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## Early Roman Rule in Commagene

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

<sup>1</sup> According to Josephus BJ 7,7,1 the invasion took place during Vespasian's fourth year, i.e. between the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 72 and the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 73: cf. T.V. Buttrey, *Documentary Evidence for the Chronology of the Flavian Titulature* (1980) 6f. Within that period Vespasian and Titus simultaneously earned two imperial acclamations (9 and 10, viz. 3 and 4). One of those must surely have been the result of the Roman victory in the *bellum Commagenicum*. Both imperial acclamations entered Vespasian's and Titus' titulatures before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 73 (ILS 246. BMC II p.146). Hence, the invasion probably took place in the second half of 72.

<sup>2</sup> Jos., BJ 7,7,1-3. F. Millar, *The Roman Near East 31 BC – AD 337* (1993) esp. 80-83.

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

These events clearly mark a new phase in the Empire's frontier policy in the East. In several stages and over a period of about 5 years this policy led to a new political organization and an entirely new disposition of the Roman legions along the Eastern frontier. Yet, the dubious justification of the invasion of Commagene in particular has left many questions open. Some scholars believe this policy to have consisted of an expansion of the empire, others that it aimed at the creation of an advantageous defense line on the banks of the Euphrates.<sup>5</sup> In any event, Commagene is generally understood to have been 'annexed' to the Roman empire. If correct, 'expansion' and even 'imperialism' may equally be fitting terms to describe the events of 72. Those terms then raise numerous questions as to the size and shape of the empire in the period preceding Vespasian's rule, as well as to the former location and functioning of its borders. The question at stake is whether royal rule by local monarchs had anything to do with the notion, Roman or local, of independence. In this respect, the history of Commagene in the early 1. century AD is an example of what both the imperial Roman and the local

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<sup>3</sup> ILS 9200. Jos., BJ 7,7,3.

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

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

understanding of the Eastern frontier and the local political situation in those years may have been.

### The Euphrates and the Roman point of view

Ever since the early first c. BC Rome considered the Euphrates as the limit of the Roman and Parthian empires.<sup>6</sup> Strabo, writing towards the end of Augustus' reign and in the early years of Tiberius put it thus: "The Euphrates and the land beyond it constitute the boundry of the Parthian empire. But the parts this side of the river are held by the Romans ...".<sup>7</sup> Hence, until the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD the Euphrates marked a clear border in Anatolia and through the Fertile Crescent.<sup>8</sup> The degree of Roman control of the vast lands "this side of the river" was, of course, an entirely different matter and subject to many changes since Rome had first claimed the Euphrates for its Eastern border. As is well-known, allied kingdoms were the predominant political organizations to control the West bank of the Euphrates until the end of the reign of Augustus. To a lesser extent they continued to play an important role until the reign of Vespasian.<sup>9</sup>

Commagene was one of these kingdoms. It was situated in SE Anatolia, roughly between the Taurus mountains in the West and the middle Euphrates in the East, and between the Nemrud Dağı in the North and Doliche in the South. Its capital Samosta watched over one of the three major crossings of the Euphrates in Anatolia.<sup>10</sup> The strategic importance of the crossing at Samosata was well known to Rome, as it offered "a most easy passage" of the otherwise

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

<sup>7</sup> Strabo 16,1,28.

<sup>8</sup> Contra: e.g. Whittaker, *Frontiers* (n. 5): 142 "it is becoming clearer that the Euphrates had never, even in the earlier Empire, been the political or military border." Where the river entered the wide steppe zone and the desert to the south its role as a dividing line naturally became less clear which is why Strabo 16,1,28 continues with saying that some of the Arab chieftains of this area adhered to the Parthians and others to the Romans. For Augustus' relations with the Parthians see esp. Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 27ff. and D. Kienast, *Augustus* (1999<sup>3</sup>) 342ff.

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

<sup>10</sup> The others were at Melitene and at Zeugma.

nearly impenetrable<sup>11</sup> Euphrates barrier in Anatolia, not only to Roman armies but also to the Parthians, should they ever decide to invade.<sup>12</sup> Pompey, in 64 BC, added to Commagene's territory the city of Seleucia on the Euphrates (Zeugma) with perhaps the most important crossing of the Euphrates in Northern Mesopotamia.<sup>13</sup> Rome, therefore, surely understood Commagene's strategic role in guarding those crossings and in keeping Roman territory safe. This, at any rate, appears to have been what Julius Caesar had king Antiochus I of Commagene (c. 70 – c. 36 BC) and other monarchs in the region promise in 47 BC: "to watch over and guard the (Roman) province (of Syria)".<sup>14</sup> In return Antiochus was accepted amongst the most loyal friends of both Caesar and the Roman people. Antiochus, however, appears to have understood Rome's expectations in this respect even before Julius Caesar came by: already in 51 BC he was the first to inform Cicero, then governor of Cilicia, that the Parthians had begun to cross the Euphrates.<sup>15</sup> A first conclusion must therefore be that from a Roman point of view the kingdom of Commagene lay within the boundaries of the Roman empire since the early 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC and was expected to fulfill an important strategic role on Rome's Eastern frontier.

Another matter is the degree of dependence of the Commagenian rulers. When Pompey celebrated his military success and his settlement of the East in 61 BC with a triumph in Rome his list of subjected kings also included Antiochus I of Commagene.<sup>16</sup> Only two years later, in 59 BC Antiochus was granted the *toga praetexta* and official Roman recognition as an allied king.<sup>17</sup> From this time onwards all kings of Commagene proved to be most loyal allies. Antiochus' son, Mithradates II (c.36 – 20 BC), personally led his forces to Actium in support of Marcus Antonius in 31 BC.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless Caesar's heir confirmed the king of Commagene on the throne of his ancestors.<sup>19</sup> That, however, marked the beginning of a new era of dependence and a new phase of increased interventions in Commagene by Rome and its

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<sup>11</sup> Impenetrable in particular for large armies and their logistical support.

<sup>12</sup> Jos., BJ 7,7,1.

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

<sup>14</sup> Bell. Alex. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Cic., Ad fam. 15,1,2.

<sup>16</sup> App., Mith. 117 (cf. 106). Plut., Pomp. 45.

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

<sup>18</sup> Plut., Ant. 61.

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

new ruler.<sup>20</sup> From now on the Roman emperor decided who should rule in Commagene.<sup>21</sup> Archaeological and epigraphical evidence suggests that perhaps one of the first measures taken after Actium was to drastically reduce in scale (or perhaps even to terminate) the grandiose royal cult which had been established by Antiochus I.<sup>22</sup> Mithradates now loyally called himself (and his father) Φιλορόμαιοσ but he appears to have dropped Φιλέλλην in both their titulatures. Also, Antiochus I was no longer referred to as Θεός and Δίκαιοσ.<sup>23</sup> Both titles had played an important role in describing his extraordinary personal position within the Commagenian royal cult. The reasons for these changes of the royal titulature are nowhere mentioned but perhaps Mithradates wanted to avoid possible charges of insufficient subordination or of uncertain loyalty. Finally, Mithradates had to hand over to Rome (i.e. to the Roman province of Syria) the city of Zeugma with its major crossing of the Euphrates.<sup>24</sup>

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

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<sup>20</sup> Dio 52,43,1.

<sup>21</sup> Dio 54,9,3.

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

<sup>23</sup> Sahin (n. 22) 102f. 121f. Sullivan (n. 4) 776ff. On Φιλορόμαιοσ in general see Braund (n. 9) 105ff.

<sup>24</sup> J. Wagner, *Seleukeia am Euphrat / Zeugma* (1976) 64. Doliche, too, may have been yielded to Rome in 31 BC: J. Wagner, 'Neue Denkmäler aus Doliche. Ergebnisse einer archäologischen Landesaufnahme im Ursprungsgebiet des Iupiter Dolichenus', BJ 82, 1982, 161ff.

<sup>25</sup> Strabo 16,2,3. Tac., Ann. 2,56. Cf. below p. 12ff.

<sup>26</sup> Dio 59,8,2.

<sup>27</sup> Dio 59,8,2. Cf. also Suet., Cal. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Dio 60,8,1.

<sup>29</sup> Suet., Claud. 11. Dio 60,5,1.

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

Rome until AD 72 when royal rule in Commagene was terminated for the third time within two generations.<sup>32</sup>

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

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

<sup>32</sup> Cf. below p. 16ff.

<sup>33</sup> Suet., Aug. 48. Cf. Suet., Aug. 60 and Eutrop. 7,9f. Cf. also Dig. 49,15,19,3. Strabo 17,3,25 describes them as belonging to the emperor's portion of the Empire (as apposed to the Roman people's provinces). Augustus' *breviarium totius imperii* with the list of the *opes publicae* also included *quot ... regna*: Suet., Aug. 101,4. Tac., Ann. 1,11. (For the *breviarium totius imperii* cf. M.A. Speidel, 'Geld und Macht. Die Neuordnung des staatlichen Finanzwesens unter Augustus', in: A. Giovannini (ed), *La révolution romaine après Ronald Syme: bilans et perspectives* (2000) 113ff.). The actual degree of dependence naturally varied according to the size and location of the kingdom, and the character of its ruler. On the subject in general Braund (n. 9) passim. H. Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire* (1996) 29f. F. Millar, *Rome, The Greek World, and the East. Government, Society and Culture in the Roman Empire*. Edited by H.M. Cotton / G.M. Rogers (2004) 229ff. ('Emperors, Kings, and Subjects: The Politics of Two-Level Sovereignty').

<sup>34</sup> Tac., Ann. 12,15 with M.P. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies II*. (1992) 173ff. ('Bithynian Troops in the Kingdom of the Bosphorus'). 229f. ('The Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators'). Tac., Ann. 12,45 and 14,26 (Armenia). etc. Cf. Braund (n. 9) 94 with further examples.

<sup>35</sup> Strabo 6,4,2.

<sup>36</sup> Tac., Ann. 4,5. Tacitus Agr. 14,2 described such kings as *instrumenta servitutis*. He called them (expressly including Antiochus IV of Commagene) *reges servientes* (Tac., Hist. 2,81), Josephus ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίοις βασιλεῖς (BJ 5,11,3). According to Strabo 14,5,6 the Romans preferred to rule Cilicia Tracheia by kings rather than by Roman governors because they judged royal rule more efficient than direct Roman rule.

<sup>37</sup> Thus Augustus in RGDA 27: *Armeniam maiorem ... cum possem facere provinciam, malui ... regnum id Tigrani ... tradere*. Cf. also Strabo 12,1,4 with Tac., Ann. 2,42. 12,56 (Cappadocia). Strabo 14,5,6 (Cilicia Tracheia) etc.

allied kingdom within the empire's boundaries as independent. Their kings ruled for Rome and, in this sense, royal rule in these countries was a form of Roman rule.<sup>38</sup>

### Provincialization: Commagenian perspectives

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

Very little is known about the internal history of the kingdom of Commagene. Still, there are some indications of recurring conflicts between different groups of its inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> Ethnic divisions between the local semitic population and the immigrated families with Iranian, Greek and Macedonian roots as well as rivalries within the royal family may have been the background and perhaps part of the reasons for such conflicts. Antiochus' I syncretistic religious programme may well have attempted, in part, to reconcile such differences (and thereby stabilize the king's rule).<sup>42</sup> At any rate, the royal family was not of local origin, much rather Antiochus celebrated his Greek and Persian roots.<sup>43</sup> It is interesting, therefore, that a large part of the population of Commagene asked for direct Roman rule after the death of

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<sup>38</sup> Strabo 17,3,24. H. Braunert, *Politik, Recht und Gesellschaft in der griechisch-römischen Antike. Gesammelte Aufsätze und Reden. Herausgegeben von Kurt Telschow und Michael Zahrnt* (1980) 294-304 ('Omnium provinciarum populi Romani ... fines auxi.'). Millar, *Government* (n. 33) 243 ('Emperors, Kings, and Subjects: The Politics of Two-Level Sovereignty'): "But what is striking and important is that the kings adopted a public role which very explicitly acknowledged their subordination to a line of superior monarchs" (i.e. the Roman emperors). Statements such as that of E. Honigmann, *RE Suppl. IV* (1924) 987 s.v. Kommagene: "Im J. 38 n.Chr. wurde K. noch einmal selbständig" are thus entirely misleading.

<sup>39</sup> Tac., *Ann.* 2,42. Jos., *Ant.* 18,2,5.

<sup>40</sup> Tac., *Hist.* 5,9. Similarly Strabo 6,4,2.

<sup>41</sup> Dio 49,21,2. 52,43,1. 54,9,3.

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

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

Antiochus III in AD 17. It is perhaps even more interesting that the noblemen in particular favored a radical change in the political structure of the country. Whatever their motivations may have been, it seems clear that there was no stable foundation within Commagene for the continuation of royal rule.

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

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

<sup>44</sup> G. Schmitz / S. Sahin / J. Wagner, 'Ein Grabaltar mit einer genealogischen Inschrift aus Kommagene', EA 11, 1988, 81-95 (the reading presented here is the editor's).



This altar was set up by Marcellus, son of Sacerdos, as part of a now lost two-story high funerary monument built and decorated in good Greco-Roman fashion of around the mid 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD. Its inscription reveals the names of several members of a wealthy Commagenian family stretching over seven generations. The first family member named in the inscription is Mithridates, son of Antiochos (line 4). He carried the otherwise unattested title μονοκρίτης which the editors explain to have been a judicial function within the royal administration of Commagene and a sign of his comparatively high social standing. The names of Mithridates and his father recall those of king Mithradates II and of his father Antiochus I. Furthermore, Mithridates' wife Laodike (line 6) carried the same name as the mother of king Antiochus I. These analogies and Mithridates' position within the royal administration date this generation to the second half of the first century BC. From the next generation onwards quite a distinct change can be observed in the traditions of this Commagenian family. All sons (with the one possible exception of the 'rhetor' Bakchios in line 17) now received decent Roman names: Tacitus (line 8), Sacerdos (line 10) and Marcellus (line 1). Marcellus, the author of the text, named his own son Sacerdos (line 19) and his daughter Marcella (line 18). Marcella (line 14) was also the name of Marcellus' wife which shows that other families too had adopted Roman names. If (as seems likely) in such families the choice of names was in any way to serve as a sign of loyalty towards the ruling government or perhaps rather a sign of the will of such families to belong to those in power, the funerary altar from Sofraz reveals an interesting and surprising turn of opinion. Such families now wished to appear "Roman". The geneology of Marcellus' family shows that this must have happened near the introduction of direct Roman rule in AD 18 (though it remains unclear whether this happened before or after that date). The new habit of this family of giving Roman names to their sons apparently did not change after Commagene returned to royal rule in AD 38/41. Yet, neither Marcellus, his sons or his "romanized" ancestors appear to have held public office again.

Many Commagenians were not in favor of direct Roman rule and there had been unrest in the kingdom. The Syriac Letter of Mara Bar Sarapion addressed to his son Sarapion may provide an interesting insight into the situation.<sup>45</sup> The text is a letter of consolation determined mainly

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<sup>45</sup> W. Cureton, *Spicilegium Syriacum* (1855) 43-48 (text) and 70-76 (translation). Cf. esp. F. Schulthess, 'Der Brief des Mara bar Sarapion. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der syrischen Literatur', *ZDMG* 51 (1897) 365-391, esp. 366-375 with a German translation. Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 460ff.

by Greek tradition, some biblical history and Stoic moralising. The letter itself contains no precise date or place of origin but the context presented in this document may indeed reflect a real situation. The letter refers to a day of grief when some friends of the author were forced to leave the Commagenian capital Samosata as well as their families and possessions and were unable to return because the Romans would not allow them to. Mara Bar Sarapion joined his friends while they were on their way to Seleuceia (which of the many cities with this name remains entirely open). Now in exile, from where Mara was writing, they were longing to return home and hoped for the Romans to act justly. Mara admits that the empire was no cause of any detriment and says that he and his friends were willing to be loyal subjects of Rome.

The only reason possibly referred to in this text why Mara's friends may have been exiled is that in earlier days when the city was still flourishing many men had held 'evil speeches'. Mara and his friends who also appear to have been politically active had not belonged to this group. They had had different plans for Samosata but fate (as Mara called it) prevented them from being accomplished and exile appears to have been the result. Much of this remains enigmatic as Mara Bar Sarapion was not writing history. However, it seems clear that Rome was in control of Samosata while Mara was writing his letter from elsewhere. The nostalgic reference to the former flourishing days of the city and Mara's admission that the empire causes no detriment could well fit a situation as in AD 18 when Commagene, after a period of turmoil, passed from royal to direct Roman rule.<sup>46</sup> Whatever the precise date and true context of the Letter of Mara Bar Sarapion, it attests a heated local political discussion about the future of the capital Samosata and refers to a party which (as must be concluded) was judged hostile by the Romans and therefore exiled.

Most revealing, however, are the formal decisions taken by the Commagenians after the death of Antiochus III: they sent embassies to Rome asking for Tiberius to decide upon the future of the political situation in their country.<sup>47</sup> The alternatives presented to Tiberius by these embassies were a new king for Commagene or direct Roman rule. Both alternatives were fully

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<sup>46</sup> Millar, *Near East* (n. 2) 461 assumes that the "appropriate context ... is the early 70s when Rome first gained control of Samosata", thereby overlooking the fact that Rome had first established direct rule in Commagene in AD 18 (but see *ibid.* 53). Also, there is no reference in the text to a conquest by armed forces as was the case in 72.

<sup>47</sup> *Jos., Ant.* 18,2,5. *Tac., Ann.* 2,42.

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

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

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

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

<sup>50</sup> For a very similar view cf. I. Shatzman, 'The intergration of Judea into the Roman Empire', SCI 18, 1999, 49-84.

## Administrative and military changes after AD 17

Commagene was not the only trouble spot in the Near East in AD 17.<sup>51</sup> Cilicia and Cappadocia, too, had vacant thrones, Parthia threatened war over the disputed succession to the throne of Armenia, and 'the provinces of Syria and Judea, exhausted by impositions, asked for a reduction of tribute'.<sup>52</sup> Tiberius (and the Senate),<sup>53</sup> fearing for the safety of the Eastern territories, therefore sent Germanicus as proconsul with powers exceeding all but the emperor's. His mission was *in transmarinas pro[vincias ...] in conformandis iis regnisque eiusdem tractus ...*, as the Tabula Siarensis puts it,<sup>54</sup> or, according to the 'senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre' of AD 20, ... *ad rerum transmarinarum statum componendum ...*<sup>55</sup> The wording of this assignment is yet another clear sign that Rome considered this an internal affair. As a result, king Archelaus II was installed in Cilicia Trachea and king Artaxias II in Armenia.<sup>56</sup> Cappadocia and Commagene underwent profound changes. Royal rule was terminated and both countries received provincial status.<sup>57</sup>

Some details as to how Germanicus achieved his mission in AD 18 are on record. From amongst his senatorial friends that had accompanied him to the East, he put Q. Veranius<sup>58</sup> as *legatus* in charge of Cappadocia, and sent Q. Servaeus<sup>59</sup> to Commagene which was then put under the 'jurisdiction of a praetor' for the first time.<sup>60</sup> Neither senator, however, remained there for long. Veranius was in Antioch in October AD 19 to attend Germanicus' funeral, as was, in all probability, Servaeus.<sup>61</sup> Both were leading witnesses and prosecutors in the trial

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<sup>51</sup> Tac., Ann. 2,5. 2,43.

<sup>52</sup> Tac., Ann. 2,1-4. 2,42.

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

<sup>54</sup> AE 1984, 508 frg. I 15f.

<sup>55</sup> Eck et al. (n. 53) Z.30ff. 157ff. Lebek (n. 53) 103-124.

<sup>56</sup> Tac., Ann. 2,56. 2,78.

<sup>57</sup> Tac., Ann. 2,42. 2,56. Strabo 16,2,3.

<sup>58</sup> PIR V 265.

<sup>59</sup> PIR S 398.

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

<sup>61</sup> Tac., Ann. 2,74.

against Cn. Calpurnius Piso in Rome which began in late November of AD 20.<sup>62</sup> Veranius and Servaeus must therefore have been back in the capital well before Piso's return to Rome in September or October of that year.<sup>63</sup> The task these senators were given in Cappadocia and Commagene was thus of short duration, and could not have consisted of much more than implementing Roman administration.

Yet, what exactly does this mean? Did Tiberius create a tiny<sup>64</sup> new province Commagene, as some scholars concluded?<sup>65</sup> Strabo's comment  $\nu\hat{\nu}\nu \delta' \acute{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\iota}\alpha \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omicron\nu\epsilon$  seems to point in this direction.<sup>66</sup> If so, who ruled it? Tacitus' statement *Commagenis ... tum primum ad ius praetoris translatis* appears to suggest that the former kingdom was put under the administration of a senatorial governor. If Tacitus did not just have the very short term of Q. Servaeus in mind, then that governor was surely the *legatus Augusti* of neighbouring Syria. Hence, other scholars believe that Commagene was simply incorporated into *provincia Syria*, as it was again after AD 72.<sup>67</sup> Strabo certainly counted recently provincialised Commagene to Syria,<sup>68</sup> though he may have meant this in a strictly geographical sense. What happened in Commagene after Servaeus left is therefore best revealed by a now lost fragmentary inscription found in 1912 in Pisidian Antioch. The editor transcribed:<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Tac., Ann. 3,10. 3,13. 3,19.

<sup>63</sup> Eck et al. (n. 53) 119ff. 149ff.

<sup>64</sup> Tiny size: Strabo 16,2,3:  $\acute{\eta} \text{ Κομμαγενή μικρά τίς ἐστίν} \cdot$

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

<sup>66</sup> Strabo 16,2,3.

<sup>67</sup> Thus J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung I* (1881<sup>2</sup>) 399. D. Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (1950) 494f. E. Honigmann RE Suppl. IV (1924) 984 s.v. Kommagene. Wagner (n. 6) 29. B. Rémy, *L'évolution administrative de l'Anatolie aux trois premiers siècles de notre ère* (1986) 33. Cf. also J. Wagner, 'Dynastie und Herrscherkult in Kommagene. Forschungsgeschichte und neuere Funde', Ist. Mitt. 33, 1983, 177-224.

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

<sup>69</sup> W.M. Ramsay, 'Studies in the Roman Province Galatia', JRS 14, 1924, 201f. no. 24 = AE 1926, 82. Cf. the excellent commentary by Demougin (n. 65) 97-109 (based on improved readings by Keppie (n. 65) 8-17) = AE 1982, 885. Cf. also S. Demougin, *Prosopographie des chevaliers romains Julio-Claudiens* (1992) 263f. no. 310 and H. Devijver, *Prosopographia militiarum equestrium quae fuerunt ab Augusto ad Gallienum II* (1977) Incerti 65 (with comments by E. Birley). No drawings or Photographs of the inscription exist.

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

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

The inscription may therefore be read as follows:

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

This monument was set up by the colony of Antioch in honor of an equestrian officer. The date is revealed by his last recorded post, prefect of the emperor Tiberius in the colony of Antioch.<sup>70</sup> The first two remaining positions of the honoured man’s career were military commands: *praefectus alae Antianae* and *praefectus veteranorum legionis XII* (sc. *Fulminatae*).<sup>71</sup> Both units belonged to the Roman army of Syria.<sup>72</sup> The next post is recorded in lines 3 and 4. As parts of the full title have broken away, the precise restoration remains uncertain. However, it is most likely to be understood as some form of ‘prefect of

<sup>70</sup> Demougin (n. 65) 107ff.

<sup>71</sup> A legionary tribunate may have preceeded the prefectures: Demougin (n. 65) 98.

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

Commagene'.<sup>73</sup> It is of no relevance to our question whether we should restore *praefect(o) / [C]ommagenes*<sup>74</sup> or *praefect(o) / [civitat(ium) C]ommagenes* or something similar.<sup>75</sup> In either case such prefects, known from many provinces throughout the early Roman empire, were not independent governors but rather administrators of districts or parts of provinces and subordinate to higher-ranking senatorial governors.<sup>76</sup> There can be little doubt, therefore, that in AD 18/19 Commagene was incorporated into the Roman province of Syria and put under the control of a prefect.<sup>77</sup> It is not unlikely that the internal administrative structures of Commagene were also changed by Q. Servaeus in AD 18/19, though this remains impossible to prove. All that seems clear is that before Actium royal Commagene was subdivided into several στρατηγίαι<sup>78</sup> whereas by the early third century AD the established division was into *quattuor civitates Commagenes*.<sup>79</sup>

As other such prefects, the new prefect of Commagene was a man of military experience. Quite possibly, Roman troops were now stationed in the former kingdom. At the same time

<sup>73</sup> Restoring *praefect(o) [alae or cohortis C]ommageno[r(um)]* in line 4 seems impossible because the letter following the N cannot have been an O – unless one chooses to disregard Ramsey's readings. It is suggested here to read the Greek genitive – *C]ommagenes*.

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

<sup>75</sup> It is perhaps even conceivable to restore *praefect(o) / [provinciae] C]ommagenes* if *provincia Commagene* is understood as the prefect's 'sphere of responsibility' within *provincia Syria*. This would reconcile the statements of Strabo 16,2,3 and Tac., Ann. 2,56 (Strabo 16,2,2f.). However, there is no documentary evidence for a *provincia Commagene*. For a "province within a province" under Augustus see G. Alföldy, 'Das Edikt des Augustus aus El Bierzo', ZPE 131, 2000, 177-205, esp. 203ff. on *Transduriana provincia*. For the differences between prefects of entire countries such as the *praefectus Iudaeae*, and the *praefecti civitatum* cf. S. Demougin, *L'ordre équestre sous les Julio-Claudiens* (1988) 723f.

<sup>76</sup> On such prefects cf. O. Hirschfeld, *Die kaiserlichen Verwaltungsbeamten bis auf Diokletian* (1905<sup>2</sup>) 383. H. Zwicky, *Zur Verwendung des Militärs in der Verwaltung der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1944) 11ff. A.H.M. Jones, *Studies in Roman Government and Law* (1968) 115ff. P.A. Brunt, 'Principes and Equites', JRS 73, 1983, 55-58. H. Cotton, 'Some Aspects of the Roman Administration of Judea/Syria-Palaestina', in: W. Eck (ed.), *Lokale Autonomie und römische Ordnungsmacht in den kaiserlichen Provinzen vom 1. bis 3. Jahrhundert* (1999) 76-91, esp. 77f. W. Eck, 'Römische Provinzialadministration und die Erkenntnismöglichkeiten der epigraphischen Überlieferung', *ibid.* 4 with n. 11. W. Eck, 'Rom und Iudaea – der Beitrag der Epigraphik', in: A. Oppenheimer, *Jüdische Geschichte in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* (1999) 245.

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

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

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

Cappadocians, too, witnessed Roman auxiliary troops being stationed in their country,<sup>80</sup> and Judea, when transformed into a prefecture in AD 6, had also received a garrison that comprised some Roman auxiliary units.<sup>81</sup> The army of the Judean prefects, however, also included some units which were simply former royal regiments inherited from Herod's army.<sup>82</sup> Comparable developments may have taken place in Commagene in AD 18, for at least one *ala Commagenorum*, and possibly six *cohortes Commagenorum* were in existence already by the mid first century AD.<sup>83</sup> Hence, these auxiliary troops must have been incorporated into the Roman army after Commagene was taken under direct rule in AD 18, either as inherited royal regiments or, in some cases perhaps, as newly raised units. Yet, there is no indication that the Roman army in Commagene between 18 and 38 AD was any larger or more efficient than the royal armies before and after that period. The disposition of the troops within the former kingdom remains entirely unknown but Philo of Alexandria clearly implies that much of the Roman army of Syria was now safeguarding the Euphrates.<sup>84</sup> Finally, royal property was confiscated, and from AD 18 onwards taxes were collected for Rome.<sup>85</sup> It is, however, impossible to say whether the rates remained the same or if they were lowered like in Cappadocia in order to make Roman rule more acceptable.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, coins with the portrait of Tiberius appear to have been struck in Commagene as soon as AD 19/20.<sup>87</sup>

## Conclusions

After only two decades of direct Roman rule, in AD 38, the Emperor Gaius returned Commagene to the former royal family. Not much later he revoked his decision only for Claudius to reconfirm it in AD 41.<sup>88</sup> There are no precise reasons on record for any of these changes but they all carry the hallmarks of whimsical personal decisions by individual emperors. Certainly, the restoration of royal rule would not have entailed a loss of Roman

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. Tac., Ann. 12,49. 15,6. Hist., 2,6. There is no need to assume with M. Heil, *Die orientalische Aussenpolitik des Kaisers Nero* (1997) 208 that the Cappadocian auxilia mentioned in Tacitus were all irregular units.

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

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

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

<sup>84</sup> Leg. Ad Caium 31.207 and 34.259. See now also A. Gebhardt, *Imperiale Politik und provinzielle Entwicklung* (2002) 31ff.

<sup>85</sup> Suet., Cal. 16.

<sup>86</sup> Tac., Ann. 2,56.

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

<sup>88</sup> Cf. above n. 26-30.



strategic control. There is indeed nothing to suggest that the royal army was ever inadequate in any respect. Under Antiochus IV it counted well over 2000 cavalry and 3000 infantry archers. Hence, in numbers, it roughly equalled the strength of at least one Roman legion and therefore cannot have been much smaller than the Roman army which finally replaced it in AD 72 (one legion and perhaps a few *auxilia*).<sup>89</sup> According to Josephus this royal army even withstood the large Roman invasion force in AD 72 for an entire day without major losses.<sup>90</sup> The country was thus firmly integrated into the empire and its kings had continuously proven to be loyal subjects.

Strategic considerations may, however, have played a role in the reorganisation of the Eastern frontier under Vespasian. In AD 70, Titus sent a legion to Melitene in Cappadocia and personally met a Parthian embassy at Zeugma.<sup>91</sup> In AD 72/73 royal rule was terminated not only in Commagene but also in the small dependent kingdom of Armenia Minor.<sup>92</sup> Other small dependent kingdoms in the region (Chalkidike, Emesa) also disappeared in these years. At nearly the same time we hear of a dangerous military escalation between Roma and Parthia.<sup>93</sup> Legions were then based near Samosata in 73 and at Satala by the mid 70s.<sup>94</sup> In the end Cappadocia was a major military province and all the great ancient routes crossing the Euphrates and connecting the East and the West were under the control of Roman legions. Roman fleets were set up on the coasts of the Syrian Mediterranean and the Anatolian Black Sea, and an immense network of highways along the frontiers and in central and eastern Anatolia was developed.<sup>95</sup> It thus seems likely that all this was part of an overall plan conceived by the new emperor and based (at least in part) on strategic considerations. What, however, had led to these changes and what their precise objectives were is not on record, though Corbulo's military experiences in the 50s and early 60s in the region may have helped to shape such plans.

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

<sup>90</sup> Jos., BJ 7,7,2.

<sup>91</sup> Jos., BJ 7,1,2. 7,5,2.

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

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

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

<sup>95</sup> Fleets (probably) set up under Vespasian: D. van Berchem, 'Le port de Séleucie de Piérie et l'infrastructure logistique des guerres parthiques', BJ 185, 1985, 47-87. C. Marek, *Pontus et Bithynia* (2003) 59f. Roads: Mitchell (n. 92) 124f.

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

Throughout the imperial period Commagene was firmly integrated into the Roman empire, both as kingdom and as provincial territory. Provincialization in AD 18 (and in 72) brought about profound changes which were welcomed by one part of the population and rejected by the other. Yet, the provincialization of Commagene cannot be described as annexation or as an expansion of the Empire. Along the Euphrates Augustus' successors much rather adhered to his advice not to move the Empire's boundaries.<sup>98</sup> It was only Trajan who first violated this advice with his conquests beyond the Euphrates in AD 114-117 – a step that went too far even for some Romans.<sup>99</sup> The first century AD was a period characterised by a great many administrative changes and transitions, in the East as in the West. Variety, flexibility and change are the hallmarks of this earliest period of imperial government. It was often only after generations that anything like a more systematic approach gradually developed and led to more stable arrangements.<sup>100</sup> The history of early Roman rule in Commagene was no

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<sup>96</sup> Jos., BJ 7,7,1.

<sup>97</sup> Suet., Vesp. 8.

<sup>98</sup> Tac., Ann. 1,11. Dio 56,33,5.

<sup>99</sup> Dio 68,17,1 and 29,1, cf. 75,3,3. M.A. Speidel, 'Bellicosissimus princeps', in: A. Nünnerich-Asmus (ed.), *Traian* (2002) 23-40, esp. 29ff. 36ff.

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

exception. It reflects the contemporary imperial practice of government and provincial administration which, rather than repeated Roman imperialism, is the appropriate background for its history in the Early Empire.

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