mesopotamia

		Mesopotamia	Oriens	Mesopotamia		
	Syria	Phoenice	Oriens	Phoenice	Tyrus	Phoenice
			Oriens	Aug. Libanensis	Emesa	
	Arabia		Oriens	Arabia	Bostra	
	Palaestina		Oriens	Palaestina	Caesarea	Palaestina
			Oriens	Arabia Nova	Pelusium	
	Cyprus		Oriens	Cyprus	Paphos	
(v) Egypt	Aegyptus		Oriens	Aeg. Iovia	Alexandria	
			Oriens	Aeg. Herculia	Leontopolis	
			Oriens	Thebais	Ptolemais	
			Oriens	Libya Inferior	Paraetonium	
	Cyrenaica		Oriens	Libya Superior	Berenice	
	(et Creta)					
(vi) Africa	Afr. Proconsularis		Africa	Procons. Zeugitana	Carthago	
			Africa	Byzacena	Hadrumetum	
			Africa	Tripolitana	Lepcis Magna	
	Numidia		Africa	Num. Cirtensis	Cirta	Numidia
			Africa	Num. Militiana	Lambaesis	
	Maur. Caesariensis		Africa	Maur. Caesariens.	Caesarea	
			Africa	Maur. Tabia (?)	Sitifis?	
(vii) Italy	Raetia		Italia	Raetia	Augusta Vindelicorum	
	Alpes Cottiae		Italia	Alpes Cottiae	Segusio	
			Italia	Venetia–Histria	Aquileia	
			Italia	Flaminia		
			Italia	[Aemilia]		
			Italia	[Liguria]	Mediolanum	
			Italia	Tuscia–Umbria		
			Italia	Picenum		
			Italia	[Campania]		
			Italia	[Samnium]		
			Italia	Apulia–Calabria		
			Italia	Lucania		
			Italia	Valeria		
	Sicilia		Italia	[Sicilia]	Syracusae	
	Sardinia–Corsica		Italia	[Sardinia]	Carales	
			Italia	Corsica	Aleria	

APPENDIX II

IMPERIAL MOVEMENTS, A.D. 193–337[1]

	Gaul/Britain	Germ./Raetia	Rome	Italy	Pann.	Moesia	Thrace	Asia Minor	Syria	Mesopot.	Egypt	Africa
Sept. Sev.												
			193	<193	<193							
			193>	193>	193>	193>	193					
							194>	194>	194			
									195>	195		
									195	<195		
			196	<196	<196	<196	<196	<196	<196			
		197	<197									
		197>	197>						197>	198		
									198	<198		
									199>		199	
											200	
			202	<202	<202	<202	<202	<202	<202		<201	
			203									203
			203									<203
			204									
			205									
			206									
			207									
	208		<208									
	209											
	210											
	211											

[1] Years in bold indicate death.

Caracalla										
	211>		211							
		213	<212							
		213>			213					
					214>	214>	214>	214		
								215>	215>	215
								216		<216
								216>	216	
									217	
Macrinus										
									<217	
								218	<218	
Elagabalus										
								218	<218	
			219	219	219	219	219	<219		
			220							
			221							
			222							
Sev. Alex.										
			222							
			223							
			224							
			225							
			226							
			227							
			228							
			229							
			230							
			231>	231>	231>	231>	231>	231>	231	
									232>	232
									232	<232
			233	<233	<233	<233	<233	<233	<233	
			234							
		234	<234							
		235								

(*cont.*)

	Gaul/Britain	Germ./Raetia	Rome	Italy	Pann.	Moesia	Thrace	Asia Minor	Syria	Mesopot.	Egypt	Africa
Maximinus												
		235										
		236>			236							
					237							
				238	<238							
Gordian III												
			238									
			239									
			240									
			241									
			242>	242>	242>	242>	242>	242>	242			
									243>	243		
										244		
Philip			244					<244	<244	<244		
			245>	245>	245>	245>						
						246						
			<247	<247	<247	<247						
			248									
			249>	**249**								
Decius												
			249	<249								
			250>	250>	250>	250						
						251						
Trebon. Gallus												
			251	<251	<251	<251						
			252									
			253>	**253**								

Valerianus									
		253>	253						
			254>	254>	254>	254>	254>	254>	254
									255
									256
									257
									258
									259> **260**
Gallienus									
			253						
	254		<254						
	255								
	256								
	257								
	258>			258					
	258			<258					
	259								
	260>	260>			260				
	260	<260			<260				
	260	260>			260				
	260	<260			<260				
	261>	261>			261>	261>	261		
	262	<262			<261	<261	<251		
	263>		263						
			264						
			265						
			266						
			267						
			268>	267>	267>	268			
				268	<268	<268			

(*cont.*)

	Gaul/Britain	Germ./Raetia	Rome	Italy	Pann.	Moesia	Thrace	Asia Minor	Syria	Mesopot.	Egypt	Africa
Postumus												
	260											
	261											
	262											
	262											
	263											
	264											
	265											
	266											
	267											
	268											
	269											
Claudius II			268	<268								
			269>	269>	269							
					270							
Quintillus			**270**		<270							
Aurelian		270			<270							
		270>			270							
			270	<270	<270							
			271>	271>	271>	271>	271>	271>	271			
						272	<272	<272	<272			
						272>	272>	272>	273>		273	
	274	<274			<273	<273	<273	<273	<273		<273	
	274>		274									
	274		<274									
	274>	274>			274>							
					275>	275>	**275**					
Tacitus							275>	275				
								276				
Florianus								**276**				

Probus			276	<276	<276	<276	<276	<276		
		<277	<277							
	277	278>			278>	278>	278>	278		
	278>							279		
			280	<281	<280	<280	<280	<280		
			281							
			282>	282>	**282**					
Carus			282	<282	<282					**283**
			283>	283>	283>	283>	283>	283>	283	
Numerianus									283	
							284	<284	<284	
Carinus										
	283	284>			285					
	284>			285	<285					
				285>	285>	**285**				
Diocletian										
					Sirmium			Nicomedia	Antioch	
				285		285		284		
				285	285			286		
							286		286	
							286		287	
		288				289				
					290		290		290	
				290/1	290					
					291	291				
					293		293			
						293				
					293/4	294	294	295		
						296			296/7	297/8

(*cont.*)

	Gaul/Britain	Germ./Raetia	Rome	Italy	Pann.	Moesia	Thrace	Asia Minor	Syria	Mesopot.	Egypt	Africa
									298	299		
									300/1		301	
								301/2	301			
			303	303	303	303		303				
				304		304		304				
								305				
Maximian												
	Trier			Milan						Carthage		
				Aquileia								
				285								
	285			285								
				286								
	286											
	287	288										
	288											
	289			290								
	290											
	291			293								
			293									
	293			295								
		296		296								
												297
	Spain 296											298
			299									299
			303/4	**305**								

Galerius										
						Thessalonica		Antioch		
						Serdica				
										293
										294
								296		295
				297	297	297			297	
									298	
				299/300	300			299	299	
					302					
							303			
					303					
							305			
			307	306/7						
					308					
				308		**311**				
Constantius I										
	Trier									
	293									
	294									
			295							
	295									
	Britain									
	296									
	297									
	300									
	301									
	302									
		303								
	304									
	Britain									
	305/6									
	306									

(*cont.*)

	Gaul/Britain	Germ./Raetia	Rome	Italy	Pann.	Moesia	Thrace	Asia Minor	Syria	Mesopot.	Egypt	Africa
Maximinus												
								Nicomedia	Antioch			
									Caesarea			
								305	306			
									307			
									308	310		
								311	311			
									312			
								313				
Severus												
				Milan								
				305								
				306								
				307								
Licinius												
					Sirmium	Naïssus		Nicomedia				
					308		311					
				313	313							
							313	313	313	313/4		
						314/5						
						316						
							317					
					318		323					
							324					
Constantinus I												
	Trier				Sirmium	Serdica	Serdica	Nicomedia				
	Arles						Thessalonica					
							Constantinopolis					
	Britain											
	306											
	Gaul											
	306/7											
	308											
	309											

Britain								
310								
Gaul								
311								
			312					
		312/3	313					
313								
314								
315			315					
316			316	316		316		
						317		
				317				
				318				
			318					
				318				
				319	319	320		
				320				
						320/1		
				321				
				322		322		
						323		
			323	323	323			
				324		324	324	324
							325	
						326		
			326					
				326		327	327	
							328	
328					328	328		
329				329	329	329		
						330	331	
					331	331		
						332		
						333	334	
					334	334		
						335		
						336		
						337		

APPENDIX III

FRONTIER DEPLOYMENT, A.D. 193–337[1]

The following table sets out Roman military deployment, in geographical sequence according to Severan provinces, and lists modern/ancient name (where known), garrison unit (Severan), *Notitia* Command and individual entry with unit (references are to *Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. O. Seeck (Berlin 1876)). On Severan and earlier units of the *auxilia* listed in the *Notitia*, see Roxan (1976). Dash symbol (–) indicates that no military occupation is presumed, question mark (?) that a presumed occupation has left no record under that heading. Absence of any symbol indicates that no presumption is possible for military occupation or non-occupation.

[1] Comment and advice in compilation of this table were provided by J. C. Mann, Margaret Roxan, Jochen Garbsch, Zsolt Visy, Mihail Zahariade, James Crow, David Kennedy, Alan Bowman and David Mattingly, but none is responsible for errors or misjudgements that remain.

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
I. BRIT. INF. (*TIR* Britannia Septentrionalis (1987))			
1. Outpost forts			
High Rochester/Bremenium	cohort+	–	–
Risingham/Habitancum	cohort+	–	–
Bewcastle/Fanum Cocidi	cohort	–	–
Netherby/Castra Exploratorum	cohort+	–	–
2. Hadrian's wall (E–W)			
Wallsend/Segedunum	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. IV Lingonum (33)
Newcastle/Pons Aelius	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. I Cornoviorum (34)
Benwell/Condercum	ala	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	ala I Asturum (35)
Rudchester/Vindobala	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. I Frisiavonum (36)
Halton Chesters/Onnum	ala	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	ala Sabiniana (37)
Chesters/Cilurum	ala	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	ala II Asturum (38)
Carrawburgh/Brocolitia	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. I Batavorum (39)
Housesteads/Vercovicium	cohort+	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. I Tungrorum (40)
Chesterholm/Vindolanda	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. IV Gallorum (41)
Great Chesters/Aesica	cohort+	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. I Asturum (42)
Carvoran/Magnis	cohort+	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. II Dalmatarum (43)
Birdoswald/Banna	cohort	[dux Brit. (Oc. 40)]	coh. I Aelia Dacorum (44)
Castlesteads/Camboglanna	cohort-	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	[trib. coh. II Tungrorum] (44)
Stanwix/Uxelodunum	ala	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	ala Petriana (45)
Burgh-by-Sands/Aballava	cohort+	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. Maurorum Aurelianorum (47)
Drumburg/Concavata	cohort?	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. II Lingonum (48)
Bowness/Maia	cohort	[dux Brit. (Oc. 40)]	coh. I Hispanorum (49)
3. NW coast			
Beckfoot/Bibra?	cohort		
Maryport/Alauna	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. III Nerviorum

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Burrow Walls/Magis?	–	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. Pacensium (29)
Moresby/Gabrosentum	cohort?	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. II Thracum (50)
Beckermet/(I)tunnocelum?	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. I Aelia Classica (51)
Ravenglass/Glannibanta	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. I Morinorum (52)
Lancaster/L(. . . .)	ala	?	numerus barcariorum
4. Frontier hinterland			
South Shields/Arbeia	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. barcariorum Tigrisiensium (22)
Wearmouth?/Dictum	–	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. Nerviorum Dictensium (23)
Chester-le-Street/Concangis	cohort?	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. vigilum (24)
Ebchester/Vindomora	cohort		
Lanchester/Longovicium	cohort+	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. Longovicianorum (30)
Binchester/Vinovia	ala+		
Piercebridge/Morbium?	–	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	equites catafractarii (21)
Greta Bridge	cohort?		
Bowes/Lavatris	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. exploratorum (25)
Brough u. Stainmore/Verteris	cohort?	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. directorum (26)
Kirkby Thore/Bravoniacum	numerus	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. defensorum (27)
Whitley Castle/Epiacum?	cohort?		
Old Penrith/Voreda	cohort+		
Brougham/Brocavum	cohort?		
Low Burrowbridge/?	cohort?		
Overburrow/Calacum?	cohort?		
Watercrook/Alauna?	cohort?		
Ambleside/Galava	cohort?		
Hardknot/Mediobogdum	cohort?		
Papcastle/Derventio	cuneus		
Old Carlisle/Maglona?	ala?	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. Solensium (28)
5. York region			
York/Eboracum	leg. VI victrix	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	leg. VI (18)
Newton Kyme?/Praesidium	–	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	equites Dalmatae (19)
Bainbridge/Virosidum?	cohort	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	coh. VI Nerviorum (56)
Malton/Derventio	ala	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	num. supervenientium Petueriensium (31)

Ilkley/?	cohort?		
Elslack/Olenacum	?	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	ala I Herculeae (55)
Doncaster/Danum?	?	dux Brit. (Oc. 40)	equites Crispiani (20)

II. BRIT. SUP.
(*TIR* Condate–Glevum–Londinium–Lutetia (1983) and Britannia Septentrionalis (1987))

1. Chester region			
Chester/Deva	leg. xx V.V.		
Lancaster/?	ala		
Ribchester/Bremetenacum	ala+	dux Brit. (oc. 40)	cuneus Sarmatarum (54)
Manchester/Mamucium	cohort+		
Brough on Noe/Navio	cohort?		
Caerhun/Canovium	cohort		
Caernavon/Segontium	cohort		
Caer Gybi, Holyhead/?	–	?	?
2. Caerleon region			
Caerleon/Isca	leg. II Aug.		
Gelligaer/?	cohort		
Leintwardine/Bravonium?	cohort?		
Forden Gaer/?	cohort?		
Caersws/?	cohort?		
Cardiff/?	–		
3. S and E coast (Saxon Shore)			
Brancaster/Branodunum	cohort	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. 28)	eq. Dalmatae Branodunensium (16)
Burgh Castle/Gariannum	–	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. .28)	eq. stablesiani Gariannonensium (17)
Bradwell/Othona	–	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. .28)	num. Fortensium (13)
Reculver/Regulbium	cohort	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. 28)	cohort I Baetasiorum (18)
Richborough/Rutupiae	–	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. 28)	leg. II Aug. (19)
Dover/Portus Dubris	classis Britannica	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. 28)	mil. Tungrecani (14)
Lympne/Portus Lemanis	–	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. 28)	num. Turnacensium (15)
Pevensey/Anderitum	–	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. 28)	num. Abulcorum (20)
Portchester/Portus Adurni?	–	com. lit. Sax. (Oc. 28)	num. exploratorum (21)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
III. BELGICA			
(Johnson, *LRF*, 197–214 (North Sea defences), 136–42 (inland sites))			
1. Coastal defences (Saxon Shore)			
Brittenburg, Katwijk/?	–	?	?
Oudenburg?/Portus Epiatici	–	dux Belgicae II (Oc. 38)	milites Nervii (9)
Marck?/Marciae	–	dux Belgicae II (Oc. 38)	equites Dalmatae (7)
St Valéry?/Quartensis sive Hornensis	–	dux Belgicae II (Oc. 38)	classis Sambrica (Samarica) (8)
Boulogne/Gesoriacum-Bononia	classis Britann.	?	
Cassel/Tarvenna		?	
Amiens/Samarobriva	–	?	
2. Bavai–Köln road			
Famars/Fanum Martis	–	–	(town)
Bavai/Bagacum	–	–	(town)
Givry	–	–	(fort)
Waudrez	–	–	(fort?)
Morlanwelz	–	–	(fort)
Liberchies	–	–	(fort)
Penteville	–	–	(fort)
Taviers	–	–	(fort)
Braives	–	–	(fort)
Tongeren/Atuatuca	–	–	(town)
Maastricht/Traiectum	–	–	(fort)
Heerlen/Coriovallum	–	–	(fort)
Julich/Juliacum	–	(Germ. Inf.)	(fort)
Köln/Agrippina	–	(Germ. Inf.)	(town)
IV. GERM. INF.			
(Bogaers and Rüger (1974); Schönberger (1985); Garbsch (1970) (Upper Rhine); Bechert and Willems (1995))			
1. Left bank of Rhine from North Sea to river Lippe			
Katwijk-Brittenburg/Lugdunum	cohort	–	–

Valkenburg /Praetorium Agrippinae	cohort	–	–
Leiden–Roomburg/Matilo	cohort+	–	–
Alphen/Albaniana	cohort	–	–
Zwammerdam/Nigrum Pullum	cohort?	–	–
Woerden/Laurum	?	–	–
Vleuten-De Meern/?	cohort	–	–
Utrecht/Traiectum	cohort	–	–
Bunnik–Vechten/Fectio	ala	–	–
Wijk, Duurstede/Levefanum	cohort?	–	–
Maurik/Mannaricium	cohort?	–	–
Kesteren/Carvo	?		
Huissen/?	Cohort?	–	–
Rossum–Grinnes/?	?	[GERM. II]?	?
Nijmegen/Noviomagus	–	[GERM. II]	?
Cuijk/Ceuclum (left bank of Maas)	–	[GERM. II]	?
Herwen en Aerdt/Carvium	cohort	–	–
Kleve–Rindern/Harenatium	ala?	–	–
Qualburg/Quadriburgium?	–	[GERM. II]	?
Altkalkar/Burginatium	ala	[GERM. II]	?
Xanten/Vetera	leg. XXX U.V.	[GERM. II]	?
2. Left bank of Rhine from river Lippe to river Ahr			
Moers-Asberg/Asciburgium	–	[GERM. II]	?
Krefeld-Gellep/Gelduba	ala?	[GERM. II]	?
Neuss/Novaesium	ala?	[GERM. II]	?
Dormagen/Durnomagus	ala	–	–
Haus Bürgel/? (now on r. bank)	–	?	?
Köln-Deutz/Divitia (r. bank of Rhine)	–	[GERM. II]	numerus
Köln-Alteburg/?	class. Germ.	–	–
Bonn/Bonna	leg. I Min.	[GERM. II]	?
Remagen/Rigomagus	cohort	[GERM. II]	?

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
V. GERM. SUP.			
1. Upper German *limes* (N–S)			
(a) from Rhine to river Lahn			
Heddesdorf	cohort	–	–
Niederbieber	ala+	–	–
Arzbach	numerus	–	–
Bad Ems	numerus	–	–
(b) from river Lahn to river Aar north of Bad Schwalbach			
Hunzel	numerus	–	–
Holzhausen	cohort	–	–
Kemel	numerus	–	–
(c) from river Aar to Kopperner valley (High Taunus)			
Zugmantel	cohort+	–	–
Heftrich	numerus	–	–
Kleiner Feldberg	numerus expl.	–	–
Saalburg	cohort	–	–
(d) from Kopperner valley to Markobel (E Taunus and Wetterau)			
Kapersburg	numerus	–	–
Friedberg	cohort	–	–
Langenhain	cohort	–	–
Butzbach	ala	–	–
Arnsburg	cohort	–	–
Inheiden	numerus	–	–
Echzell	ala+	–	–
Ober-Florstadt	cohort	–	–
Altenstadt	cohort?	–	–
(e) from Markobel to Gross-Krotzenburg and river Main			
Marköbel	cohort	–	–
Rückingen	cohort	–	–
Groß Krotzenburg	cohort	–	–

(f) from Hainstadt to Miltenberg			
Seligenstadt	cohort	–	–
Stockstadt	cohort	–	–
Niedernberg	cohort	–	–
Obernburg	cohort	–	–
Wörth am Main	numerus	–	–
Trennfurt	numerus	–	–
Miltenberg-Altstadt	cohort	–	–
Miltenberg-Ost	numerus	–	–
(g) from river Main to Lorch			
Walldürn	numerus	–	–
Osterburken	cohort	–	–
Jagsthausen	cohort	–	–
Westernbach	numerus?	–	–
Öhringen	cohort	–	–
Mainhardt	cohort	–	–
Murrhardt	cohort	–	–
Welzheim	ala+	–	–
Lorch	cohort	–	–
2. Left bank of Rhine from Andernach to Strasbourg			
Andernach/Antonacum	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites Acincenses (25)
Koblenz/Confluentes	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites defensores (24)
Boppard/Bodobrica	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites balistarii (23)
Bingen/Bingium	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites Bingenses (22)
Mainz/Moguntiacum	leg. XXII Primigen.	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites armigeri (21)
Mainz-Kastell/? (r. bank of Rhine)			
Wiesbaden/? (r. bank of Rhine)			
Worms/Vangiones (Borbetomagus)	–	dux. Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites (legionis)) secundae Flaviae (20)
Altrip/Alta Ripa	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites Martenses (19)
Speyer/Nemetae	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites Vindices (18)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Germersheim/Vicus Iulius	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites Anderetiani (17)
Rheinzabern/Tabernae	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites Menapii (16)
Seltz/Saletio	–	dux Mogont. (Oc. 41)	milites Pacenses (15)
3. Left bank of Rhine from Strasbourg to Raetian border			
Strasbourg/Argentorate	leg. VIII Aug.	?	?
Ehl/Helvetum	–		
Horburg/Argentovaria	–		
Basel/Basilia	–		
Kaiseraugst/Castrum Rauracense	–		
Zurzach/Tenedo	–		
Burg/Tasgaetium	–		
Windisch/Castrum Vindonissense	–		
Winterthur/Vitudurum	–		
Pfyn/Ad Fines	–		
4. Inland area			
Besançon/Vesontio	–	dux prov. Sequanic. (Oc. 36)	milites Batavienses (5)
VI. RAETIA			
(Schönberger (1985) (*limes* forts); Garbsch (1970) (Rhine–Iller–Danube)			
1. Raetian *limes* from Lorch to Danube			
Schirenhof	cohort	–	–
Böbingen	cohort	–	–
Aalen	ala	–	–
Rainau-Buch	cohort	–	–
Halheim	numerus?	–	–
Ruffenhofen	ala?	–	–
Dambach	cohort	–	–

Gnotzheim	cohort	–	–
Gunzenhausen	numerus?	–	–
Theilenhofen	cohort	–	–
Weißenburg	ala	–	–
Ellingen	numerus	–	–
Oberhochstatt und Burgsalach	?	–	–
Pfünz	cohort	–	–
Böhming	numerus?	–	–
2. Left bank of Danube above end of *limes*			
Faimingen/Phoebiana	?	–	–
Kösching/Germanicum	ala	–	–
Pförring/Celeusum	ala	–	–
3. From frontier of Germania Superior to river Iller			
Konstanz?/Constantia (Confluentes?)	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	numerus barcariorum (32)
Arbon/Arbor Felix	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	coh. Herculea Pannon. (34)
Bregenz/Brigantium (Brecantia)	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	numerus barcariorum (32)
Bettmauer, Isny/Vemania	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	ala II Valeria Sequanorum (33)
Kempten/Cambodunum	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	leg. III Italicae (19)
4. Right bank of Iller and right bank of Danube to river Inn			
Kellmünz/Caelius Mons	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	coh. III Herculea Pannon. (30)
Ulm?/Piniana	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	equites stablesiani iuniores (15)
Günzburg/Guntia	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	milites Ursarienses (20)
Bürgle/Febiana	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	coh. V Valeria Phrygum (29)
Burghöfe/Summuntorium	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	equites stablesiani iuniores (16) leg. III Italica (18)
Burgheim/Parrodunum	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	coh. I Herculea Raetorum (28)
Neuburg/Venaxamodurum	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	coh. VI Valeria Raetorum (27)
Manching/Vallatum	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	ala II Valeria singularis (26)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Eining/Abusina	cohort	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	coh. III Brittorum (25)
Regensburg/Castra Regina	leg. III Italica	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	leg. III Italica (17)
Straubing/Sorviodunum	cohort	?	?
Künzing/Quintana	cohort	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	ala I Flavia Raetorum (23)
Passau/Batava	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	coh. Nova Batavorum (24)
5. Interior of Raetia			
Chur/Curia	–	?	?
Füssen/Foetes	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	leg. III Italica (21)
Goldberg/Rostrum Nemaviae	–	?	?
Augsburg/Augusta Vindelicum	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	equites stablesiani seniores (14)
Zirl/Teriola	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	gens per Raetias deputata (31)
Pfaffenhofen/Pons Aeni	–	dux Raetiae (Oc. 35)	equites stablesiani iuniores (15)
Seebruck/Bedaium	–	?	?
VII. LUGDUNENSIS (Johnson, *LRF* 209)			
1. Coastal defences			
Rouen/Rotomagus	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites Usarienses (21)
Le Havre?/Grannona	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites Grannonenses (23)
Coutances/Constantia	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites (leg.) I Flavia (20)
Avranches/Abrincatis	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites Dalmatae (22)
Aleth/Aletum	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites Martenses (19)
Brest/Osismis	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites Mauri Osisimiaci (17)
Vannes/Benetis	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites Mauri Benetii (16)
Nantes/Namnetum (Mannatias)	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites superventi (18)
Alderney C.I./?	–	?	?
2. Other sites			
Châlons-sur-Saône/Cabilonnum/Lugdunum		mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	classis Ararica (21) coh. Fl. Sapaudica (17)
Paris/Lutetia	–	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	classis Anderetianorum (23)

VIII. NARBONENSIS			
(Rivet (1988) 101–2)			
Vienne/Vienna and *Arles*/Arelate	–	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	classis fluminis Rhodani (14)
Yverdon/Eburodunum (Sequania)	–	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	classis barcariorum (15)
Marseilles/Massilia	–	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	milites muscularii (16)
Grenoble/Cularo?/Calarona	–	mag. peditum praes.(Oc. 42)	coh. I Fl. Sapaudica (17)
IX. AQUITANIA			
(Johnson, *LRF* 209 (Blaye))			
1. Coastal defence			
Blaye?/Blabia	–	dux tractus Armoric. (Oc. 37)	milites Carronenses (15)
2. Other sites			
?/Lapurdum	–	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	trib. coh. Novempopulanae (19)
X. ITALIA			
(Starr (1960) 197–8)			
1. Venetia			
Aquileia	?	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	praef. Classis Venetum (4)
2. Flaminia			
Ravenna	classis	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	milites iuniores Italici (6) classis Ravennatium (7)
3. Liguria			
Comum	–	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	classis Comensis (9)
4. Campania			
Misenum	classis	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	classis Misenatium (11)
XI. HISPANIA TARRACONENSIS (CITERIOR)			
(Johnson, *LRF* 221 and Richardson (1996) 280–1, discounting notions of a fortified line between the river Duero and the Pyrenees)			
León/Legio	leg. VII Gemina	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 32)	leg. VII Gemina (26)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Rosinos de Vidriales/Paetonium	?	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	coh. II Fl. Pacatianae (27)
/Cohors Gallica	?	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	coh. II Gallica (28)
Lugo/Lucus Augusti	?	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	coh. Lucensis (29)
El Retorillo/Iuliobriga	?	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	coh. Celtibera (30)
Iruna/Veleia	?	mag. peditum praes. (Oc. 42)	coh. I Gallica (32)
XII. NORICUM			
(Kandler and Vetters (1986) 61–165 (Austria); Wilkes (1989a))			
1. Downstream along right bank of Danube			
Passau-Innstadt/Boiodurum	cohort	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	cohort (44)
Oberranna/Stanacum	–	?	
Schlögen/Ioviacum	–	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	leg. II Italica mil. Liburnarii (37)
Aschach/?	–	?	
Eferding/Ad Mauros	?	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	equites promoti (31)
Linz/Lentia	ala	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	equites sagittarii (32)
			leg. II Italica (38)
Lorch/Lauriacum	leg. II Italica	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	leg. II Italica (39)
			classis Lauriacensis (43)
Wallsee/Ad Iuvense	cohort	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	leg. I Noricorum mil. Liburnariorum (40)
Mauer an der Url/Locus Felicis	cohort?	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	equites sagittarii (33)
Pöchlarn/Arelape	cohort	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	equites Dalmatae (34)
			classis Arlapensis (42)
Mautern/Faviana	cohort	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	leg. I Noricorum liburnariorum (41)
Traismauer/Augustiana	ala	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	equites Dalmatae (35)
Zwentendorf/Astura	cohort	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	cohort
Tulln/Commagena	ala	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	equites promoti (36)
			classis (Co)maginensis (42)
Zeiselmauer/Cannabiaca?	cohort	dux Pann. I & Nor. Ripens. (Oc. 34)	cohort (46)

XIII. PANNONIA SUPERIOR
(Kandler and Vetters (1986) 166–230 (Austria); Visy (1988) 37–47 (Hungary))

1. Downstream along right bank of Danube

Klosterneuburg/Cannabiaca (Arrianae?)	cohort	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	cohort (29)
Wien/Vindobona	leg. X Gemina	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	leg. X Gemina (25)
Schwechat/Ala Nova	?	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	equites Dalmatae (18)
Fischamend/Aequinoctium	ala?	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	equites Dalmatae (19)
Deutsch-Altenburg/Carnuntum	leg. XIV Gem. Mart. Vic.	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	leg. XIV Gemina mil. Liburnarii (26)
Rusovce/Gerulata	ala	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	equites sagittarii (21)
Magyaróvár/Ad Flexum	cohort	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	cuneus equitum Dalmatarum (14) equites promoti (22)
Lébény/Quadrata	cohort	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	equites Mauri (23)
Győr/Arrabona	ala	dux Pann. I (Oc. 34)	equites promoti (16)

2. Inland places in Savia

Bos. Gradiška/Servitium	–	Dux Pann. II & Saviae (Oc. 32)	classis I Pannonica (55)
Sisak/Siscia	–	Dux Pann. II & Saviae (Oc. 32)	classis Aegatensium (56) coh. III Alpinorum (57)
?/Leonata	–	Dux Pann. II & Saviae (Oc. 32)	coh. I Iovia (58)
?/Caput Basen(t)is	–	Dux Pann. II & Saviae (Oc. 32)	coh. I Thracum c. R. (59)

XIV. PANNONIA INFERIOR
(Visy (1988) 47–130)

1. Downstream along right bank of Danube from river Raba to N of river Drava

Ács-Vaspuszta/Ad Statuas	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	auxilia Ursarensia (47)
Ács-Bunbumkut/Ad Mures	?		
Szőny/Brigetio	leg. I Adiutrix	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	leg. I Adiutrix (51)
Iža/Celamantia (l. bank)	ala		
Almásfüzitő/Odiavum (Azaum)	ala	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (29)
Nyergesújfalu/Crumerum	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites promoti (30)
Tokod/Cardabiaca	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	auxilia insidiatorum (50)
Esztergom/Solva	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (24) equites Mauri (31)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Pilismarót/Castra ad Herculem	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (32) auxilia Herculensia (46)
Visegrád-Sibrik/Pone Navata	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	auxilia Ursarensia (47)
Dunabogdány/Cirpi	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (33) auxilia Fortensia (49) leg. II Adiutrix (56)
Szentendre/Ulcisia Castra (Constantia)	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (34)
Felsőgöd/Contra Constantiam (l. bank)	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	leg. II Adiutrix (55)
Budapest-Rákos-patak/Transaquincum	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	leg. (II Adiutrix)
Budapest/Aquincum	leg. II Adiutrix	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	leg. II Adiutrix (54)
Budapest/Contra Aquincum	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	auxilia vigilum (48)
Budapest-Albertfalva/?	?	–	–
Nagytétény/Campona	ala	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (35)
Százhalombatta/Matrica	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites promoti (36)
Adony/Vetus Salina	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (37)
Dunaújváros/Intercisa	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cuneus equitum Dalmatarum (25) Cuneus equitum Constantianorum, Lussonio nunc Intercisa (26) equites sagittarii (38)
Baracspuszta/Annamatia	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (39)
Dunakömlőd/Lussonium	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (40) leg. II Adiutrix (57)
Tolna/Alta Ripa	ala	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (41)
Öcsény/Alisca	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	leg. II Adiutrix (52) cohort (63)
Várdomb/Ad Statuas	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (42) Auxilia Ursarensia, Pone Navata nunc Ad Statuas (47)
Dunaszekcső/Lugio-Florentia	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Dalmatae (43) leg. II Adiutrix (53)

Dunafalva/Contra Florentiam	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites sagittarii (44)
Kölked/Altinum	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cuneus equitum Fortensium (28) equites sagittarii (44)
Batina-Kiskőszeg/Ad Militare	cohort	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	equites Flavianenses (45)
2. Inland forts of Valeria			
Környe/Vincentia	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cohort (59)
Ságvár/Quadriburgium	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cohort (60)
Alsóhetény/Iovia	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cohort (61)
Donji Miholjac/Mariniana	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cohort (64)
?/Burgus Centenarius	–	dux Valeriae (Oc. 33)	cohort (62)
3. Downstrean along right bank of Danube from N of river Drava to river Sava			
Zmajevac/Ad Novas	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	cuneus equitum Dalmatae (28)
?/Albanum	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	equites Dalmatae (29)
Dalj/Teutoburgium	ala	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	cuneus equitum Dalmatae (23) equites promoti (30) leg. VI Herculea (47)
Sotin/Cornacum	cohort	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (22) equites Dalmatae (31)
Ilok/Cuccium	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	cuneus equitum promotorum (25) equites sagittarii (32)
Banoštor/Malata-Bononia	ala	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	equites Dalmatae (33) leg. V Iovia (44)
Begeč/Castellum Onagrinum (l. bank)	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	auxilia Augustensia (41) legg. V Iovia and VI Herculea (48)
Petrovaradin/Cusum	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	equites Dalmatae (34)
Slankamen/Acumincum	cohort	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	equites sagittarii (35)
?/Secundae	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	cuneus equitum Italicianorum (27)
Surduk/Rittium	ala	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	equites Dalmatae (36)
Novi Banovci/Burgenae	cohort	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	equites Dalmatae (37) leg. V Iovia (46)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Zemun/Taurunum-Marsonia	class. Fl. Pann.	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	equites promoti (38) auxilia ascarii (43)
?/Ad Herculem	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	auxilia Herculensia (39)
?/Castra Herculis	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	auxilia praesidentia (42)
4. Inland places in Pannonia II			
Sremska Mitrovica/Sirmium	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	milites Calcarienses (49) classis I Flavia Augusta (50) ala Sirmensis (54)
?/Graium	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	classis II Flavia (51)
Osijek/Mursa	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	classis Histrica (52)
?/?	–	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32)	coh. III Alpinorum Dardanorum (53)
XV. MOESIA SUPERIOR			
(*TIR* L34 Aquincum–Sarmizegetusa–Sirmium; Petrović (1996); Wilkes (1998). On interior sites, see Dušanić *IMS* I 106 (Stojnik), Petrović *IMS* IV.31 (Niš) and Petrović *IMS* III/2.34 (Ravna))			
1. Downstream along right bank of Danube from river Sava to river Porecka			
Belgrade/Singidunum	leg. IV Flavia	Dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	leg. IV Flavia (30)
Belgrade/Flaviana			equites promoti (13)
Ritopek/Tricornium	cohort	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	equites sagittarii (14) auxiliares Tricornienses (22) auxilium Aureomontanum (28)
Seona/Aureus Mons	?	dux Pann. II (Oc. 32) dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	leg. VI Herculea (45) cuneus equitum Dalmatarum (15)
Orašje/Margum	–	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	auxilium Margense (24) classis Stradensis et Germensis (39)
Kovin/castra Augustoflaviensia-Constantia	(l. bank)	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	milites . . . (33)
Kostolac/Viminacium	leg. VII Gemina	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	cuneus equitum promotorum (16) leg. VII Gemina (31) classis Histrica (38)
Ram/Lederata	cohort	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	cuneus equitum sagittariorum (17) milites Vincentienses (36)

Banatska Palanka (l. bank)/?	?		
Veliko Gradište/Pincum	?	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	cuneus equitum Constantiacorum (12)
Pojejana (l. bank)/	cohort		
Golubac/Cuppae	cohort	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	cuneus equitum Dalmatarum (19) auxilium Cuppense (25) leg. VII Claudia (32)
Cezava/Novae	cohort	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	auxiliares Novenses (23) milites exploratores (34)
Saldum/Gratiana	–	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	auxilium Gratiarenses (26)
Boljetin/Smorna	–	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	milites exploratores (37)
Donji Milanovac/Taliata	cohort	dux Moesiae I (Or. 41)	auxilium Taliatense (27) milites exploratores (35)
2. Downstream along right bank of Danube from river Porecka to Lom			
Porečka r./?	–	?	?
Veliko Golubinje/?	–	?	?
Malo Golubinje/?	–	?	?
?/Transalba [Daciae]	–	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	auxilium Miliarensium (23)
Hajdučka Vodenica/Translucus?	–	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	auxilium Claustrinorum (27)
Orsova/Dierna (l. bank)	–	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	leg. XIII Gemina (37)
Teĕkija/Transdierna	?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	milites exploratores (29)
Sip/Ducis Pratum	–	?	?
Karataš/Diana	?	?	?
Kostol/Pontes-Transdrobeta	cohort	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	leg. XIII Gemina
Turnu Severin/Drobeta (l. bank)	cohort	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equit. Dalmatarum Divitiensium (14) auxilium primorum Daciscorum (24)
Insula Banului/?	–	?	?
Donje Butorkel?	–	?	?
Veliko Vrbica/?	–	?	?
Korbovo/?	–	?	?
Ostrovul Corbului/?	–	?	?

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Rtkovo/Stiliburgu?	–	?	?
Vajuga/?	–	?	?
Milutinovac-Brloga/*Halicaniburgu*?	–	?	?
Velika Kamenica/?	–	?	?
Ljubicevac/?	–	?	?
Grabovica/?	–	?	?
Brza Palanka/Egeta	cohort	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equit. scutariorum (20) leg. XIII Gemina (34) classis Histrica (42)
Usće Slatinske reke/?	–	?	?
Mihailovac/Clevora	–	?	?
Mora Vagei/?	–	?	?
Bordjei/Laccoburgu?	–	?	?
Kusjak/?	–	?	?
Dušanovac/?	–	?	?
Prahovo/Aquae?	?	?	?
Radujevac/Burgo Novo	–	dux Daciae Ripensis (Or. 42)	auxilium II Daciscorum (28) leg. XIII Gemina (36)
Izvoarele/?(l. bank)	?	?	?
Desa/? (l.bank)	–	?	?
Vrâv/Dorticum	?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equit. Dalmatarum Divitensium (14)
?/Crispitia (l. bank)	?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	auxilium Crispitiense (25)
Vidin/Bononia	cohort?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equit. Dalmatarum Fortensium (13)
Archar/Ratiaria	–	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	leg. XIII Gemina (37) classis Ratiarenssis (43)
Lom/Almus	?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equit. stablesianorum (19)

3. Interior sites			
Stojnik/?	cohort	?	?
Niš/Naïssus	cohort	?	?
Ravna/Timacum Minus	cohort		

XVI. TRES DACIAE

(Gudea (1977); Tudor (1968); Cataniciu (1981); Maxfield (1987) 181)

1. SW Dacia			
(a) from Danube across the Banat			
Dupljiaja?/?	?	–	–
Grebenac?/?	?	–	–
Vărădia/Arcidava	cohort	–	–
Vršac/?	cohort+	–	–
Surduc/Centum Putei	cohort	–	–
Berzovia/Berrsobis?	cohort	–	–
Fîrliug/Aizizis?	?	–	–
(b) from Danube at Orsova via Teregova Keys			
Mehadia/Praetorium	cohort	–	–
Teregova/Ad Pannonios	cohort	–	–
Jupa/Tibiscum	cohort+	–	–
Zăvoi/Acmonia?	cohort	–	–
(c) W Transylvania			
Vetel/Micia	cohort+	–	–
Abřud/Alburnus Maior	?	–	–
Bologa/Resculum	cohort+	–	–
Buciumi/?	cohort+	–	–
Românas/Largiana	cohort+	–	–
Romita/Ćertiae	cohort+	–	–
Moigrad-Citera/Porolissum	numerus	–	–
Moigrad-Pomet/Porolissum	cohort+	–	–

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
(d) N Transylvania			
Tihău/?	cohort+	–	–
Časei/Samum	cohort+	–	–
Ilisùa/?	ala	–	–
Livezile/?	?	–	–
Orheiu Bistritei/	cohort+	–	–
(e) E Transylvania			
Brîncovenesti/?	ala	–	–
Calugăreni/?	cohort	–	–
Sărăteni/?	cohort	–	–
Inlačeni/?	cohort+	–	–
Odorheiul Secuiesc/?	cohort+	–	–
Sânpaul	numerus	–	–
Olteni/?	cohort+	–	–
(f) S Transylvania			
Bretcu/Angustia	cohort+	–	–
Borosneu Mare/?	ala	–	–
Comălau/?	cohort	–	–
Risnov/Cumidava	cohort	–	–
Hoghiz/?	ala+	–	–
Cincsor/?	cohort	–	–
Feldioara/?	cohort	–	–
Boita/Caput Stenarum	cohort	–	–
(g) inner Transylvania			
Cigmău/Germisara	numerus	–	–
Gilău/	ala	–	–
Sutoru/Optatiana	ala+	–	–
Gherla/?	ala	–	–
Cristesti/?	ala+	–	–

Sighisoara/?	?	–	–
Orăştioara de Sus/?	numerus+	–	–
Războieni/?	ala+	–	–
(h) central Transylvania			
Alba Julia/Apulum	leg. XIII Gemina	–	–
Turda/Potaissa	leg. V Macedonica	–	–
(i) SE Dacia: from the Danube (Turnu Severin) via Vulcan pass to Transylvania			
Cătunele/?	?	–	–
Bumbesti/?	cohort	–	–
Vârtop/?	*?*	–	–
(j) SE Dacia: Jiu valley			
Mofleni/Pelendava	numerus	–	–
Răcari/?	numerus	–	–
(k) SE Dacia: from Danube along river Olt via Red Tower pass to Transylvania			
Islaz Verdea/?	?	–	–
Islaz-Racovita	?	–	–
Tia Mare?/?	?	–	–
Slăveni/?	ala+	–	–
Resca/Romula	cohort+	–	–
Enoşesti/Acidava	cohort	–	–
Momoţesti/Rusidava	?	–	–
Ionestii Govorii/Pons Aluti	cohort	–	–
Stolniceni/Buridava	cohort+	–	–
Sambotin/Castra Traiana	cohort	–	–
Rădăcinesti/?	numerus	–	–
Jiblea?/?	?	–	–
Bivolari/Arutela	numerus	–	–
Perisani?/?	?	–	–
Titeşti/?	?	–	–
Copăcen/Praetorium (1)	numerus	–	–
Racovita/Praetorium (2)	?	–	–
Râul Vadului?/?	?	–	–
Caineni?/Pons Vetus?	?	–	–

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
(I) SE Dacia: *limes transalutanus*			
Flămănda/?	?	–	–
Putineiu/?	?	–	–
Băneasa (1)/?	?	–	–
Băneasa (2)/?	?	–	–
Rosiorii de Vede/?	?	–	–
Grésia/?	?	–	–
Ghioca/?	?	–	–
Urluieni (1)/?	?	–	–
Urluieni (2)/?	?	–	–
Fâlfani-Izbăşeşti/?	?	–	–
Săpata de Jos (1)/?	?	–	–
Săpata de Jos (2)/?	?	–	–
Purcăreni/?	?	–	–
Cîmpulung Muscel(1)/?	?	–	–
Cîmpulung Muscel/?	?	–	–
Voineşti/?	?	–	–
Rucăr/?	?	–	–
XVII. MOESIA INFERIOR			
(Zahariade and Gudea (1997); Aricescu (1980); Scorpan (1980); Maxfield (1987) 187–92; Vetters (1950))			
1. Downstream along right bank of Danube to river Vit			
Labet/Pomodiana	–	?	?
Dolni Cibar/Cebrus	?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (15)
?/Regianum	–	?	?
Kozloduí/Camistrum	–	?	?
Harlets/Augustae	ala	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equitum Dalmatarum (17)

Leskovets/Variana	?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equitum Dalmatarum (18) leg. V Macedonica (31)
?/Pedoniana	–	?	?
Vadin/Valeriana	–	?	?
Gigen/Oescus	–	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	leg. V Macedonica (33) auxilium Mar(t)ensium (26)
Celei/Sucidava (l. bank)	–	dux Daciae ripensis (Oc. 42)	leg. V Macedonica (39)
Guljantsi/Utum	?	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	cuneus equitum Constantinianorum (21)
2. From river Vit downstream along right bank of Danube to Oltina			
Musalievo/Asamus	?	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	milites praeventores (19)
Cherkovitsai/Securisca	–	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (11)
Belene/Dimum	ala	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	cuneus equitum Solensium (12)
Gorno Gradishte/?	?	?	?
Svishtov/Novae	leg. I Italica	dux Moesiae II (Or. 30)	leg. I Italica (30)
Krivina/Iatrus	?	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (13)
Batin/Sacidava	?	?	?
Pirgovo/Trimammium	?	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	milites Constantini (20)
?/Mediolana	–	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	milites Dacisci (21)
Ruse/Sexaginta Prista	cohort	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	cuneus equitum armigerorum (14) leg. I Italica (32)
Marren/Tegra	?	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	cuneus equitum II armigerorum (15)
Ryahovo/Appiara	ala	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (16) milites tertiae nauclarii (22)
Toutrakan/Transmarisca	cohort	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	milites Novenses (23) leg. XI Claudia (35) naves amnicae et milites (36)
?/Constantiana Daphne (l. bank)	–	magister militum per Thracias (Or. 8)	Constantini Dafnenses (45)
		magister militum per Thracias (Or. 8)	ballistarii Dafnenses (46)
Malak Preslavets/Candidiana	?	dux Moesiae II (Oc. 40)	milites primi Moesiaci (24)
Vetren/Tegulicium	?	dux Moesiae II (Oc. 40)	milites Moesiaci (25)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Silistra/Durostorum	leg. XI Claudia	dux Moesiae II (Oc. 40)	leg. XI Claudia (34) milites quarti Constantini (26)
Gura Canliei/Cimbriana?	?	dux Moesiae II (Oc. 40)	milites Cimbriani (27)
Izvoarele/Sucidava	?	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	cuneus equitum stablesianorum (17)
Oltina/Altinum	?	dux Moesiae II (Or. 40)	milites nauclarii Altinenses (28)
3. Downstream along right bank of Danube from Rasova to delta (Scythia)			
Muzaiti/Sacidava	?	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (12)
Raşova/Flaviana	–	dux Scythiae (Oc. 39)	milites nauclarii (20)
Hinog/Axiopolis	cohort classis	dux Scythiae (Oc. 39)	milites superventores (21) leg. II Herculia (30)
Topalu/Capidava	cohort	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	cuneus equitum Solensium (13)
Harşova/Carsium	ala	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	milites Scythici (22)
Gârliciu/Cius	cohort	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	cuneus equitum stablesianorum (14)
Frecătei/Beroe	?	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	cuneus equitum stablesianorum (15)
Turcoaia/Troesmis	–	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	milites secundi Constantini (23) leg. II Herculia (29)
Măcin/Arrubium	ala	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	cuneus equitum catafractariorum (16)
Barbosi (l. bank)	cohort	?	?
Garvăn/Dinogetia	cohort	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	milites Scythici (24)
Orlovka/Aliobrix (l. bank)	classis Flavia Moesica	?	?
Isacea/Noviodunum	classis Flavia Moesica	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	milites primi Constantiani (25) leg. I Iovia (32)
Tulcea/Aegyssus	cohort	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	cuneus equitum armigerorum (17) leg. I Iovia (34)
Mahmudia/Salsovia	cohort	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	milites quinti Constantiani (26)
Murighiol/Salmorus/Halmyris	classis	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	cuneus equitum Arcadum (18)
Dunarŭtul de Jos/Gratiana	–	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	milites primi Gratianenses (27)
?/Plateypegiae	–	dux Scythiae (Or. 39)	leg. I Iovia, leg. II Herculia, musculi Scythici et classis (35)

4. Inland sites			
Cheljustitsa/?	cohort	–	–
Mihajlovgrad/Montana	cohort	–	–
Lomec/Sostra (Siosta)	cohort	dux Daciae ripensis (Or. 42)	coh. II redux (40) coh. nova Sostica . . . (41)
Razgrad/Abritus	–	?	?
Adamklissi/Tropaeum Traiani	–	?	?
5. Crimea			
Sevastopol/Chersonesus	classis vex. leg.	–	–
Aj-Tor/Charax	cohort vex. leg.	–	–
XVIII. THRACIA			
(Velkov (1977) 67, 126–7, 131)			
?/Ulucitra	–	prov. Rhodopa (Oc. 40)	coh. IV Gallorum
Mihilci?/Subradice-Viamata	–	prov. Thracia (Oc. 40)	coh. I Aureliana (48)
?/Drasdea	–	prov. Thracia (Oc. 40)	coh. III Valeria B(r)acar(augustanorum) (49)
XIX. CAPPADOCIA			
(Mitford (1980); French (1983); van Berchem, *L'Armée* (dux Armeniae); Crow and Bryer (1997) (Black Sea))			
1. Black Sea coast			
Pitiunt/Pityous	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala I felix Theodosiana (32)
Sukhumi/Sebastopolis	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. I Claudia equitata (36)
/Chobus	?		
/Phasis	?		
Gonia/Absarus	?		
Eski Pazar/Caene Parembole	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. I Lepidiana (35)
Arakli/Hyssou Limen	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. Apuleia civium Romanorum (34)
Trabzon/Trapezus	classis Pontica	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	leg. I Pontica (16)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
2. From the coast to Satala			
/Ad Vicensimum			
Hortokop/Gizenenica	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala I Iovia felix (31)
/Zigana	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. II Valentiana (37)
/Sedisca			
Komani Tepe/Domana	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	equites sagittarii (12)
Satala/Satala	leg. XV Apollinaris	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	leg. XV Apollinaris (13)
?/Auaxa	–	dux Armeniae(Or. 38)	ala Theodosiana (18)
?/Silvanis	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala felix Theodosiana (19)
?/Aeliana	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala II Gallorum (24)
?/Castellum Tablariensis	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala (25)
Öğütlü/Sisila (Ziziola)	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. miliaria Germanorum (30)
?/Valentia	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. I Theodosiana (33)
?/Mochora	–	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	cohort (38)
3. Satala to Pingan/Zimara on the Euphrates			
Mecidiya/Suisa	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala I Ulpia Dacorum (23)
Gümüştarlası Kavakyolu/Arauracos	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. miliaria Bosporiana (29)
(or via Lycus valley)			
/Haza			
/Ad Dracones			
Şenbağlar/Olotoedariza (Aladaleariza)	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala Rizena (17)
/Carsaga	cohort?		
/Sinervas			
/Analiba	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. IV Raetorum (28)
Boyalik–Bağlıca/Zimara			

4. Zimara–Eski Malatya (Melitene)			
Çit Harabe/Sabus	ala?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	equites sagittarii (11)
Pagnik Öreni/Dascusa	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala Auriana (22)
nr Morhaman/Chiaca	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	ala I Augusta colonorum (21)
Eski Malatya/Melitene	leg. XII Fulminata	dux Armeniae (Oc. 38)	leg. XII Fulminata (14)
5. Melitene–Samsat/Samosata (short route via Lacotina)			
Yaygın/Miasena			
Derik Kale/Lacotina			
Örenli/Perre			
(along Euphrates)			
Meydancık/Corne			
nr Agiyabus/Metita	?	dux Armeniae (Or. 38)	coh. III Ulpia miliaria Petraeorum (27)
nr Koldere/Claudia	?		
Killik/Barsalium	?		
Üçkaya/Heba			
Tille/Charmodara	?		
Samsat/Samosata			
XX. CILICIA			
(Van Berchem, *L'Armée* 22)			
?/?	–	comes per Isauriam (Or. 29)	leg. II Isaura
?/?	–	comes per Isauriam (Or. 29)	leg. III Isaura
XXI SYRIA COELE			
(Van Berchem, *L'Armée* 26–7)			
1. Downstream in right bank of Euphrates			
Samsat/Samosata	leg. XVI Flavia	?	?
/Arulis	?	?	?
Kargamış/Zeugma (Seleucia)	leg. IV Scythica	?	?
/Europus	?	?	?

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
/Caeciliana	?	?	?
/Betthamaris	?	?	?
/Serrhae	?	?	?
/Apammaris	?	?	?
/Eragiza	?	?	?
/Barbalissus (25)	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites Dalmatae Illyriciani
/Thapsacus	?	?	?
/Sepe	?	?	?
Sourija/Sura	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	leg. XVI Flavia firma (28)
/Circesium	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	leg. IV Parthica (24)
/Dura Europus	cohort	–	–
2. From Sourija/Sura across the desert to Palmyra			
?/Resapha	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites promoti indigenae (27)
?/Cholle	?	?	?
Tayibeh/Oreza	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	leg. IV Scythica (23)
[?/?	?	?	?]
?/Aracha (Anatha)	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites sagittarii indigenae (20/11)
3. Interior sites			
Isriye/Seriane	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites scutarii Illyriciani (16)
Agerbat/Occariba	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites promoti Illyriciani (17)
?/Matthana	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites sagittarii indigenae (18)
/Adada	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites promoti indigenae (19)
Qdeym/Acadama	?	dux Syriae (or. 33)	equites sagittarii (21)
/Acauatha	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	equites sagittarii (22)
/Ammuda	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	ala I nova Herculia (30)
/Salutaria	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	ala I Iuthungorum (31)

Hlela/Helela	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	coh. I Gothorum (32)
/Claudiana	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	coh. I Ulpia Dacorum (33)
/Marmantarum	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	coh. III Valeria (34)
/Amattha	?	dux Syriae (Or. 33)	coh. I victorum (35)

XXII. OSRHOENE

(van Berchem, *L'Armée* 27–30)			
/Ganaba	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	equites Dalmatae Illyriciani (15)
Raqqa/Callinicum	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	equites promoti Illyriciani (16)
/Dabana	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	equites Mauri Illyriciani (17)
/Banasam	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	equites promoti indigenae (18)
/Sina Iudaeorum	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	equites promoti indigenae (19)
Tell Adjadje/Oraba (Haraba)	?	dux Oshroenae (Or. 35)	equites sagittarii indigenae (20)
/Thillizamana	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	equites sagittarii indigenae (21)
/Mediana	?	dux Osrhoenae (Oc. 35)	equ. sagittarii indigenae Medianenses (22)
/Rasin (?=Resaina)	?	dux Osrhoenae (Oc. 35)	equ. [sagittarii indigenae] I Osrhoeni (23)
/Circesium	?	dux Osrhoenae (Oc. 35)	leg. IV Parthica (24)
Tell Fdeyn/[Apatna]	?	dux Osrhoenae (Oc. 35)	[leg. III Parthica] (25)
/Thillicana	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	ala VII Valeria praelectorum (27)
/Tovia contra Bintha	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	ala I Victoriae (28)
/Thillafica	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	ala II Paflagonum (29)
/Resaia (?=Resaina)	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	ala I Parthorum (30)
between *Tell Touneymir*/Thannurin and *Tell Adjadje*/Horoba	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	ala I nova Diocletiana (31)
/Thillaama	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	coh. I Gaetulorum (32)
/Maratha	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	coh. I Eufratensis (33)
/Duodecim	?	dux Osrhoenae (Or. 35)	coh. I salutaria (34)

XXIII. MESOPOTAMIA

(van Berchem, *L'Armée* 27–30)			
Diyabekir/Amida	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	equites scutarii Illyriciani (19) equites ducatores Illyriciani (21)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Ras el-Ain/Resaina	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	equites promoti Illyriciani (20)
Veransehir/Constantina	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	equites felices Honoriani Illyriciani (22) [equites promoti indigenae] (24) leg. I Parthica Nisibena (29)
/Apadna	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	[equites promoti indigenae] (23)
/Mefana-Cartha (Charcha)	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	equ. sagittarii indigenae Arabanenses (25) ala II nova Aegyptiorum (32)
/Assara	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	equites scutarii indigenae Pafenses (26)
Tell Bisme/Thilbisme	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	equ. sagittarii indigenae Thibithenses (27)
Tell Touneyir/Thannuri	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	equites sagittarii indigenae (28)
Nusaybin/Nisibis	leg. II Parthica	–	–
Sinjar/Singara	leg. III Parthica	–	–
Hasankef/Cefae	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	leg. II Parthica
/Ripaltha	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	ala VIII Flavia Francorum (33)
/Cainum	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	ala XV Flavia Carduenorum (34)
/Bathallaha	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	coh. Quingenaria Arabum (35)
N of Mardin/Maiocariri	?	dux Mesopotamiae (Or. 36)	coh. XIV Valeria Zabdenorum (36)
XXIV. SYRIA PHOENICE (van Berchem, *L'Armée* 15–17; Bauzou (1993))			
1. Interior			
Rafna/Raphanaea?	leg. III Gallica	–	–
2. Palmyra–Damascus outer line (*strata Diocletiana*)			
Tadmor/Palmyra	cohort	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	leg. I Illyricorum (30)
/Mons Iovis	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	ala I Damascena (33)
Khan el-Hallabat/Veriaraca	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	ala nova Diocletiana (34)
/Cunna	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	ala I Francorum (35)
Khan el-Qattar/[Car]neia	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	ala I Alamannorum (36)

El-Basiri/Abira[ca]	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites sagittarii indigenae (24)
/Verofabula	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	ala I Saxonum (37)
/Rene	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	ala I Foenicum (38)
/Arefa	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	ala II Salutis (39)
/Veranoca	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	coh. III Hercul(i)a (40)
Khan Aneybe/Onevatha(Anabatha)	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	coh. V pacata Alamannorum (41)
Khan el-Manqara/Valle Alba	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	coh. I Iulia lectorum (42)
Khan at-Trab/Valle Diocletiana	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	coh. II Aegyptiorum (43)
/Thana	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	coh. I Orientalis (44)
3. Inner sites W of Jebel Rawaq			
Ghounthour/Otthara	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites Mauri Illyriciani (18)
Hanwarin/Euhari	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites scutarii Illyriciani (19)
/Saltatha	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites promoti indigenae (20)
/Latavi	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites Dalmatae Illyriciani (21)
/Auatha	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites promoti indigenae (22)
Qaryatein/Nazala	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites promoti indigenae (23)
Nebk?/Casama	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites sagittarii indigenae (25)
Nr. Gebel Qalamon/Calamona	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites sagittarii indigenae (26)
Bir el Fourqlous/Betproclis	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites Saraceni indigenae (27)
/Thelsee	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites Saraceni (28)
/Adatha	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	equites sagittarii indigenae (29)
Dmeyr/Danaba	?	dux Foenicis (Or. 32)	leg. III Galli(c)a (31)

XXV. PALAESTINA

(van Berchem, *L'Armée* 24–5; Avi-Yonah (1976); Roll (1989) (Diocletianic organization); *TIR* H/I Iudaea–Palaestina (1994))

1. Interior sites			
Jerusalem	leg. X Fretensis	–	–
Caparcotna	leg. VI Ferrata	–	–
2. Southern plain			
Nirim, Kh. Ma'in/Menois	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	equites promoti Illyriciani (19)
H. Beer Shema/Birsama	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	equites Mauri Illyriciani (21)
			equites Thamudeni Illyriciani (22)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
/Sabaia	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	equites promoti indigenae (23)
Beersheba/Berosaba	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	equites Dalmatae Illyriciani (18)
Tell el Milh/Malatha	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. I Flavia (45)
el Karmil/Cherrmela	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	equites scutarii Illyriciani (20)
3. From Dead Sea along Wadi Araba to Aqaba			
Ghor es Safi/Zoar	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	equites sagittarii indigenae (26)
Ghor el Feife/Praesidium	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	ala II felix Valentiana (35)
nr. et Taiyibe/Ophrah Afro)	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. XII Valeria (38)
Qasr et Tlah/Toloha	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	ala Constantiana (34)
Ain el Husb/Tamara	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. IV Palaestinorum (46)
Wadi el Khusaiya/Hasta	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	ala I miliaria (36)
Kh. Er Ruwat/Robotha	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	[equites sagittarii indigenae] (27)
Kh. Es Samra/Asuada	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	ala I miliaria Sebastena (32)
Qasr Mahalle/Mohahile	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. I Flavia (45)
Bir Madhkur/Calamona	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. equitata (43)
es Sabre/Sobera-Veterocariae	?	dux Palaestinae (Oc. 34)	equ. I fel. [sagit. indigenae] Palaestini (28)
Gharandal/Ariedela	?	dux Palaestinae (Oc. 34)	coh. II Galatarum (44)
Yotvata/Ad Dianam	?	?	?
Ruweihi/ *Jurf-ed-Darawish*/ *Da'janiya*/ *Udruh*/Adrou *Ail*/ *Hamman*/Admatha *Mutrab*/			(leg. VI Ferrata?)
es Sadaqa/Zodocatha	?	dux Palaestinae (Oc. 34)	equites promoti indigenae (24)
Qirana/ *Humeina*/Hauara	?	dux Palaestinae (Oc. 34)	equites sagittarii indigenae (25)

Quweira/			
El Kitara in Wadi Itm/Praesidium	?	dux Palaestinae (Oc. 34)	coh. IV Phrygum (41)
?/Iota	?	dux Palaestinae (Oc. 34)	ala Idiota (37)
?/Cartha	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. X Carthaginensis (39)
?/Tarba	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. I argentaria (40)
?/Iehibo	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. II Gratiana (42)
/between Hierichis and Aila	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	coh. I Salutaria (48)
Aqaba/Aila	?	dux Palaestinae (Or. 34)	leg. X Fretensis (30)

XXVI. ARABIA

(van Berchem, *L'Armée* 24–6; Parker (1986); Roll (1989))

1. N sector and Azraq basin

Masmiye/Dia Fenis (Phaene)	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites sagittarii indigenae (23)
Namara/Nemara		?	?
Bosra/Bostra	leg. III Cyrenaica	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	leg. III Cyrenaica (21)
Qasr el Baghiq nr Salkhad/Tricomias	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites promoti Illyriciani (15)
Umm el-Quottein/			
Imtan/Motha	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites scutarii Illyriciani (14)
Deir el Kahfl/Speluncae	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites promoti indigenae (18)
/Basiena	?		
Aseikhin/			
Azraq/	?		
Uweinid/			
Junha/Gomoha	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	ala VI Hispanorum (26)
Ba'iq/			
Thuqhrat el-Jubb/Thainatha	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	ala I Valentiana (29)
Kh. Khaw/Gadda	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites sagittarii indigenae (20)
Hallabat/			
Hadid/Hatita	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	coh. I miliaria Thracum (31)
Amman/Philadelphia	?		

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
2. S sector			
El Lubban/Libona	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	ala II Constantiana (27)
Na'afa/Mefa	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites promoti indigenae (19)
El Qastal nr Zuweisa/Ziza	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites Dalmatae Illyriciani (16)
Zona/			
Rama/			
Thuraiya/			
Fityan/			
Kh. Iskandar, Wadi el Wali/Valtha	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	coh. VIII Voluntaria (33)
Qasr Sapa'ia/Asabaia	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	coh. I Thracum (32)
Qasr Bshir/Castra Praetorii Mobeni	?		
Kh. Qasr el Buleida, Wadi Zafri/Naar Safari	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	ala II miliarensis (28)
Rabbath Moab/Areopolis	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	equites Mauri Illyriciani (17)
Lejjun/Betthoron	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	leg. IV Martia (22)
Wadi Hafir/Vade Afaris	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	coh. III felix Arabum (34)
Wadi Mujib/apud Arnona fl.	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	coh. III Alpinorum (35)
Quweira/			
/Auatha	?	dux Arabiae (Or. 37)	ala IX miliaria (25)

XXVII. AEGYPTUS

(van Berchem, *L'Armée* 59–71 and (1972) (Upper Egypt); Price (1976) (Lower Egypt); Bowman (1978) (Upper Egypt); Duncan-Jones, *Structure* 105–17 (army unit strength A.D. 298–300)

1. Delta: Memphis–Alexandria and coast W of Delta			
Memphis	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	leg. V Macedonica (14)
Terenuthis	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala III Arabum (15)
Andropolis	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	leg. III Diocletiana (18)

Nithine	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. I sagittariorum (40)
Alexandria (Parembole)	leg. II Traiana	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	leg. II Traiana (19)
Nee (Alexandria-Neapolis?)	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala VIII Vandilorum (25)
Tacasira (Taposiris?)	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala II Aegyptiorum (39)
2. Delta: Babylona–Rhinocolura			
Babylona	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	leg. XIII Gemina (15)
Scenae Veteranorum	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	equites Saraceni Thamudeni (17)
Castra (Vicus) Iudaeorum	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. I Epireorum (42)
Tohu (Thvov)	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. I Aug. Pannoniorum (41)
Thaubastum	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala II Ulpia Afrorum (38)
Sile (Sellae)	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala I Aegyptiorum (27)
Pelusium	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	equites stablesiani (16)
Scenae extra Gerasa (Gerra)	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala I Herculia (29)
Rhinocolura	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala veterana Gallorum (28)
3. Lower Egypt: W of the Nile			
Dionysias	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala V Praelectorum (34)
Narmuthis	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. IV Numidarum (46)
Oasis Minor	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala II Armeniorum (22)
4. Lower Egypt: right bank of Nile upstream			
Scenae Mandrorum	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala VII Sarmatarum (26)
Aphroditopolis	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. IV Iuthungorum (43)
Thimonepsi	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala I Tingitana (31)
Alyi	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. II Ituraeorum (44)
Hipponon	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala Apriana (32)
Muson	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. II Thracum (45)
5. Lower Egypt or Delta unlocated			
Sosteos	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	ala II Assyriorum (33)
Cefro	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. III Galatarum (35)
Busiris	?	comes limitis Aegypti (Or. 28)	coh. II Asturum (36)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
6. Upper Egypt: W of Nile			
Hibis-Oasis Maior	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala I Abasgorum (41)
Trimithis-Oasis Minor	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala I Quadorum (56)
7. Upper Egypt: left bank of Nile upstream			
Hermupolis Magna	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	cuneus equitum scutariorum (24)
Cusae	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	leg. II Flavia Constantia Thebaeorum (32)
Lycopolis (Lico)	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	cuneus equ. Maurorum scutariorum (23)
Abydos	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala VIII . . . (53)
Diospolis Parva	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	equites sagittarii indigenae (27) coh. VII Francorum (67)
Tentyra	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	equites sagittarii indigenae (25)
Pampane	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala I Iovia catafractariorum (52)
Hermonthis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	leg. II Valentiniana (39)
Asphynis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	equites felices Honoriani (40)
Latopolis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	equites sagittarii indigenae (28)
Apollonopolis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	leg. II Traiana (34)
Elephantine	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. I felix Theodosiana (64)
8. Upper Egypt: right bank of Nile upstream			
Speos Artemidos	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala II Hispanorum (43)
Nitnu (Antinoopolis)	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. IX Tzanorum (62)
Pescla	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala Germanorum (44)
Theraco (Hieracon)	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. I Lusitanorum (58)
Isiu	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala IV Britonum (45)
Muthis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. scutata civium Romanorum (59)
Antaeopolis	?		
Silili (Selino)	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. I Apamenorum (60)
Psinaulu nr Panopolis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala II Herculia dromedariorum (54)
Thmou	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala I Hiberorum (46)
Chenoboskion	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala Neptunia (47)

Maximianopolis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala III dromedariorum (48)
Coptos	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	equites sagittarii indigenae (26)
Diocletianopolis	?		
Phoenicon (E of Nile)	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala VIII Palmyrenorum (49)
Thebae	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	leg. III Diocletiana (38)
Contra Latopolis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala VII Herculia voluntaria (50)
Contra Apollonopolis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala Francorum (51)
Ombos (Praesentia)	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	leg. III Diocletiana (31)
Syene	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	milites miliarenses (35) coh. V Suentium (65)
Philae	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	leg. I Maximiana (37)
Castra Lapidariorum	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. VI saginarum (66)
9. Upper Egypt: unlocated sites			
Prectis	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	ala I Valeria dromedariorum (57)
Burgus Severus	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. IX Alamannorum (63)
Peamou	?	dux Thebaidos (Or. 31)	coh. XI Chamavorum (61)

XXVIII. AFRICA

(van Berchem, *L'Armée* 37–49; Daniels (1987); Mattingly (1995) 90–115 and 186–201 (Tripolitania); Fentress (1979) 83–123 (Numidia); Cherry (1998) 24–74 (Numidia))

1. Tripolitania: desert oases (E013W)			
Bu Ngem/Gholaia	vex. leg. III Aug.	–	–
Gheriat/?	vex. leg. III Aug.	–	–
Ghadames/Cidamus	vex. leg. III Aug.	–	–
2. Tripolitania: coastal hinterland (E–W)			
/Macomades	–	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Macomadensis (23)
Mizda/?	?		
Zintan/Thenteos	coh.	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Tentheitanus (19)
Mad . . .	–	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Madensis (22)
Remada/Tillibari	coh.	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31) comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Tillibarensis (21) (coh.) II Afrorum?(33)
Ras el-Ain/Talalati	coh.	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31) Comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Talatensis (18) limes Tablatensis (31)

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
Bir Rhezene/Bezereos	vex. leg. III Aug.	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Bizeritanus (20)
Nefzaoua/Thamalla		comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Tamallensis (21)
3. Tripolitania: coastal hinterland (unlocated)			
?		dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Tintiberitani (24)
?		dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Bubensis (25)
?		dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Mamucensis (26)
?		dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Balensis (27)
?		dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Varensis (28)
?		dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	limes Sarcitanus (31)
4. Tripolitania: coastal bases			
Lepcis Magna	–	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	milites Fortenses (29)
Sebkha Tauorga?/Mada	–	dux prov. Tripolitaniae (Oc. 31)	milites munifices (30)
5. Proconsularis S frontier			
/Gabes			
/Aquae Tacaptianae	?		
Gafsa/Capsa	?		
/Turris Tamallini			
/AdTurres			
/Thiges			
/Speculum			
/Aquae			
/Nepte	?	comes Africae (Oc. 22)	limes Montensis in castris Neptitanis (22)
/Ad Maiores			
?	?	comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Buzensis (23)
6. Numidia: N of Aures mts			
/Ad Maiores			
Terebaza/Turris Ubaza			
Ain Zoui/Vazaivi			
/Mascula			
/Lambaesis	leg. III Augusta		

7. Numidia: S of Aures and Saharan Atlas (E–W)			
/Ad Maiores			
Mdila/			
Taddert/Ad Medias			
Djendel/			
Bades/Badias	?	comes Africae (Oc. 22)	limes Badensis (36)
Kikovina/			
Drah Squid/			
Bouradа/			
/Gemellae	?	comes Africae (Oc. 22)	limes Gemellensis (24)
Es Senam/			
Bir Djefeir/			
Tobna/Thubunae	?	comes Africae (Oc. 22)	limes Tubuniensis (25)
Doucen/			
Oued Djellal/			
/Ausum			
Bou Mellal/			
El Gahra/			
Ain Rich/			
Messad/Castellum Dimmidi			
Tadmit/			
Laghouat/			
8. Numidia: Gemellae to Lambaesis			
Menaa/			
Biskra/Vescera			
/Mesarfelta			
Oumach/			
/Burgus Speculatorius			
Seba Mgata/			
/Calceus Herculis			
/Lambaesis			

(*cont.*)

Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
9. Numidia: Mesarfelta to Tobna/Thubunae			
Henchir Sellaouine/			
/Aquae Herculis			
Guerrira/			
'Castellum de la Daya'/			
Tobna/Thubunae			
10. Numidia: from Lambaesis W to Zenina			
Tobna/Thubunae			
Zebaret/			
/Aqua Viva			
Djebel Mechaieb/			
Zireg/			
Ain Mekrenza/			
Bou Saada/			
Medjerdel/			
Djelfa/			
Korirein/			
Ain El Hammam/			
Charef/			
Zenina/			
11. Kabylie mts: coast and hinterland			
/Bida	?	comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Bidenses (35)
		dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Videnses (13)
/Tucca	?	comes Africae(Oc. 25)	limes Tuggensis (34)
/Saldae	cohort?		
/Tubusuctu	?	comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Tubusubditanus (27)
/Auzia	cohort		

XXIX. MAURETANIA CAESARIENSIS

1. Mauretania Caesariensis: Lambaesis–Setif/Sitifis–Siga (N route)

/Lambaesis			
/Diana			
/Zarai			
El Bahira/			
Oued Boutouane/			
/Thamallula	?	comes Africae (Oc. 22)	limes Thamallomensis (28)
Setif/Sitifis	cohort		
/Auzia	?	dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Audiensis (17)
/Rapidum	cohort		
/Thanaramusa Castra	cohort		
/Caputcilani	?	comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Caputcellensis (32)
		dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Caputcellensis (18)
Sufasar/	cohort		
/Oppidum Novum	ala		
/Tigava Castra			
/Castellum Tingitanum			
/Gadaum Castra			
/Mina			
/Castra Nova			
/Tassaccura	cohort		
/Regiae			
Ain Temouchent/Albulae	cohort		
Siga			
?	?	dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Inferior (14)
?	?	dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Fortensis (15)
?	?	dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Muticitanus (16)
?	?	dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Augustensis (19)

(*cont.*)

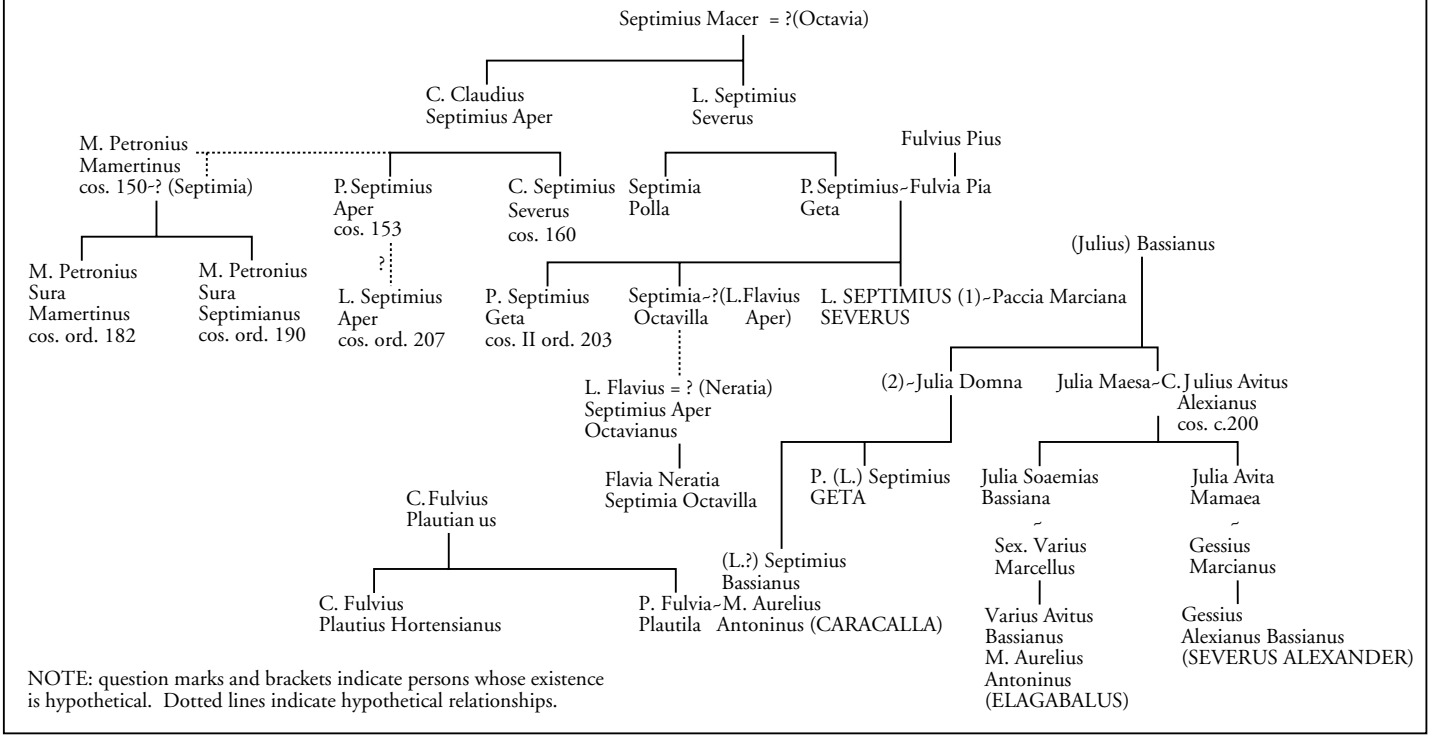
Modern/ancient name	unit (Severan)	ND command	unit (ND)
2. S line from Cellas to Numerus Syrorum			
/Cellas			
/Macri			
/Zabi	?	comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Zabensis (26)
/Aras	?		
/Tatilti (branch to N)	cohort		
Ain Grimidil			
Ain Toutal			
*Boghar*l			
Boughezoul (branch to S)			
/Hibernae Alae Sebastenae	ala		
Ain Toukrial			
/Columnata	cohort	comes Africae (Oc. 25)	limes Columnatensis (30)
		dux Mauretaniae (Oc. 30)	limes Columnatensis (12)
*Tiaret*l			
*Aioun Sbiba*l			
/Cohors Breucorum	cohort		
/Ala Miliaria	ala		
/Lucu	cohort		
/Kaputtasaccura	ala		
/Altava	cohort		
/Pomaria	cohort		
/Numerus Syrorum	numerus		

XXX. MAURETANIA TINGITANA

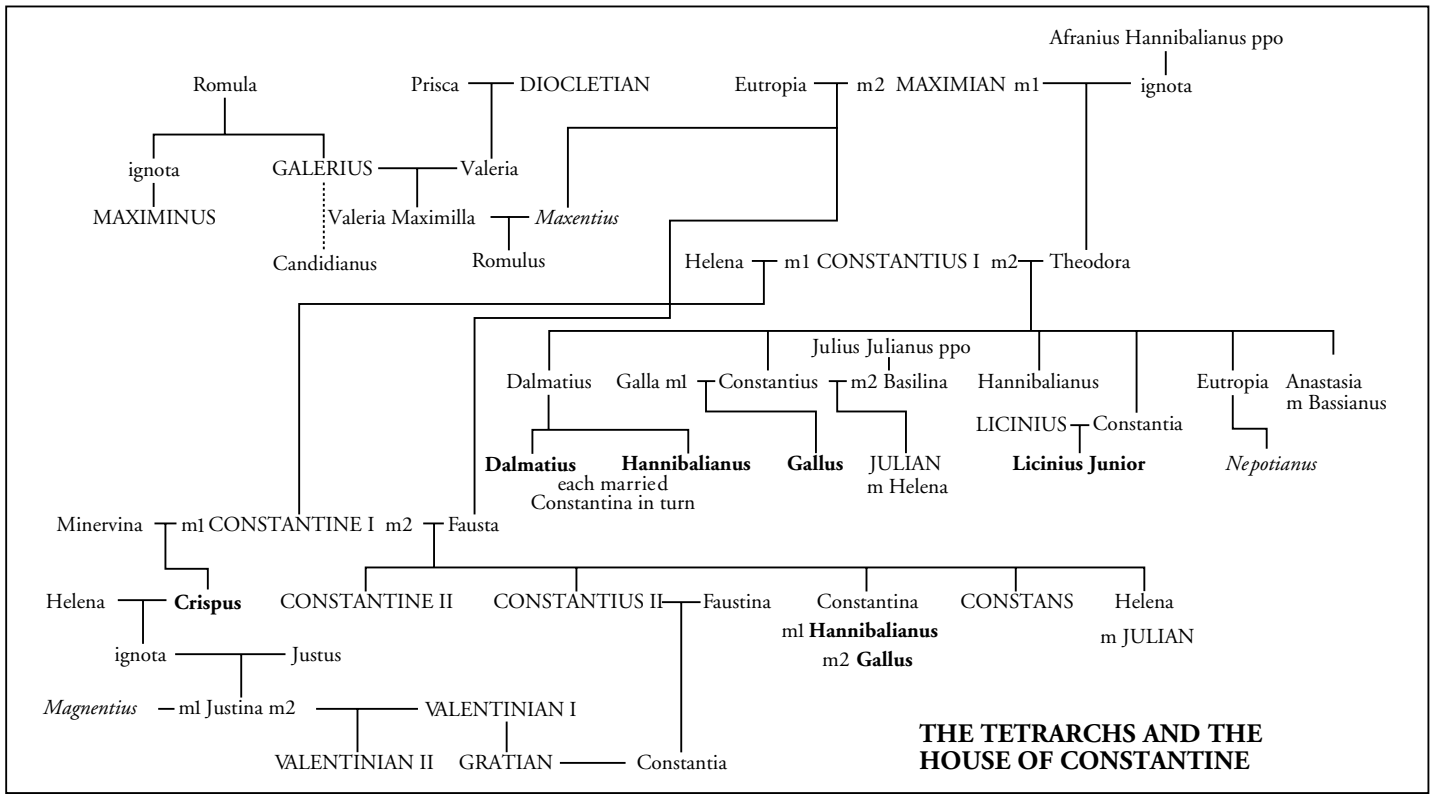
1. N coast E–W			
/Mellila	?		
/Tamuda	?	comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)	ala Herculea (13)
/Ceuta	?		
El Beniam/Duga?	?	comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)	coh. II Hispanorum (14)
2. W coast N–S	**?**		
/Ad Mercurios	?		
/Tabernae	?	comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)	coh. III Asturum (19)
/Lixus (Ad Lucos)	?	comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)	coh. I Herculea (15)
/Frigidae	?	comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)	coh. Friglensis (20)
/Banasa (Castra Bariensia?)	?	comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)	coh. I Ituraeorum (16)
/Thamusida	?		
Rabat/Sala	?	[comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)]	[coh . . .] (17)
/Exploratio ad Mercurios	?		
?/Pacatiana	–	comes Tingitaniae (Oc. 28)	coh. Pacatiensis (18)
3. Inland and Volubilis area			
/Ad Novas			
Kasr el Kebir/			
Souk el Arba du Gharb/			
/Aquae Dacicae			
Ain Schkor/	?		
/Tocolosida	?		

compiled by BRIAN CAMPBELL *and* SIMON CORCORAN

THE FAMILY OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS



NOTE: question marks and brackets indicate persons whose existence is hypothetical. Dotted lines indicate hypothetical relationships.



1. NOTES ON TETRARCHIC AND CONSTANTINIAN FAMILY TREE

Rulers who attained the rank of Augustus are in CAPITALS.
Those only Caesar (plus Hannibalianus as king) are in **bold**.
Usurpers never recognized are in *italic*.
Some marriages have been omitted (e.g. the earlier marriages of Constantius II).

Some relationships are uncertain, and as given here represent the views adopted by Barnes in *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*. The alternative views are fully discussed there, but a summary of differences are as follows:

(1) Theodora is here given as Maximian's daughter by an unknown first wife (perhaps the daughter of Afranius Hannibalianus). But some sources describe her as his step-daughter, which has been taken to indicate that she was issue of an earlier marriage between Eutropia and Afranius Hannibalianus (Barnes, *NE* 33–4).
(2) If Galerius only married Valeria at the time of his elevation to Caesar (and Valeria may in any case have been sterile), Valeria Maximilla can hardly be their daughter, so should be the daughter of a previous unknown marriage (Barnes, *NE* 38).
(3) Maximinus' unnamed wife and children have been omitted. T. D. Barnes, 'The wife of Maximinus', *CPh* 94 (1999) 459–60 suggests that Maximinus was not just nephew of Galerius, but that his wife was a cousin.
(4) It has been supposed in the past that Constantine II was illegitimate (Barnes, *NE* 45 n. 72).
(5) It is presumed that both Helena and Constantius I, and Constantine and Minervina were married, but some sources suggest rather concubinage (Barnes, *NE* 36, 42–3; cf. Leadbetter (1998)).
(6) Justina, wife of Magnentius, and later Valentinian I, and mother of Valentinian II, is known to have been related to the Constantinian dynasty. One proposal is that she could be the grand-daughter of Crispus, through his daughter (b. 322). This remains speculative (Barnes, *NE* 44).
(7) In a recent article, J. Vanderspoel ('Correspondence and correspondents of Julius Julianus', *Byzantion* 69 (1999) 396–478) has explored the relationship of Julius Julianus, praetorian prefect of Licinius, to the imperial families; among suggestions are that Julianus was the brother of Maximian's second wife Eutropia, that the first wife of Maximian was the sister, not daughter of Afranius Hannibalianus; and that the same Hannibalianus was the father or ancestor variously of Julianus' wife, of Eusebius of Nicomedia, and of the usurper Procopius. Other

possibilities have also recently been treated by F. Chausson ('Un soeur de Constantin: Anastasia', in J.-M. Carrié and R. Lizzi Testa (eds.), *Humana Sapit: Études d'Antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini* (Bibliothèque de l'Antiquité Tardive 3). Turnhout, 2002, 131–55). None of the rather speculative ideas or suggestions examined or proposed by either author is represented in the stemma given here.

CHRONOLOGY

Emperors	The West	The East	Culture, Religion, Society
192 Death of Commodus (31 December). Pertinax proclaimed emperor			
193 Murder of Pertinax (28 March). Julianus declared emperor, but put to death on 1 June. Accession of Septimius Severus	193 Severus declares D. Clodius Albinus, governor of Britain, Caesar	193 C. Pescennius Niger proclaimed emperor by the Syrian legions	
		194 Niger is defeated on the plain of Issus (April). Severus crosses the Euphrates (*c.* September)	
	195 Albinus declared emperor in Britain. He sets up his capital in Lyon		
	197 Severus defeats Albinus near Lyon (19 February). Death of Albinus. Severus returns to Rome (June)	197–202 Severus campaigns in the east	197 Tertullian's *Apologeticum*
198 Caracalla (Caesar 196) proclaimed Augustus		198 Capture of Ctesiphon 199–201 Severus in Egypt	before 198 Papinian's *Quaestiones*
	202 Severus returns to Rome from the east and celebrates his *decennalia* 203 Consulship of C. Fulvius Plautianus and P. Septimius Geta. The lawyer Papinian is praetorian prefect 203–4 Severus in Africa 204 Secular games at Rome 205 Consulship of Caracalla and Geta. Murder of Plautianus		202 Enforcement of regulations against Christians 203 Dedication of the arch of Septimius at Rome. Origen succeeds Clement as head of the Catechetical School. The *Passio* of Perpetua and Felicitas after 204 Papinian's *Responsa* 205 Birth of Plotinus

206 First consulship of Cassius Dio
206–7 Bulla Felix active in Italy
208 Severus leaves Rome for Britain

208 Ardashir becomes king of Persia
208–213 Parthian succession disputed between Vologaeses V and Artabanus V. Artabanus is eventually confirmed as king of Parthia

209 Geta (Caesar 198) proclaimed Augustus
211 Death of Severus in York (4 February). Succeeded by Caracalla and Geta. Following the murder of Geta, Caracalla becomes sole emperor (26 December)

211 Murder of Papinian, possibly on the same day as Geta

212 Caracalla issues the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, universalizing Roman citizenship

213 Caracalla campaigns successfully against the Alamanni

214–17 Caracalla in the east, accompanied by his mother. He invades Parthia in 215, spends the winter of 215–16 at Antioch, then advances to the eastern borders of Adiabene
215 Massacre at Alexandria

215 Issue of *Antoninianus* silver coinage

217 Asassination of Caracalla near Carrhae (8 April). Macrinus becomes emperor, but is defeated in battle by supporters of Elagabalus and put to death (8 June 218)
217 Macrinus begins a campaign against the Parthians

(*cont.*)

Emperors	The West	The East	Culture, Religion, Society
218 Elagabalus proclaimed emperor at Raphaneae (16 May)		218 Macrinus agrees a dishonourable peace with Artabanus V (summer) 218–19 Elagabalus winters at Nicomedia	
	219 Elagabalus arrives in Rome (late summer) 220 Consulship of Elagabalus and Comazon		after 219 Cassius Dio completes his *History*
221 Elagabalus adopts his cousin, Alexianus, as Caesar, under the name of Marcus Aurelius Alexander (26 June)			
222 Elagabalus and his mother are murdered (13 March). His cousin succeeds him, taking the name of Severus Alexander	222 The lawyer Ulpian is *praefectus annonae*, and subsequently praetorian prefect		
	223 Murder of Ulpian		
		224 Artabanus V defeated and killed in battle by Ardashir	224 Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* *c*. 225 Death of Tertullian *c*. 225–30 The Ludovisi battle-sarcophagus
		226 Ardashir crowned king of kings of Iran	
	229 Second consulship of Cassius Dio		
		230 Persians under Ardashir invade Mesopotamia. Nisibis besieged	
	231 Severus Alexander departs Rome for the east (spring)		
		232 Severus Alexander campaigns unsuccessfully against Ardashir	232 Origen is exiled from Alexandria, and moves to Caesarea *c*. 232 Birth of Porphyry

234 Maximinus Thrax proclaimed emperor by Pannonian soldiers

235 Death of Severus Alexander and his mother, Julia Mamaea, near Mainz, after a mutiny (18/19 March). Maximinus Thrax confirmed as emperor by the senate

235 Maximinus campaigns successfully against the Alamanni

235–8 The Persians overrun Mesopotamia

236 Maximinus declares his son, Maximus, Caesar and deifies his own wife

236–7 Campaigns against the Sarmatians and Dacians

236 Capture of Nisibis and Carrhae

238 Gordian I and his son, Gordian II, declared emperors in Africa. Their claim is recognized by the senate, but they are defeated and killed near Carthage by the legate of Numidia. The senate elects Pupienus and Balbinus emperors (late April/early May). Upon their murder by the praetorians, Gordian III is proclaimed emperor (August)

238 Maximinus besieges Aquileia. He is murdered, along with his son (early June). The Goths and Dacian Carpi attack across the Danube

238–41 M. Tullius Menophilus governor of Moesia Inferior. He negotiates successfully with the Goths and Carpi (240)

240 Rebellion at Carthage under Sabinianus crushed

c. 240–5 The Achilles sarcophagus

241 Timesitheus appointed praetorian prefect

241 Shapur I succeeds his father Ardashir on the Persian throne. He launches an offensive upon Mesopotamia

242 A campaign against the Persians is inaugurated, under Timesitheus and Gordian (spring). Gordian winters in Antioch

242 Mani begins preaching his new religion

(*cont.*)

Emperors	The West	The East	Culture, Religion, Society
		243 Roman successes against the Persians. Timesitheus falls ill and dies	
244 Philip the Arabian acknowledged as emperor (early March)	244–6 and 248–53 Goths, Carpi and their allies invade Moesia and the Balkans	244 Shapur I defeats Romans. Gordian III dies, possibly of wounds. His successor, Philip the Arabian, makes peace with the Persians and departs for Rome	
247 Philip, the emperor's son (Caesar 244) is declared Augustus (August)			247–8 Dionysius bishop of Alexandria
	248 Millenary celebrations at Rome (21 April). Decius pacifies Moesia and Pannonia		248 Origen's *Contra Celsum*. Cyprian becomes bishop of Carthage
249 Trajanus Decius is declared emperor by his troops (June)	249 Philip is killed in battle with Decius near Verona (September)	249 Usurpation of Jotapian in Syria and/or Cappadocia	late 249 Persecution of Christians
	250 Etruscus campaigns against the Goths in Illyricum	250 Attempted usurpation of Titus Julius Priscus	*c*. 250 Birth of Iamblichus
	250 or 251 Usurpation of Valens at Rome		
251 Decius names his two sons, Herennius Etruscus and Hostilianus (Caesars 250) Augusti (May). Hostilianus proclaimed emperor with Trebonianus Gallus (May/June). Hostilianus dies soon afterwards. Gallus' son, Volusianus, proclaimed Augustus	251 Defeat and death of Decius and Herennius Etruscus on the Danube at the hands of the Goths under Cniva (May)		mid-third century: sporadic recurrence of plague throughout the empire
	252 Goths and others invade the Danubian provinces	252 Tiridates III is deposed by the Persians in Armenia. Under Shapur, they then attack Mesopotamia	*c*. 254 Death of Origen

253 Aemilianus is proclaimed emperor on the Danube, but is murdered some four months later by his troops near Spoletium. In the meantime, Valerian is proclaimed emperor by the Rhine legions. The senate recognize his claim, and make his son, Gallienus, Augustus

253 First Gothic sea-borne expedition to Asia Minor. Shapur invades Syria, capturing Doura and Antioch. Usurpation of Uranius Antoninus, who repulses the Persians

254 Marcommani in Pannonia. They raid Ravenna. Alamanni in Raetia and Gaul. Gallienus marches against them

254 Shapur captures Nisibis. Goths in Thrace. Valerian departs for the east, liberates Antioch and recaptures Doura. Usurpation of Uranius Antoninus ends

255 The Borani take Pityus and Trapezus. Valerian reaches Antioch. Second Gothic sea-borne expedition to Asia Minor

256 Gallienus in Cologne. He establishes a mint

257 Renewed persecution of Christians. Cyprian of Carthage exiled to Curubis

258 Death of Valerian II on campaign in Illyricum. The usurpation of Ingenuus in Moesia and Pannonia is crushed by Gallienus

258 Odenathus of Palmyra receives consular honours

258 Martyrdoms of Cyprian and Sixtus II, bishop of Rome

259 Alamanni invade Illyricum and Gaul, and Iuthungi invade Italy

259 Dionysius I, bishop of Rome

(*cont.*)

Emperors	The West	The East	Culture, Religion, Society
260 Macrianus and Quietus declared emperors	260 The Alamanni are repulsed by Gallienus, who then opens a mint at Milan. Simplicinius Genialis, governor of Raetia, is victorious over the Iuthungi. Usurpations of Postumus in Gaul, and of Regalianus on the Danube 260–7 Gallienus campaigning in Illyricum, with only brief returns to Rome	260 Valerian is defeated at Edessa by Shapur and captured. The Persians make further inroads into the eastern provinces	260 Gallienus ends persecution of the Christians (The 'Little Peace')
261 Macrianus killed in battle against Aureolus in Illyricum. Quietus executed at Emesa by Odenathus (November)		261 Odenathus of Palmyra recognised as *dux* and *corrector totius Orientis*. Usurpation of Valens in Macedonia. He is later killed by his own troops. Usurpation of Mussius Aemilianus, prefect of Egypt, ended the following year	
	262 Gallienus in Rome (briefly) to celebrate his *decennalia* (summer)	262 Odenathus successful against the Persians. He attempts to capture Ctesiphon. Goths in Asia Minor	262 Plague reaches Italy and Africa. Dedication of the arch of Gallienus at Rome
	264 Postumus celebrates his *quinquennalia* in Gaul (July?)		
	265 Gallienus campaigns unsuccessfully against Postumus		265 or 266 Gallienus is initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries at Athens
		266 Odenathus makes a second attempt upon Ctesiphon. Goths make another maritime raid on Asia Minor	
		266 or 267 Arrest and execution of Odenathus. His wife, Zenobia, secures power in the name of their infant son, Vaballathus	

267 *Quindecennalia* of Gallienus

267 Gallienus victorious in battle at Naïssus. Aureolus throws in his lot with Postumus, and is attacked at Milan by Gallienus

267 Gothic invasion of Greece, the Balkans and the Aegean. Sack of Athens

268 Murder of Gallienus at the siege of Milan (September). He is succeeded by Claudius II, who puts down the revolt of Aureolus

268 Goths attack Macedonia

268 Paul of Samosata is declared a heretic by a synod at Antioch

268 Alamanni invade northern Italy, but are defeated by Claudius II

269 Claudius is victorious over the Goths at Naïssus, and receives the title *Gothicus Maximus*. Postumus celebrates his *decennalia*, but is assassinated shortly afterwards (May or June). He is succeeded first by Marius, then by Victorinus

269 Zenobia extends her kingdom

270 Claudius II dies at Sirmium, a victim of the plague (January). The senate choose his brother, Quintillus, as emperor, but he reigns only 77 days. Aurelian declares himself in Sirmium

270 Palmyrene troops enter Alexandria. Zenobia annexes Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor

270 Death of Plotinus

271 Victorinus takes Autun. Aurelian campaigns against the Iuthungi in Raetia and Noricum, the Vandals and Sarmatians in Pannonia. New incursions into Italy by the Alamanni and Iuthungi. Aurelian's victories at Fano and Ticinum deliver Italy. Assassination of Victorinus at Cologne. Tetricus is declared emperor in Gaul. Evacuation of Dacia and creation of a new province, Dacia Ripensis

271 Vaballathus, the son of Zenobia, is declared Augustus

271 Construction of a new defensive wall around Rome begun

(*cont.*)

Emperors	The West	The East	Culture, Religion, Society
	272 or 273 Tetricus elevates his son Tetricus	272 Aurelian moves against the Palmyrenes. He reconquers Asia Minor and Egypt. He is victorious in Syria, at Daphne and Emessa. Zenobia is captured. Death of Shapur I, who is succeeded by Hormizd I 273 Revolt of Palmyra is ruthlessly suppressed. Hormizd I dies, and is succeeded by Vahran I	
	274 Aurelian campaigns in Gaul. Tetricus submits. Aurelian celebrates a triumph at Rome		274 Inauguration of Aurelian's temple of the Sun God and creation of a priesthood to administer it. Coinage reform
275 Murder of Aurelian (late September/early October). After a brief interregnum, Tacitus is declared emperor by the senate, with the support of the army (late November/early December)	275 Alamanni invade Gaul		
276 Tacitus is murdered and replaced by Florianus, who is recognized by the senate (June/July). Simultaneously, the eastern legions declare Probus emperor. Shortly afterwards, Florianus is assassinated by his troops in Tarsus (August)		276 Probus campaigns against the Goths in Anatolia, then winters in Sirmium. Death of Vahran I, succeeded by Vahran II	
	277–8 Probus recovers Gaul 278 Battles against Vandals and Burgundians in Raetia		

279 Suppression of Isaurian rebellion in Asia Minor. Siege of Cremna. Campaign against the Blemmyes in Egypt

280 Usurpation of Bonosus and Proculus

280 Frankish piracy in the Mediterranean, including a raid on Syracuse

281 Probus celebrates a triumph in Rome, and winters there

281 Usurpation of Saturninus. He is murdered by his own soldiers at Apamea

282 Murder of Probus near Sirmium (September–October). The soldiers acclaim Carus emperor

282 Carus campaigns against the Sarmatians and the Quadi

283 Death of Carus near Ctesiphon (July/August). He is succeeded by Carinus in the west and Numerian in the east (Caesars 282)

283 Carinus campaigns against the Germans in Gaul

283 Carus and Numerian take the offensive against Vahran II in Mesopotamia. Capture of Ctesiphon and Seleucis on the Tigris. Numerian winters in Syria

283 The *Cynegetica* of Nemesianus

284 Assassination of Numerian in Thrace at the instigation of his praetorian prefect, Aper (early November). He is succeeded by Diocles (20 November), who executes Aper and takes the name of Diocletian

285 Battle of the Margus between Diocletian and Carinus (April or May). Carinus is defeated, and subsequently killed by his own troops

285 Maximian defeats the Bagaudae under Amandus and Aelianus in Gaul (late summer), then repels a German invasion of Gaul (autumn). Diocletian campaigns against the Sarmatians

(*cont.*)

Emperors	The West	The East	Culture, Religion, Society
286 Maximian (Caesar 285) declared Augustus (1 March or 1 April)	286 Carausius declares himself Augustus in Britain (autumn)	286 Diocletian winters at Nicomedia, then summers in Palestine 287 Diocletian makes an agreement with Vahran II in Syria, and restores Tiridates III as ruler of Armenia	
	288 or 289 Conference between Diocletian and Maximian, possibly on the frontier of Raetia 289 Diocletian campaigns against the Sarmatians. Maximian defeated by Carausius		
	Dec. 290 or Jan. 291 Conference in Milan between Diocletian and Maximian	290 Diocletian campaigns against the Saraceni	
293 Constantius Chlorus and Galerius appointed Caesars in the west and east respectively (1 March). The first tetrarchy	293 Constantius captures Boulogne from Carausius. Carausius is killed by his minister Allectus, who continues to hold Britain	293 Death of Vahran II. Succeeded first by Vahran III, and then Narses I 293 or 294 Galerius suppresses a revolt in Upper Egypt	293 Introduction of diocesan organization *c*. 294 Coinage reform (or before 293) 295 Edict on Marriages (1 May)
	296 Constantius recovers Britain from Allectus. Diocletian defeats the Quadi on the Danube, and campaigns against the Carpi (summer/autumn)	296 Narses invades Armenia	
	297 Maximian combats a rebellion in Africa	297 Narses defeats Galerius near Carrhae (spring). Revolt in Egypt under L. Domitius Domitianus and Achilleus	*c*. 297 Purge of Christians in the army

298 Galerius captures Ctesiphon. Diocletian suppresses the revolt in Egypt. He besieges and captures Alexandria

299 Peace treaty with Persia

301 Currency reform (before September). Diocletian's Prices Edict (December)

302 Death of Narses, succeeded by Hormizd II

302 Rescript against the Manichaeans

303 Diocletian and Maximian celebrate their *vicennalia* at Rome (20 November). Galerius campaigns against the Carpi on the Danube

303 Great Persecution of the Christians begins (23 February)

304 Death of Pope Marcellinus

305 Abdication of Diocletian and Maximian (1 May). Constantius and Galerius succeed them, and appoint Severus and Maximin Daia Caesars. The second tetrarchy

306 Death of Constantius at York (25 July). Constantine proclaimed emperor of the west by Constantius' soldiers

306 Maxentius acclaimed as princeps by the praetorians, and enlists the support of his father, Maximian

307 Constantine marries Fausta. He is recognized as Augustus by Maximian. Death of Severus

307 Maxentius and Maximian ally with Constantine. Galerius invades Italy, but subsequently withdraws to Pannonia (autumn). Severus marches on Rome. He is forced to retreat by Maxentius and Maximian, and abdicates in Ravenna (spring)

307 First issue of the *solidus*

308 Conference at Carnuntum (11 November). Maximian is forced to retire a second time, and Licinius is invested as Augustus

308 Domitius Alexander rebels against Maxentius in Africa, but is suppressed the following year

309 Death of Hormizd II

309 Maximin's edict concerning the rebuilding of temples in Palestine

(*cont.*)

Emperors	The West	The East	Culture, Religion, Society
310 Death of Maximian after a revolt in Gaul. Maximin declared Augustus by his troops			310 Pamphilus executed
			c. 310 Lactantius becomes tutor to Crispus
311 Death of Galerius			311 Galerius' Edict of Tolerance (30 April). Persecution resumed by Maximin, and Peter of Alexandria martyred (November). Miltiades bishop of Rome
311 or 312 Death of Diocletian			
	312 Constantine is victorious over Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge (28 October)		312 Maximin's rescript expelling Christians from the cities
313 Marriage of Licinius to Constantia, Constantine's sister (February). Maximin commits suicide at Tarsus (*c.* July)		313 Licinius defeats Maximin near Adrianople (30 April)	313 Edict of freedom of religious belief issued jointly by Licinius and Constantine ('Edict of Milan'). Council in Rome condemns Donatists
	314 Constantine campaigns in Germany (autumn)		314 Council of Arles finds against Donatists. Verona List compiled. Introduction of the *chrysargyron*
	315 Constantine celebrates his *decennalia* at Rome		315 Arch of Constantine
	316 Battle of Cibalae between Constantine and Licinius (8 October), followed by reconciliation		
317 Crispus, younger Constantine and younger Licinius declared Caesars (1 March)			

321 Constantine abrogates responsibility for the Donatist controversy

324 Constantine elevates Helena and Fausta to the rank of Augusta. Constantius declared Caesar

324 Constantine defeats Licinius at the battle of Chrysopolis (18 September). Licinius is banished to Salonica. Foundation of the city of Constantinople (8 November)

325 Constantine celebrates his *vicennalia* at Nicomedia.

325 Council of Nicaea

326 Deaths of Crispus, Fausta and the younger Licinius

326 Constantine's *vicennalia* celebrated in Rome

326 Holy pilgrimage of Helena

c. 327 Death of Helena

330 Dedication of the city of Constantinople (11 May)

332 Constantine campaigns against the Goths

333 Constans declared Caesar (25 December)

334 Constantine campaigns against the Sarmatians

335 Dalmatius declared Caesar

335 Dedication of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Council of Tyre. First exile of Athanasius

336 Constantine celebrates his *tricennalia* in Constantinople (25 July)

336 Council of Constantinople. Exile of Marcellus of Ancyra

337 Death of Constantine (22 May)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATIONS

PAPYROLOGICAL ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of papyrological publications which are not included in the following list may be found in J. F. Oates *et al., Checklist of Editions of Greek Papyri and Ostraka*, 4th edn. Atlanta, 1992, or the web edition: John F. Oates, Roger S. Bagnall, Sarah J. Clackson, Alexandra A. O'Brien, Joshua D. Sosin, Terry G. Wilfong, and Klaas A. Worp, *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>, Month, 200#.

AARC	*Atti dell'Academia Romanistica Costantiniana*
AAntHung	*Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*
AArchHung	*Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*
ABSA	*Annual of the British School at Athens*
AC	*L'Antiquité Classique*
ADAJ	*Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*
AE	*L'Année épigraphique*
AJPh	*American Journal of Philology*
Annales (ESC)	*Annales (Économies, sociétés, civilisation)*
Annales (HSS)	*Annales (Histoire, Sciences sociales)*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
AntAfr	*Antiquités Africaines*
ARS	A. C. Johnson, P. R. Coleman-Norton and F. C. Bourne, *Ancient Roman Statutes*. Austin, TX, 1961
ASR	*Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs*, ed. C. Robert, Berlin, 1890–
AT	*L'Antiquité Tardive*
Aur. Vict. *Caes.*	Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*
BAH	Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BAR Int. Ser.	British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BAR Suppl. Ser.	British Archaeological Reports, Supplementary Series
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BASP	*Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*
BEFAR	Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome

BEO	*Bulletin des Études Orientales*
BGU	*Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen/Staatlichen Museum zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*. Berlin, 1895–
BICS	*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*
BIDR	*Bullettino dell'Istituto di Diritto Romano*
BJ	*Bonner Jahrbücher*
BMC	*Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*. v (Pertinax to Elagabalus). H. Mattingly, London, 1950; vi (Severus Alexander to Balbinus and Pupienus). R. A. G. Carson, London, 1962
BRGK	*Bericht der römisch-germanischen Kommission*
BSAC	*Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte*
BSFN	*Bulletin de la Société française de numismatique*
BSNAF	*Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
Bull. Ép.	*Bulletin épigraphique* in *Revue des Études Grecques*
CAH	*Cambridge Ancient History*: vol. x^2 (1996), xi^2 (2000), xii^1 (1939), xiii (1998); xiv (2000)
Cahiers Glotz	*Cahiers du Centre G. Glotz*
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CE	*Chronique d'Égypte*
CEFR	Collection de l'École française de Rome
Chron. Min. i	T. Mommsen, *Chronica Minora* i (Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi 9). Berlin, 1892
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
CIMRM	*Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, ed. M. J. Vermaseren, The Hague, 1956–60
CIS	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*
CJ	*Codex Iustinianus*
CLRE	R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz and K. A. Worp, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (Philological Monographs of the American Philological Association 36). Atlanta, 1987
Coll.	*Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio* (in *FIRA* ii.544–89)
Cons.	*Consultatio Veteris cuiusdam Iurisconsulti* (in *FIRA* ii.594–613)
CPh	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CR	*Classical Review*
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CTh	*Codex Theodosianus*
D	*Digest*
DHA	*Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne*
Diz. Ep.	E. de Ruggiero *et al.*, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane*. Rome, 1886–
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EA	*Epigraphica Anatolica*

EPRO	*Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain*, ed. M. J. Vermaseren, Leiden, 1961–
ES	*Epigraphische Studien*
ESAR	*An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*, ed. T. Frank: I, *Rome and Italy of the Republic*; II, *Roman Egypt to the Reign of Diocletian*; III, *Roman Britain, Roman Spain, Roman Sicily, La Gaule Romaine*; IV, *Roman Africa, Roman Syria, Roman Greece, Roman Asia*; V, *Rome and Italy of the Empire*. Baltimore, 1933–40
Eus. *Hist. Eccl.*	Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*
Eus. *Vit. Const.*	Eusebius, *De Vita Constantini*
Eutr.	Eutropius
Expositio	*Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium*, ed. J. Rougé, SC 124. Paris, 1967
FD III	*Fouilles de Delphes*, III, *Épigraphie*. Paris, 1909–85
FGrH	*Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby
FHG	*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, ed. K. Müller. Paris, 1878–85
FIRA	S. Riccobono *et al.*, *Fontes Iuris Romani Anteiustiniani*, 2nd edn, 3 vols. [I, *Leges*; II, *Auctores*; III, *Negotia*]. Florence, 1940–3
FV	*Fragmenta Vaticana* (in *FIRA* II.464–540)
GCN	M. E. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero*. Cambridge, 1967
GCS	*Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten jahrhunderte*
GLP	D. L. Page, *Greek Literary Papyri*, vol. I (= *Select Papyri* III) (Loeb Classical Library). Cambridge, MA and London, 1942
G&R	*Greece and Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
H.	The Hatran Inscriptions: see Part V, ch. 16 n. 39
HAC^{1}	*Historia Augusta Colloquia*, original series. Bonn, 1964–91
HAC^{2}	*Historia Augusta Colloquia*, new series. Macerata, 1991, thereafter Bari, 1994–
HAW	*Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*
Herod.	Herodian
HLL	*Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HThR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IA	*Iranica Antiqua*
IAM	M. Euzennat, J. Marion and J. Gascou, *Inscriptions antiques du Maroc* II. Paris, 1982
I. Aryk.	S. Şahin, *Die Inschriften von Arykanda* (IGSK 48). Bonn, 1994
ICret	M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae*, 4 vols. Rome, 1935–50
I. Cyme	*Die Inschriften von Kyme*, ed. H. Engelmann (IGSK 5). Bonn, 1976
I. Eph.	*Die Inschriften von Ephesos* (IGSK 11–17). 8 vols. in 10. Bonn, 1979–84
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae*

IGBulg	G. Mihailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae*, 5 vols. in 6. Sofia, 1958–97
IGF	J.-CL. Decourt. *Inscriptions grecques de la France (IGF)*. Lyons, 2004
IGLS	*Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de la Syrie*
IGRR	R. Cagnat *et al.*, *Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes*, 3 vols. (I, 3, 4). Paris, 1906–27
IGSK	Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien
ILAfr	R. Cagnat, A. Merlin and L. Chatelain, *Inscriptions Latines d'Afrique (Tripolitanie, Tunisie et Maroc)*. Paris, 1923
ILM	L. Chatelain, *Inscriptions Latines du Maroc*. Paris, 1942
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
IME	*Inscriptions métriques de l'Égypte gréco-romaine: Recherches sur la poésie épigrammatique des grecs en Égypte*, ed. E. Bernand. Paris, 1969
IMS	F. Papazoglou *et al.*, *Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure*. Belgrade: I (Singidunum and NW area, 1976); II (Viminacium and Margum, 1986); III.2 (Timacum Minus and Timok valley, 1995); IV (Naissus–Remesiana–Horreum Margi, 1979); VI (Scupi and Kumanovo region, 1982)
InscrIt	*Inscriptiones Italiae*. Rome, 1931–
Inv. Pal.	Cantineau, J. *et al.*, *Inventaire des Inscriptions de Palmyre*. 12 fascicles: I–IX (J. Cantineau), Beirut; X (J. Starcky), Damascus; XI (J. Teixidor), Beirut; XII (A. Bounni and J. Teixidor), Damascus. (1930–75)
IRT	J. M. Reynolds and J. B. Ward-Perkins, *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*. Rome, 1952
I. Smyrn.	G. Petzl, *Die Inschriften von Smyrna* (IGSK 23, 24), 2 vols. in 3. Bonn, 1982–90
It. Ant.	*Itineraria Antonini Augusti* (O. Cuntz, ed., *Itineraria Romana* I. Stuttgart, 1929 (repr. 1990))
JBAA	*Journal of the British Archaeological Association*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JJP	*Journal of Juristic Papyrology*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JRA	*Journal of Roman Archaeology*
JRGZM	*Jahrbuch des römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JS	*Journal des Savants*
JSAS	*Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*
JThS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
Knopf-Krüger	R. Knopf, and G. Krüger, *Ausgewählte Martyrakten*, 4. Aufl. Tübingen, 1965

Lact. *DMP*	Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*
LoisRom	*Les Lois des Romains: 7e édition par un groupe de romanistes des 'Textes de droit romain' tome II de Paul Frédéric Girard et Félix Senn*, ed. V. Giuffrè (Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Giurisprudenza della Università di Camerino 12). Naples, 1977
LSCG	F. Sokolowski, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques* (École française d'Athènes, Travaux et mémoires 18). Paris, 1969
MAAR	*Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*
MAL	*Atti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Memorie. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*
MAMA	*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*. 10 vols. Manchester, then London, 1928–93
MBAH	*Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte*
MEFRA	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité*
MPER n.s.	Mitteilungen aus der Papyrussammlung der österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien. New Series, 1932–
Münch.Beitr.	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte
MUSJ	*Mélanges de l'Université St Joseph*
NC	*Numismatic Chronicle*
NDIEC	G. H. R. Horsley, R. A. Kearsley, and S. R. Llewelyn, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*: I (1981); II (1982); III (1983); IV (1987); V (1989); VI (1992); VII (1994), North Ryde, NSW; VIII (1998), Grand Rapids, MI
NZ	*Numismatische Zeitschrift*
OCD[3]	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*, eds. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 3rd edn. Oxford, 1996
OGIS	W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1903–5
OLP	*Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*
OR	*Opuscula Romana*
Origo	*Origo Constantini*, ed. I. König. Trier, 1987
P&P	*Past and Present*
PACT	*Physical, Chemical and Mathematical Techniques applied to Archaeology*
PAES	E. Littmann *et al.*, *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria*. III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions. A, Southern Syria (Leiden, 1904–21); B, Northern Syria (Leiden, 1908–22); IV: Semitic Inscriptions (Leiden, 1914–49)
Pan. Lat.	*Panegyrici Latini* (cited in the numeration of Mynors' Oxford Classical Text (1964) and Nixon and Rodgers, *Panegyrici*)
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
P. Cairo Isid.	A. E. R. Boak and H. C. Youtie, *The Archive of Aurelius Isidorus in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo and the University of Michigan*. Ann Arbor, 1960
P. Col. 123	see Westermann and Schiller, *Apokrimata*

PCPS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
PE	Diocletian's *Prices Edict* (see Giacchero, *Edictum Diocletiani*)
PECS	R. Stillwell *et al.*, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*. Princeton, 1976
P. Euphr.	see Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents'; plus *JS* (1995) 61–118; *JS* (1997) 3–57; *JS* (2000) 157–208; *CRAI* (1990) 144–66; *Semitica* 41–2 (1991–2): 195–208
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
P. Giss.	O. Eger *et al.*, *Griechische Papyri im Museum des oberhessischen Geschichtsvereins zu Giessen*. Leipzig–Berlin, 1910–12
P. Giss. Lit.	*Die Giessener literarischen Papyri und die Caracalla-Erlasse*, ed. P. A. Kuhlmann (Berichte und Arbeiten aus der Universitätsbibliothek und dem Universitätsarchiv Giessen 46). Giessen, 1994
PGM	K. Preisendanz and A. Henrichs, *Papyri Graecae Magicae: die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd edn. Stuttgart, 1973–74
PIR	*Prosopographia Imperii Romani*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
PLRE	A. H. M. Jones, R. Morris and R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols. Cambridge, 1971–92
PO	*Patrologia Orientalis*
P. Oxy.	B. P. Grenfell *et al.*, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. London, 1898–
P. Panop. Beatty	T. C. Skeat, *Papyri from Panopolis in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*. Dublin, 1964
RAC	*Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*
RlAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*
RAL	*Atti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RBPh	*Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*
RE	Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
REA	*Revue des Études Anciennes*
REArm	*Revue des Études Arméniennes*
REAug	*Revue des Études Augustiniennes*
REByz	*Revue des Études Byzantines*
RES	*Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique publié par la Commission du Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, vol. v, ed. G. Ryckmans. Paris, 1929
RFIC	*Rivista di Filologia e di Istruzione Classica*
RGDS	*Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (see also *ŠKZ*)
RHDFE	*Revue Historique de Droit Français et Étranger*
RIB	*The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, vol. 1, 1965, rev. edn 1995
RIC	*Roman Imperial Coinage*. v.1 (Valerian 1 to Florian), P. H. Webb, London, 1927; v.2 (Probus to Amandus), P. H. Webb, London, 1933; vi (Diocletian's reform to Maximinus), C. H. Sutherland

	and R. A. G. Carson, London, 1967; VII (Constantine and Licinius), P. Bruun, London, 1966
RICH	A. S. Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow*. III (Pertinax to Aemilian) Oxford, 1977; IV (Valerian to Allectus) Oxford, 1978
RIDA	*Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité*
RN	*Revue Numismatique*
RPC I	A. Burnett, M. Amandry and P. P. Ripollès, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, Vol. I: *From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 B.C.–A.D. 69)*. London and Paris, 1992
RPh	*Revue de Philologie, de Littérature et d'Histoire Anciennes*
RS I	*Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, I: *Rom und Ostia*, eds. F. Deichmann, G. Bovini and H. Brandenburg. Wiesbaden, 1967
RS II	*Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage,* II: *Italien mit einem Nachtrag Rom und Ostia, Dalmatien, Museen der Welt*, eds. T. Ulbert and J. Dresken-Weiland. Mainz, 1998
RSA	*Rivista Storica dell'Antichità*
SB	*Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten*
SBAW	Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Philosophisch-historische Klasse)
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SCO	*Studi classici e orientali*
SDHI	*Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris*
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
SHA	*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*
SIG^{3}	W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd edn, 4 vols. Leipzig, 1915–24
ŠKZ	*Šabuhrs I. an der Kaʿba-i Zardušt = Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (see Huyse, *ŠKZ*; Sprengling, *Iran*)
SÖAW	Sitzungsberichte der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Philosophisch-historische Klasse)
Soc.	Socrates Scholasticus
Soz.	Sozomen
StAmst	Studia Amstelodamensia ad epigraphicam, ius antiquum et papyrologicam pertinentia
TAM	*Tituli Asiae Minoris*. Vienna, 1901–
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
TAVO	*Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*
TIR	*Tabula Imperii Romani*; for individual maps, see details in Bibliography Part III
Tit. Ulp.	*Tituli ex Corpore Ulpiani* = Ulpian's *Regulae* (*FIRA* II.262–301)
TR	*Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis (Revue d'Histoire du Droit)*
TZ	*Trierer Zeitschrift*
YCS	*Yale Classical Studies*

ZDMG	*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
Zon.	Zonaras
Zos.	Zosimus
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*
ZRG	*Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Romanistische Abteilung*

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PART III: THE PROVINCES (CHS. 8–10)

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PART V: THE NON-ROMAN WORLD (CHS. 13–16)

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