Between Rome and Persia

The middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra under Roman control

Peter M. Edwell

BETWEEN ROME AND PERSIA

The conflict between the powerful Roman and Iranian empires arising from the extension of Roman power into today's Middle East is coming into increasingly sharp focus, thanks to the amount of evidence now available. This richly illustrated book examines this evidence to reveal how Rome established itself on the middle Euphrates, in Mesopotamia and Palmyra, and its efforts to consolidate power over these areas.

Reviewing evidence from Palmyra and Dura Europos – two of the most important archaeological sites in the Roman East – Peter M. Edwell builds a picture of the Roman military presence throughout this region in the second and third centuries AD. In the process he questions some commonly held assumptions about the nature of the Roman political and military presence at these ancient cities and the region of which they were an important part, forming a fresh and original perspective on the subject.

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Peter M. Edwell

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For my nephews Jay Thorn and
Alexander Pettigrew,
and my niece Millicent Thorn

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inspired my interest in ancient history in the first place. Much of the passion she had for the study of the ancient world lies in this book.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ANCIENT SOURCES

AAAS	Annales archéologiques arabes syriennes
AFAM	Association française d'archéologie mérovingienne
AJP	American Journal of Philology
AJSLL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, ed. H. Temporini (Berlin 1972–)
BAR-IS	British Archaeological Reports, International Series
BFLS	Bulletin de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg
Bull. Asia Inst.	Bulletin of the Asia Institute
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
CAH	The Cambridge Ancient History, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923–
CHI	The Cambridge History of Iran, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983
CJ	Classical Journal
CP	Classical Philology
CRAI	Compte rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres
CSHB	Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
EHR	English Historical Review
GJ	Geographical Journal
GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
Harv. Theol. Rev.	Harvard Theological Review
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
JSav	Journal des savants

JRA	Journal of Roman Archaeology
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MDOG	Mitteilungen de Deutschen Orient-Gesselschaft zu Berlin
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae historica
MUSJ	Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph
NC	Numismatic Chronicle
PAT	D. Hillers and E. Cussini, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996
PLRE	A.H.M. Jones, J. Morris and J.R. Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971
RGM	Revue du Génie Militaire
TAPA	Transactions of the American Philological Association
YClS	Yale Classical Studies
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

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Agathangelos, *Hist. Arm.*	*History of the Armenians*, ed. and trans. R.W. Thomson, New York: State University of New York, 1976.
Agathias	A.M. Cameron, 'Agathias on the Sassanians', *DOP* 23/24, Washington, 1969/1970, pp. 69–183.
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, *LCL*.
Appian, *B.C.*	Appian, *Bella Civilia*, trans. H. White, *LCL*.
Cedrenus	Georgius Cedrenus, *Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker, *CSHB* 24.1–2, Bonn, 1828.
Chron. Se'ert	*Chronicle of Se'ert*, in M.H. Dodgeon and S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 297.
CII	Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum.
CIL	Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.

CMC	*Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 1994, p. 33.
Dio	Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, trans. E. Cary, *LCL*.
Epit. De Caes.	*Die Epitome De Caesaribus*, trans. J. Schlumberger, Munich: Beck, 1974.
Eunapius, *Vit. Sophist.*	*Vitae Sophistarum*, trans. W.C. Wright, *LCL*.
Eunapius, *Frag. Hist.*	*Fragmenta Historica*, in ed. and trans. R.C. Blockley, *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians*, 2 vols, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981/1983.
Eutropius, *Brev.*	Eutropius, *Breviarium*, trans. H.W. Bird, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993.
Eutychius, *Ann.*	*Annales*, in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 1994, p. 295.
Evagrius, *Hist. Eccl.*	*Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier, London: Methuen, 1898.
Ferdowsi	*Shah-nama* (The Epic of the Kings), trans. R. Levy, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.
Festus, *Brev.*	*Breviarium*, ed. and trans. J.W. Eadie, London: Athlone Press, 1967.
FGrH	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby, Brill: Leiden, 1999.
FHG	*Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 5 vols, ed. C. Müller, Paris: Didot, 1841–1870.
Frontinus, *Strat.*	*Strategemata*, trans. C.E. Bennett, *LCL*.
Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.*	Letters to Lucius Verus, in *epistulae*, trans. C.R. Haines, *LCL*.
Fronto, *Princ. Hist.*	*Principia Historiae*, in *epistulae*, ed. C.R. Haines, *LCL*.
HA	*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, trans. D. Magie, *LCL*.
HA, *Trig. Tyr.*	= *Triginta Tyranni*.
Herodian	*Historia ab excessu divi Marci*, ed. C.R. Whittaker, *LCL*.
Hyginus, *De Mun. Cast.*	*De Munitionibus Castrorum*, ed. M.C.J. Miller and J.G. DeVoto, Chicago: Ares, 1994.

IG	Inscriptiones graecae.
IGRR	*Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes*, eds. R. Cagnat and G. Lafaye, Paris, 1906–1927.
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. H. Dessau, Berlin, 1892–1916.
Inv I-IX	*Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre*, ed. J. Cantineau, *Fascicules I-IX*, Beirut: Imprimierie Catholique, 1930–1936.
Inv X	*Inventaire des Inscriptions de Palmyre*, ed. J. Starcky, *Fascicule X*, Damascus: Imprimierie Catholique, 1949.
Inv. Doura	*Inventaire des Inscriptions Palmyréniennes de Doura-Europos*, ed. R. du Mesnil du Buisson, Paris: Geuthner, 1939.
Isidore	Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, trans. W.H. Schoff, repr. Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1976.
Jerome, *Chron.*	*Chronicon*, trans. M.D. Donalson, Pittsburgh: Mellen University Press, 1996.
Jordanes, *Hist. Rom.*	Jordanes, *Historia Romana*, ed. T. Mommsen, Berlin, 1882, MGH.
Josephus, *A.J.*	*Antiquitates Judaicae*, eds H. Thackeray and R. Marcus, *LCL*.
Josephus, *B.J.*	*Bellum Judaicum*, ed. H. Thackeray, *LCL*.
KKZ	'The Inscription of Kerdir', ed. and trans. D.N. Mackenzie, Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1999, pp. 217–74.
Libanius, *Auto.*	*Autobiography*, ed. A.F. Norman, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.
Libanius, *Ep.*	*Epistles*, ed. A.F. Norman, *LCL*.
Libanius, *Or.*	*Orations*, ed. A.F. Norman, *LCL*.
Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*	*Verae Historiae*, ed. K. Kilburn, *LCL*.
Malalas	John Malalas, *Chronographia*, trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys and R. Scott, Melbourne: AABS, 1986.
Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist. Arm.*	*History of the Armenians*, ed. and trans. R.W. Thomson, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978.
Not. Dignit., Or.	*Notitia Dignitatum. Orientalis*, in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 1994, pp. 341–8.

Orac. Sib. XIII	*The Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, ed. and trans. D.S. Potter, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
Orosius, *Adv. Pag.*	*Adversus Paganos*, trans. R.J. Deferrari, Washington: Catholic University Press of America, 1964.
P.Dura	*The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report Volume V, Part 1: The Parchments and Papyri*, ed. and trans. C.B. Welles, R.O. Fink and J.F. Gilliam, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
P.Euphr.	D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle après J-C)', *CRAI*, 1989, 535–61; D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate', *JSav*, 1995, 65–119; D. Feissel, J. Gascou and J. Teixidor, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate', *JSav*, 1997, 3–57.
Pliny, *N.H.*	*Naturalis Historia*, trans. H. Rackham, *LCL*.
Plutarch, *Pomp.*	*Vita Pompeii*, trans. B. Perrin, *LCL*.
Plutarch, *Sulla*	*Vita Sullae*, trans. B. Perrin, *LCL*.
Polybius	*Historia*, trans. W.R. Paton, *LCL*.
Porphyry, *Plot.*	*Vita Plotinus*, trans. A.H. Armstrong, *LCL*.
Procop., *Bell. Pers.*	Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, trans. H.B. Dewing, *LCL*.
Ptolemy, *Geog.*	*Geographia*, trans. E.L. Stevenson, Mineola, N.Y., 1991.
RGDS/SKZ	*Res Gestae Divi Saporis/Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Ka'ba-i Zarduŝt*, ed. and trans. P. Huyse, London: SOAS, 1999.
Statius, *Silv.*	*Silvae*, trans. J.H. Mozley, *LCL*.
Steph. Byz.	Stephanus Byzantinus, *Ethnika*, ed. A. Meineke, Berlin: G. Reimeri, 1849.
Strabo, *Geog.*	*Geographia*, trans. J.R.S. Sterrett, *LCL*.
Suetonius	*De Vita Caesarum*, trans. J.C. Rolfe, *LCL*.
Syncellus	Georgius Syncellus, ed. A.A. Mosshammer, Leipzig: Teubner, 1984.

Tabari, *Ann.*	*Annales*, in Dodgeon and Lieu, *Roman Eastern Frontier*, 1994, pp. 275–95.
Tacitus, *Ann.*	*Annales*, trans. J. Jackson, *LCL*.
Tacitus, *Hist.*	*Historiarum*, ed. C.H. Moore, *LCL*.
Ulpian, *De Cens.*	*De Censibus*, in ed. S.P. Scott, *The Digest of Justinian*, Cincinnati: University of Ohio Press, 1937.
Vegetius	*De re militari*, ed. N.P. Milner, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993.
Velleius Paterculus	*Roman History*, trans. F.W. Shipley, *LCL*.
Vergil	*Aeneid* and *Georgics*, trans. H.R. Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold, *LCL*.
Victor, *Caes.*	Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, trans. H.W. Bird, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994.
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Zosimus, *Nov. Hist.*	*Nova Historia*, trans. R.T. Ridley, Melbourne: AABS, 1982.
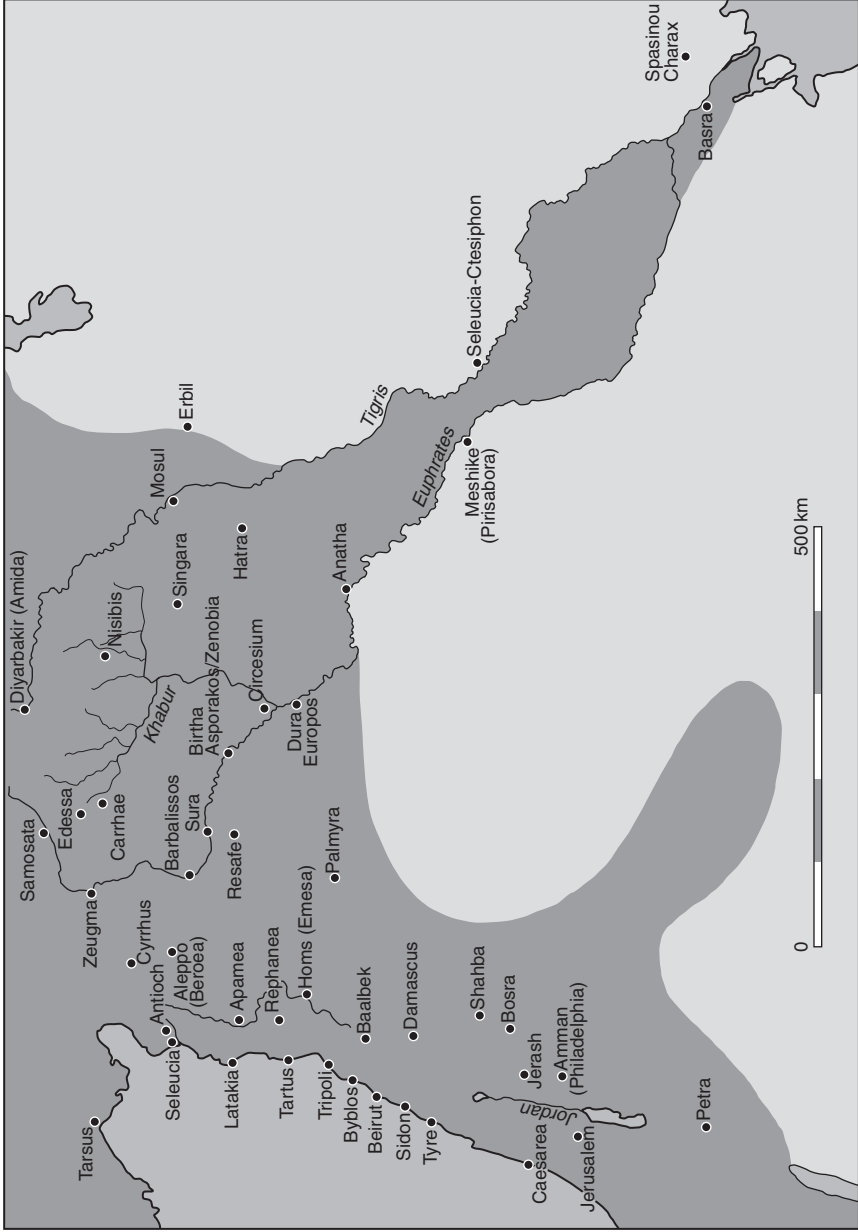
The Roman Near East in the third century AD.

INTRODUCTION

This book is a regional study of the middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra set in the broader context of conflict between the powerful empires of Rome and Iran. Chronologically it begins with Pompey's establishment of the province of Syria and ends with the first Syrian campaign of Shapur I, which was concluded *c.* AD 257/258. Within this time-frame the greater focus lies in the first half of the third century, and considerable attention is also paid to events in this region in the latter half of the second century.

The middle Euphrates was clearly the most important geographical feature in the area that comprised eastern Syria and Mesopotamia. The river and its most important tributary, the Khabur, performed functions in antiquity that fundamentally defined the nature of territory in Palmyra and Mesopotamia. The Euphrates and Khabur allowed quick communication, reliable movement of trade and effective invasion routes for the armies of both the Iranian and Roman empires. It also allowed intensive agricultural production for hundreds of kilometres along its banks and this was vital to populations in both eastern Syria and in Mesopotamia. The rivers were not only significant regionally but also played roles in ancient conceptions of the eastern frontier throughout the Roman Empire.

The literature of the late Roman Republic and early Empire generally refers to the Euphrates in the broader context of events in the Roman Empire itself. References to the Euphrates in the literature, therefore, are often made in the context of wars and other imperial activities. Evidence from epigraphy and papyri, however, demonstrates the regional significance of the Euphrates to both Palmyra and Mesopotamia. Archaeological evidence is site-specific by its nature, but it can be used to make observations about activities regionally and occasionally about events of importance to the Roman and Iranian empires more broadly.

It is partly for the above reasons that this book employs a number of historical lenses through which to view aspects of the history of this important section of the Roman Near East. Chapter 1 analyses the Euphrates' initial role as a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests up to the

territorial organization of Septimius Severus at the end of the second century AD. This provides important background to developments on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers in the third century.

Historical studies of Palmyra are increasingly the domain of specialists due to the nature of the evidence discovered at Palmyra itself and elsewhere. The role Palmyra came to play in Rome's extension of power to northern Mesopotamia and eastern Syria by the early third century was particularly important and it is for these reasons that Palmyra is considered separately in Chapter 2.

Following the territorial reorganization under Septimius Severus, which saw the formation of the provinces of Mesopotamia and Osrhoene and the division of Syria, the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers became significant for a number of reasons. They bolstered Roman power in northern Mesopotamia through the provision of supplies and troops when necessary. They continued to play significant roles in prospective Roman invasions of the Iranian Empire and, most importantly, the fertile territory on their banks became essential territorial components in the new provinces of Syria Coele and Syria Phoenice. The Dura Europos and Euphrates papyri provide some detailed evidence for the Roman military and administrative organization of the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers. They indicate that Roman soldiers were dotted all over the landscape of these rivers. Their roles are the subject of ongoing debate, but on the basis of the archaeological evidence the fortifications they occupied were not large enough to provide any meaningful defence in the event of large-scale invasions. Chapter 3 is a detailed attempt to locate many of the fortifications referred to in the papyri on the Euphrates and Khabur today and argues that their roles were not primarily defensive but focused more on the establishment of Roman power and authority on the landscape.

Undoubtedly, the most important archaeological site on the middle Euphrates is Dura Europos. The archaeological evidence from the site is in many ways unequalled in the Roman East. The site has been the subject of ongoing study in both archaeological and historical contexts. We have come a long way in understanding the city's role and the value of the evidence discovered at the site since the 1920s, but there are still a number of difficulties in this respect. The problem has partly come about due to the nature of the excavations in the 1920s and 1930s. This, combined with the ongoing influence of the brilliant but highly speculative interpretations made by Rostovtzeff and others as they dug, has made writing the history of the city a difficult undertaking. Chapter 4 is partly focused on such a history placed in the context of broader historical events during the Seleucid, Parthian and Roman periods of control of the city. A particular focus of Chapter 4 is also the deconstruction of some long-held ideas about Dura – mostly those of a military nature in the third century. Much of the evidence used to reach ideas about the Roman military presence at Dura

and its role on the middle Euphrates is particularly problematic, yet speculative conclusions made in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s have largely gone unchallenged and are still accepted in modern scholarship. In deconstructing these conclusions through a re-evaluation of the evidence it is argued that there is no clear proof for the inferiority of auxiliaries to legionaries and that conclusions about the office of Dux Ripae require serious reconsideration. These observations have implications for ideas about the purposes of the Roman military presence on the Euphrates and Khabur rivers in the third century AD.

When the Sasanian Persians overthrew the Parthian Arsacids and took control of the lands of Iran *c.* AD 224, the Romans knew little of what lay in store for them. Within 40 years, the Roman eastern provinces lay devastated and it was not until the reign of Aurelian that Roman control began to be reasserted in any meaningful way. In the early wars between the Sasanians and Rome, the middle Euphrates was of central importance as an invasion route and in supporting the province of Mesopotamia, which was the subject of dispute between the two empires. After Shapur I's 'second contest' (the so-called first Syrian campaign) against the Romans concluded in the late 250s, the middle Euphrates below the Khabur river was effectively abandoned by the Romans while the Persians did not seek to establish control anywhere above Anatha. Chapter 5 undertakes a detailed history of the conflict between Rome and Persia from *c.* 224 to *c.* 257, and the relevant evidence from the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers is placed in the context of these conflicts. The chronological point at which the analysis concludes coincides with the shift in military focus further to the north, which was a feature of Shapur's third contest against the Romans in 259/260.

The middle Euphrates and broader studies of the Roman Near East

In recent years there have been a number of chronologically broad studies that focus on Roman Syria and the Near East. They necessarily provide some important analysis of the region on which this book focuses but are often only able to deal with some of the important aspects briefly. One of the most valuable of these studies is that of Fergus Millar who analyses the history and culture of the Roman Near East from 31 BC to AD 337.[1] Millar addresses some issues that have been re-examined in greater detail in this book, and some sections of it owe much to his work. Kevin Butcher's recent publication on Roman Syria and the Near East covers an even broader time-frame than Millar from the arrival of Pompey in Syria to the Islamic conquests.[2] Butcher makes valuable observations on the Euphrates, Palmyra and Mesopotamia, but they are necessarily briefer due to the nature of his study. A further example of a broad approach is Warwick

Ball's *Rome in the East*, which claims to be 'a work of synthesis, a general study of the history, architecture and archaeology of the Near Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, of Roman penetration beyond the frontiers, and of ensuing influences that brought about Rome's own transformation'.[3]

Other recent works that are more regionally specific take particular themes as their focus. Nigel Pollard's, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria* is a good example.[4] The recent publication by Michael Sommer of *Roms Orientalische Steppengrenze* is more specific in taking a regional approach to the study of cultural history, with a focus on Palmyra, Edessa, Hatra and Dura Europos. Sommer covers the time-frame from Pompey to Diocletian and makes many valuable observations.[5] Aspects of both works are important to this study.

Archaeological studies of the Euphrates and the Roman eastern frontier

A number of studies of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers and Roman archaeological sites in their vicinity have been made over the last century. These studies have contributed to the development of a picture of the Roman presence on the Euphrates and within its vicinity, but they were often too ready in their identification of sites as Roman. An early example of one of these studies is that of Chapot.[6] Chapot analysed archaeological evidence for fortifications and roads along the Euphrates, in Cappadocia, Armenia, the Khabur basin, Mesopotamia and in Syria. Much of Chapot's analysis focused on evidence from the fourth century and later, but some valuable observations were made about sites on the Euphrates before this period. The monumental four-volume work of Sarre and Herzfeld is a detailed description of archaeological sites visited in their extensive travels in Syria and Iraq in the last decades of the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth century.[7] They identified and described numerous sites in the Tigris, Euphrates and Khabur river valleys. Their analysis and discussion of many sites focused mostly on Islamic material, but some useful observations were made about sites from the Roman period.

Perhaps the most extensive and admirable study of Roman fortifications and roads in the East was that of Poidebard.[8] Poidebard's impressive work, conducted over many years, was an attempt to identify lines of Roman defensive fortifications across the deserts and rivers in Syria, as well as in some parts of northern Iraq. The volume of text described the structure of what Poidebard referred to as the *limes* from the reign of Trajan to the 'Arab Conquest' and the various defensive lines which he claimed to have identified. Poidebard's mapping of the many sites he photographed and visited was an attempt to demonstrate in considerable detail the extent of a physical *limes*, or system of defence, in Syria from the

air. A significant proportion of the material covered by Poidebard is from periods later than that dealt with in this book, and there has been sustained criticism of Poidebard's ready identification of sites as Roman; nonetheless, the work remains valuable to this study and is an enduring tribute to the man and his labours.

An important and more recent investigation by Kennedy and Riley brings together the pioneering works of Poidebard and two other significant scholar/aviators, Sir Aurel Stein and O.G.S. Crawford.[9] Stein and Crawford studied the Roman, Byzantine and Islamic archaeological remains of the Near East from the air from the 1920s to the 1940s.[10] Crawford and Stein mostly covered Iraq and what was then Transjordan in an attempt to emulate and supplement Poidebard's work in Syria.[11] Kennedy and Riley bring together the key material from Poidebard, Stein and Crawford as well as photographic material from other sources to provide a more concise picture of Rome's desert frontier and its important features as it was conceived between the First World War and the Second World War.[12]

More specific studies of the Euphrates on the ground were undertaken by the scholar–travellers Musil and Dussaud, and their observations are also important to sections of this book.[13] Musil's travels were undertaken two decades earlier than the publication date of his book in 1927, which focused on the middle Euphrates, sections of the Tigris and parts of Mesopotamia and Syria. Exceptionally precise in describing the journeys, Musil attempted to identify the ancient names of many of the archaeological sites he visited based on their modern names. He also listed references in Classical and Islamic literature to many of the sites he attempted to identify. Musil's and Dussaud's works have sometimes been neglected in more recent scholarship in deference to Sarre and Herzfeld and Poidebard, but they are relied on to an extent in Chapter 3 where an attempt is made to identify a number of ancient locations referred to in the parchments and papyri from Dura Europos and the Euphrates papyri. The above pioneering works are now outdated in some respects as considerable excavation and research has been carried out since. However, they provide an enduring record of the archaeological sites, which in many cases have become seriously degraded since the early twentieth century.

More recent archaeological surveys on particular sections of the Euphrates include those of Kohlmeyer and Geyer and Monchambert.[14] Kohlmeyer focuses on earlier periods than those covered in this book, but some observations are of relevance to sites on the Euphrates between Sura and the Khabur confluence in the Parthian and Roman periods. Geyer and Monchambert's recent study is part of the *Mission Archéologique de Mari* and surveys the Euphrates from the vicinity of its confluence with the Khabur to Abou Kemal on the modern border between Syria and Iraq. The study provides an important hydrographical analysis of this section of

the Euphrates and highlights the significance of the Dawrin canal that runs parallel to the river on its left bank on this section. Much of their study also focuses on earlier periods, but it provides some useful analysis of the itinerary of Isidore of Charax and the probable locations of the Euphrates sites mentioned in his work, together with other locations on the Euphrates and lower Khabur. A useful three-volume catalogue of the military sites on the Roman eastern frontier is provided by Shelagh Gregory.[15] This work undertakes an architectural analysis and summary of the details of fortifications on Rome's eastern frontier and owes much to the works of Sarre and Herzfeld and Poidebard, together with the publications of the archaeology performed on some sites excavated since their earlier observations. Studies by Kettenhofen and Huyse both focus on the third-century Sasanian Persian invasions of the Roman eastern provinces and discuss the identification and details of the various sites Shapur I claimed to have captured in the *SKZ*, including the Euphrates sites in the first Syrian campaign of 252/253.[16]

One of the important aims of this book is to combine the evidence of archaeology, ancient texts and modern observations of scholar–travellers to focus on the expansion and maintenance of Roman power in the region of the middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra in the second and third centuries AD. This regional and chronological focus is positioned between broader studies of the Roman Near East and Roman Syria and specific archaeological analyses of individual sites. The focus of the book is at times on detailed and specific material, though on other occasions it expands to consider broader political and military developments; however, the overall aim is a regional study in the second and third centuries AD.

1

ROME ON THE EUPHRATES AND IN MESOPOTAMIA, *c*.65 BC–*c*. AD 200

Introduction

From the time of Pompey's establishment of the province of Syria in *c*.65 BC, the Euphrates came to symbolize a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests in the Near East.[1] On a number of occasions over the next 130 years meetings between senior Roman officials or members of the Imperial family and Parthian representatives were held on the Euphrates, confirming its status during this time as a boundary. During this time, however, there is no evidence for Roman fortifications within the vicinity of the Euphrates, and the river was crossed on many occasions by both Roman and Parthian forces. The Euphrates appears to have played the role of a symbolic boundary between Roman and Parthian interests up to the early Flavian period. Initially the status of the river as a symbolic boundary applied more to its northerly section as it flows from north to south, but during the Augustan period there is some evidence to suggest that it came to include the middle Euphrates in its south-easterly flow towards Mesopotamia.[2]

Over time the Euphrates came to play an increasingly important military role in the disputes between Rome and Parthia over Armenia, and this was one factor that led to the permanent establishment of Roman troops on or close to the river for the first time during the reign of Vespasian. In the second century the Euphrates played a key role in conflict between Rome and Parthia, including three Roman invasions of its powerful eastern neighbour. As Roman territorial interests extended further east as a result of these conflicts, the Euphrates became increasingly important militarily over an increasing distance. By the end of the second century AD, Rome had organized territory for a considerable distance on the other side of the Euphrates so that Roman provincial territory extended to the banks of the Tigris.[3] By this time, the Euphrates itself became less important militarily as the frontier moved further east but there is considerable evidence for the Roman military presence on the middle Euphrates in the third century AD.

From Pompey to Vespasian the more relevant section of the Euphrates as a symbolic boundary was the course it took as it flows south from Cappadocia and Commagene to the point where it turns east near Barbalissos to flow in the direction of Mesopotamia. From this point the evidence is less conclusive; however, in the late first century BC the confluence of the Khabur river and the Euphrates may also have marked a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests. In general, the Euphrates was not well suited to act in a defensive capacity for Rome, but there were times when practicality saw it act in this way.[4] At its most westerly stretch the Euphrates flows close to the Mediterranean coastline in the direction of Antioch, making the most important city in the Roman Near East potentially vulnerable to Parthian and, later, Persian attacks directed from the river. Despite this, fortifications on or close to the river under the Flavians and Trajan were located more to the north, indicating that the main military interest was in Armenia and increasingly in directing attacks into Osrhoene and northern Mesopotamia. In the long term, therefore, the military build-up that developed under the Flavians on the upper and middle Euphrates was focused more on offensive capacity than defence.

While the Roman military presence on the middle and upper Euphrates was maintained in the second century, it appears that there were no Roman fortifications on the river below Zeugma until after the victory over Parthia in the middle of the second century under Lucius Verus. From this period a larger section of the Euphrates came under more direct Roman control, with Roman fortifications located as far down the river as Dura Europos. By the end of the reign of Septimius Severus, Roman fortifications existed on the Euphrates a further 120 km downstream from Dura. Prior to AD 165, settlements on the Euphrates below the Khabur, such as Dura, had been under some form of Parthian control, but there are important questions to be asked about the nature of Parthian control on this section of the middle Euphrates and, in particular, the nature of the Palmyrene presence on this part of the river in the second century. As Roman power extended further east towards Mesopotamia in the second century, the Palmyrenes came to play an increasingly important military role in the Roman presence on the Euphrates. This military role was an evolution from the armed protection of the caravans, which Palmyra had established from the first century BC. When Septimius Severus initiated a major reorganization of territory in Syria, Osrhoene and northern Mesopotamia, the Palmyrenes continued to play a significant role in the longer-term establishment of Roman authority on the middle Euphrates and in the territory of Palmyra itself. Following its inclusion in the province of Coele Syria, Palmyra would continue to play a unique role in the Roman Near East, which in turn contributed to its dramatic rise and fall later in the third century.

From Pompey to Augustus

The Euphrates' role in conflict

The Euphrates appears to have played the role of a boundary between the north-eastern part of the Roman province of Syria, the Roman client-kingdoms of Commagene and Cappadocia and the Parthian-aligned kingdom of Osrhoene in the first century BC.[5] In this sense it represented a symbolic division between Roman and Parthian interests on sections of the upper and middle Euphrates. Indeed, the Parthians asked Pompey to recognize the Euphrates as a boundary of Roman control, indicating that this was how they conceived of the extent of their own power in the middle of the first century BC.[6] Pompey evaded the request, but the treatment of the Euphrates as a symbolic boundary by the Romans seems to have been the reality over the following 130 years.

The poet Vergil made three references to the Euphrates that are reflective of how the Euphrates represented a point where Roman and Parthian power met and conflicted under Octavian/Augustus. Two references in the *Georgics* show the employment of the Euphrates as a literary device for strife and war in territory on the upper and middle Euphrates during the civil war between Octavian and Antonius.[7] These references not only indicate a concern about a possible Parthian invasion during the civil war but in particular the support of the client-kingdoms on the Euphrates for Antonius.[8] In *Georgics* 4.561, Octavian deals with the client-kingdoms on the Euphrates as part of the settlement following Actium, and in the *Aeneid* Augustus receives honours from conquered peoples and the submission of the Euphrates – undoubtedly representatives of the client-kingdoms on the Euphrates that had supported Antonius.[9] The Euphrates is portrayed by Vergil as a source of war and difficulty which Octavian/Augustus succeeded in subduing. The potentially unstable nature of territory on either side of the river in political and military terms is clearly reflected in these passages, and over the following century the loyalty of the client-kingdoms to Rome was at times questionable. The Euphrates was representative, therefore, of a point at which Roman power was under potential threat and in this sense represents a boundary.

An interesting reference made by Velleius Paterculus also conveys the idea of the Euphrates as symbolizing a boundary on its upper reaches between Roman and Parthian interests in the Augustan period.[10] In his coverage of Gaius Caesar's tour of the eastern provinces in AD 1, Velleius tells the story of an event he witnessed in which Gaius met Phraates V of Parthia on an island in the Euphrates. The Roman army was arrayed on one side of the river while the Parthian army faced them on the opposite bank. Gaius then entertained Phraates on the Roman side ('nostra ripa') before dining with Phraates on enemy soil ('regem in hostili epulatus est')

on the opposite bank. This is reflective of the representation of the Euphrates by Vergil. There is no indication as to where specifically this meeting took place; however, it immediately follows a report of Gaius meeting Tiberius while he was still in self-exile on Rhodes. It presumably took place in the vicinity of Zeugma. Late in the reign of Tiberius, a similar meeting took place between Vitellius and the Parthian king, which is discussed in more detail on p. 16.

From the establishment of the province of Syria by Pompey until shortly before the reign of Vespasian (AD 69–79) there is no evidence for a permanent Roman or Parthian military presence on the Euphrates, demonstrating that the Euphrates acted more as a symbolic or notional boundary rather than a practically defended one during this period. For a stretch of approximately 250 km downstream from the point at which the Euphrates emerges from the Taurus range at Commagene it was relatively easy in antiquity to cross the river as it had few significant obstacles on either bank. The river was not, therefore, a significant natural barrier on this section. The Syrian coastline in the vicinity of Antioch was potentially vulnerable for the Romans and the plains of Osrhoene and northern Mesopotamia were at risk for the Parthians, but there seems to have been no attempt to locate fortifications on the Euphrates in this period, indicating that neither empire sought the strict enforcement of the river as a boundary.[11]

Conflict between Rome and Parthia in the first 30 years of the existence of the province of Syria was often begun by the Romans, and it took place on both sides of the Euphrates. The most famous example is Crassus' battle with the Parthians near Carrhae, which ended disastrously in 53 BC. In 38 BC, as part of Marcus Antonius' abortive Parthian campaign, Roman forces besieged Samosata, the capital of Commagene, located close to the Euphrates on its right bank.[12] In the same campaign, Antonius' general, Bassus, was powerless to stop a Parthian force crossing the Euphrates; Zeugma was described as the bridge that the Parthians customarily used to cross the river.[13]

The evidence of ancient geographical observations

The Augustan geographer Strabo's description of the course of the Euphrates as it flowed through Armenia, Cappadocia, Commagene and into Syria provides some indication of the organization of these territories towards the end of the first century BC and the role the river played in this respect. While Strabo's work focuses more on geographical topography it provides some useful information regarding the Euphrates' role as a nominal or symbolic boundary. Strabo located the source of the Euphrates on the northern side of the Taurus mountains from where it initially flowed in a westerly direction through Armenia before turning south, cutting through the Taurus range between Armenia, Cappadocia and

Commagene.[14] In Strabo's description of these regions, the Taurus mountain range was also an important feature in defining territorial divisions. The city of Melitene in Cappadocia bordered Commagene to its south, suggesting that the Taurus on the right bank of the Euphrates represented a division between Cappadocia and Commagene.[15] On the left bank of the Euphrates, opposite Melitene in the very south of Cappadocia, lay the satrapy of Sophene, suggesting that the division between Armenia and Sophene lay somewhere to the north in the Taurus range on the left bank of the Euphrates.[16]

Cappadocia and Commagene were both kingdoms aligned with Rome by the time Strabo wrote, but the Parthians attempted to destabilize this relationship on a number of occasions. Armenia was the ongoing subject of dispute between Rome and Parthia, and Sophene on the left bank looked more to Parthia. Strabo's indication that Armenia and Sophene were divided from Cappadocia and Commagene by the Euphrates is reflective of the river's role as a boundary between Roman and Parthian influence, but it was far from a strictly defined and observed border and the situation in Armenia was key to this. It is possible that this stretch of the Euphrates was confirmed as a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests in the treaty between Augustus and Phraates IV in 20/19 BC, but the texts make no mention of any territorial arrangements resulting from the treaty.[17]

Writing approximately 70 years later, and perhaps reflecting the situation earlier, Pliny the Elder noted that after the Euphrates passed through the Taurus it flowed into the territory of the Orroei (Osrhoene) in Arabia on its left bank and divided this territory from Commagene on its right bank for a distance of three *schoeni*.[18] Pliny's reference to Arabia here is to Osrhoene, with its principal city at Edessa.[19] The kingdom of Osrhoene initially established its independence when it broke away from the declining Seleucid Empire in the late second century BC.[20] While it was able to maintain a level of independence from both Rome and Parthia, Osrhoene was largely within the Parthian sphere until the middle of the second century AD.[21] The evidence of Pliny writing in the reign of Vespasian indicates that the Euphrates had continued to act as a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests on this section of the river.[22] We do not know how far the territory of Osrhoene extended along the Euphrates on its left bank when Pliny wrote, but a reference made by Tacitus to events in AD 49 indicates that the kingdom of Osrhoene extended power to the left bank of the Euphrates bridge crossing at Apamea, opposite Zeugma, and some way along its banks.[23]

The Euphrates below Zeugma to the Khabur confluence

The *Parthian Stations* of Isidore of Charax, written late in the first century BC, is a particularly important source for understanding the situation on the

Euphrates below Zeugma at this time.[24] The *Parthian Stations* is claimed to be a description of the caravan route from Syria to India, but its final destination is actually thought to be modern Kandahar in Afghanistan.[25] At the time Isidore wrote, the caravans crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma to Apamea on the opposite bank and travelled overland to rejoin the river at Nicephorium on its left bank, approximately 150 km downstream from Zeugma. Strabo provides a description of the same route in the *Geographia*, and Ammianus Marcellinus also provides a description of the route as part of his account of Julian's campaign in 363.[26]

One of the most important observations made by Isidore is that at a location called Nabagath, where the river Abouras (Khabur) meets the Euphrates, 'the forces cross over to the Roman side'.[27] This appears to indicate that the Khabur, or more likely its confluence with the Euphrates, acted as a boundary with some military significance between Rome and Parthia. Millar suggests that Isidore was thinking of invading Roman armies when he made this reference, but concedes that it is possible that Isidore was referring to soldiers from either Rome or Parthia.[28] The Khabur runs from its confluence with the Euphrates in a northerly direction towards Nisibis in northern Mesopotamia. Nisibis and the territory to the west of the Khabur (that is, Osrhoene) were in the Parthian sphere at this time, suggesting that Isidore was probably not implying that the whole of the Khabur was a boundary. Instead, his reference may indicate that a boundary between the two powers existed in the vicinity of the confluence of the two rivers.

Further up the Euphrates from the Khabur confluence there are no indications of Roman fortifications on the right bank of the river dating to this period. Isidore unfortunately tells us nothing of settlements on the left bank of the Euphrates between Apamea and Nicephorium because the trade route ran overland between these two cities. On the route from Apamea to Nicephorium he listed Anthemusia, Batana, three otherwise unknown settlements that he called fortified places, then Ichnae and Nicephorium on the Euphrates. This section of the trade route appears to have followed the Balikh river, a small and intermittent tributary of the Euphrates.[29] The sizes of the fortified places Isidore referred to are not known, but they are an indication that some fortifications existed east of the Euphrates in territory under Parthian influence and that they were probably under the control of Osrhoene. On the Euphrates itself from Nicephorium to the confluence with the Khabur, Isidore noted walled villages on the left bank of the Euphrates – but he mentioned no fortifications.

Isidore's description of the trade route as it ran along the left bank did not make any mention of settlements on the right bank of the Euphrates between Nicephorium and the Khabur. There is archaeological evidence, however, for three fortifications on the right bank of this stretch of the river and these have been interpreted by some as Roman fortifications

dating to this period. More recently it is proposed that they are Diocletianic, with foundations belonging to the late Seleucid period. None of the ancient names of these sites is known and they are referred to here by their modern names. The first is Siffin, located approximately 15 km east of Nicephorium (modern Raqqa), while the next, Nouhaila (Nheyla), lies approximately 15 km further downstream. Another 17 km downstream from Nouhaila are the remains of a fortification known as Djazla. All are located on the edge of the ravine carved by the flow of the Euphrates and have commanding views of the irrigated flood plain. (See Map 3.1 on p. 68.)

In a recent article that focuses primarily on Djazla, Napoli concludes that its walls are Diocletianic but probably lie on foundations dating to the late Seleucid period.[30] Napoli notes similarities in the establishment and construction of Djazla to Nouhaila and Siffin, and suggests a similar chronology for the other two fortifications as well.[31] This conclusion rests primarily on a comparison with the walls of Dura Europos, which are now dated to the middle of the second century BC. Napoli suggests that all three fortifications were established as a result of the growing Parthian threat to Seleucid Mesopotamia and Syria, which developed in the latter half of the second century BC.[32] While it is possible that Roman garrisons occupied these sites without making architectural changes, there is no archaeological

Figure 1.1 Remains of the late Roman fortification at Nouhaila.

Figure 1.2 The east wall at Djazla on the right bank of the Euphrates.

evidence of Roman occupation at any of them until the reign of Diocletian.[33] As a consequence, Napoli concludes that Roman control on the Euphrates did not extend any further than Zeugma at the end of the first century BC. He suggests that it was only after the Roman victories over the Parthians in 163–165 that Rome extended its control of the Euphrates beyond Sura, and that these fortifications did not play a role in Roman strategy until the early fourth century AD.[34]

The Yale excavation team to Dura Europos in the 1920s and 1930s appears to have used Isidore's observations as evidence for a Roman frontier established on the Khabur river resulting from the peace agreement with Parthia in 20/19 BC. Their conclusions were strongly influenced by a desire to explain what they thought were Parthian changes to the walls at Dura in the last half of the first century BC. In the preliminary reports dealing with the fortifications, it was concluded that the walls at Dura underwent considerable work in the early Parthian period of control of the city.[35] This was held to be a response to growing tension between Rome and Parthia, *c*.65–20 BC. The suggestion that the frontiers were fixed at the Khabur in the agreement between Augustus and Phraates IV resulted in the conclusion that Dura was the closest major Parthian fortification facing the Romans on the Euphrates on the southern side of the Khabur confluence.[36] It is now thought that the defences at Dura were constructed in the late Seleucid period and that the Parthians did little to the walls during the period in which they controlled the city.[37] As noted earlier, the smaller fortifications of Djazla, Nouhaila and Siffin, on the right bank of the Euphrates, are thought to have been constructed by the Seleucids in the last half of the second century BC, at a similar time to the wall circuit at Dura, when the Parthian threat to Seleucid possessions in Mesopotamia and eastern Syria became significant. They are not indicative of a Roman attempt to fortify the right bank of the Euphrates north-west of the

Khabur as a result of an agreement to make the Khabur the boundary between the two empires.

At the time Isidore wrote, the Euphrates flowed between Osrhoene on its left bank and territory that the Palmyrenes may have had the most significant influence over on its right bank. It is possible to argue that the Parthians exercised control of the left bank through their influence in Osrhoene and that the Romans exercised control of the right bank through their influence over Palmyra; however, the extent of Palmyrene or Osrhoenian territorial control to the banks of the Euphrates during this period is difficult to establish. It is argued in Chapter 2 that the nature of Roman control of Palmyra itself is difficult to define clearly at this time. It is unlikely that the Palmyrenes were in clear control of the right bank of the Euphrates between Sura and the Khabur confluence, and the situation was probably similar for Osrhoene on the left bank, but, just as the upper and middle Euphrates acted a symbolic boundary, Palmyra and Osrhoene may have exercised nominal control to this section of the Euphrates.[38] In the loose expression of territorial control along this section of the Euphrates it is likely that Rome's influence was stronger on the right bank and Parthia's on the left, as a result of the influence that each wielded in Palmyra and Osrhoene respectively.

On the basis of Isidore's observations regarding the confluence of the Khabur and Euphrates rivers, it is possible that the Euphrates ceased to be recognized as a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests beyond the Khabur confluence in the direction of southern Mesopotamia. This may indicate that the Khabur marked a boundary between Roman and Parthian influence on the right bank of the Euphrates. Control of the left bank of the Euphrates above the Khabur was notionally with Parthia through its influence in Osrhoene. Both the left and right banks of the Euphrates below the Khabur confluence were in the territory of Parapotamia controlled by Dura Europos, which was under some form of Parthian control at this stage; but the extent of Parthian power below the Khabur confluence is debatable.[39]

If the Khabur was a boundary at this stage, there is no evidence that the Romans sought to fortify or defend it at this time. The Parthians controlled the fortified city of Dura Europos approximately 60 km south-east of the Khabur confluence, but the evidence indicates that they neglected the city's defences.[40] The evidence from the whole of the Parthian period at Dura is reflective of economic connections with Roman Syria and the Near East, indicating that Dura's growth during the Parthian period was due more to the Roman presence in Syria than that of the Parthians, suggesting that if there was a boundary at the Khabur it was easily negotiated.[41]

Roman control on the right bank of the Euphrates to the Khabur river reflects influence in an area that extended well beyond the boundaries of provincial Syria, the eastern boundary of which appears to have been on

the Euphrates in the vicinity of Zeugma. There is evidence to indicate that from its upper reaches in Armenia and Cappadocia to its confluence with the Khabur the Euphrates acted as a symbolic boundary between Roman and Parthian interests from the middle of the first century BC to the middle of the first century AD, but the reality on the ground is that this was not a fortified boundary designed to establish a clear limit for the power of either empire. The Euphrates acted instead to promote connection and exchange through territory under Roman and Parthian influence, which the evidence from Dura Europos clearly indicates. Strabo reflects the situation late in the Augustan period in the following statement:

> The Euphrates and the land beyond it constitute the boundary of the Parthian empire. But the parts this side of the river are held by the Romans and the chieftains of the Arabians as far as Babylonia, some of these chieftains preferring to give ear to the Parthians and others to the Romans, to whom they are neighbours.[42]

The first century AD and the reign of Vespasian

In AD 37, at the instruction of Tiberius, Vitellius met with Artabanus II on the Euphrates to discuss an offer of friendship to the Parthian king following recent disturbances in Armenia.[43] A pontoon bridge was constructed and the two met in the middle of the river surrounded by each other's bodyguard. King Herod then entertained Vitellius and Artabanus in a pavilion constructed for the purpose. Another meeting between Roman and Parthian representatives was held at Zeugma in 49, which is discussed below, and in 71 Vespasian's son Titus met with a deputation from Vologaeses I at Zeugma where he was presented with a golden crown in recognition of his recent victory over the Jews.[44] The symbolism of these meetings is clearly reflective of the meeting between Gaius and Phraates V at the beginning of the first century. In its upper reaches the Euphrates retained its significance throughout the first half of the first century AD as a symbolic boundary between Roman and Parthian interests, as it had during the reign of Augustus.

The bridge crossing at Zeugma/Apamea was an important element in the Euphrates acting as a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests. Zeugma's importance as a crossing for troops dates back to the Seleucid period, and its potential military importance to the Romans was indicated when Gaius Cassius Longinus, governor of Syria, placed a camp there in 49.[45] The camp appears to have been temporary and was established when Cassius conducted Meherdates, a pro-Roman claimant to the Parthian throne, to Zeugma where they were met by Parthian nobles as well as the kings of Osrhoene and Adiabene.[46] The rival claimant, Gotarzes, was anti-Roman and succeeded in gaining the support of the Osrhoenian and Adiabenian

kings whose allegiance was initially thought to be with the Romans. Gotarzes was successful and Meherdates' supporters fled. It is significant that Zeugma acted as the meeting place for the rulers of the lands on both sides of the river and indicates further that this section of the Euphrates was mutually recognized as a boundary.[47] For Cassius it probably represented the boundary of the province of Syria, and for Osrhoene it represented part of the kingdom's western boundary – which was probably the case in the first century BC.

The war with Parthia over Armenia, which occupied the middle years of Nero's reign, culminated in his crowning of Tiridates, the Roman nominee to the Armenian throne, in 65.[48] This is the immediate background to Vespasian's reorganization of territory to the south and west of Armenia, which is discussed on pp. 18–20.[49] In the negotiations between Rome and Parthia after the war, Tacitus reported that the Parthians requested the Romans to withdraw to the Euphrates, as was the case before the war.[50] While there is no evidence that Nero accepted this as a condition of the settlement, it is an indication of the status quo up to this point and is reflective of the Parthian request put to Pompey 130 years earlier.[51] During the conflict between Rome and Parthia over Armenia, Nero's general, Corbulo, crossed the Euphrates and occupied the opposite bank before coming under attack from the Parthians and withdrawing to the other side.[52] Tacitus reported that Corbulo erected a line of defences so that a pontoon bridge could be constructed to facilitate the crossing.[53] When Corbulo later marched from Syria to confront the Parthians in Armenia, he left part of his forces to hold forts on the Euphrates.[54] These were probably the defences he had constructed when the Euphrates was bridged.

A major reorganization of territory on the upper Euphrates took place in the reign of Vespasian and resulted in the long-term establishment of Roman forces on or close to the Euphrates for the first time. This was part of a broader reorganization of the eastern client-kingdoms into formally administered territory.[55] This reorganization saw the province of Cappadocia receive a garrison, and it resulted in the incorporation of the client-kingdom of Commagene into the province of Syria, forming part of Vespasian's wider reorganization of the eastern provinces after the capture of Judaea in 70/71.[56] This was not the first time that a reorganization of territory on the upper Euphrates had taken place in the first century AD, but in earlier times it had not been accompanied by fortifications and troops.[57] In the reign of Tiberius the client-kingdoms of Cappadocia and Commagene were converted into provincial territory, but Commagene reverted to client-kingdom status again under Caligula and Claudius.[58] In 54, the kingdom of Sophene, on the left bank of the Euphrates between Armenia and Osrhoene, became a Roman client-kingdom, reflecting Roman moves to increase its influence on the other side of the Euphrates.[59] The Roman approach to the client-kingdoms on

the Euphrates clearly vacillated in the first half of the first century AD until Vespasian's more decisive actions settled the situation in the long term and marked Roman intentions to extend power in territory that was more under Parthian influence.

Territorial reorganization under Vespasian

One of the significant changes that marked Vespasian's territorial reorganization was the establishment of four legions on or near the Euphrates from its upper reaches in Cappodocia to the north-eastern limits of the province of Syria at Zeugma. Vespasian established a legion each in Satala and Melitene, the two principal cities of Cappadocia. According to Suetonius, this was due to the incursions of the barbarians, presumably the Parthians, and at the same time Vespasian appointed a consular governor to replace its equestrian one.[60] Vespasian's reorganization took some years to develop and does not appear to have been as well planned as the benefit of hindsight might suggest.[61] There is evidence to suggest that the reorganization that was begun in the early years of Vespasian's reign when Caesennius Paetus was *legatus* of Syria, was refined and developed under Marcus Ulpius Traianus, the father of the future emperor and *legatus* of Syria from 73–77.[62] Satala probably received the newly created Legio XVI Flavia Firma, while Melitene was garrisoned by Legio XII Fulminata, previously based at Rephanea in southern Syria.[63] In 72/73 the client-kingdom of Commagene, between Cappadocia and the province of Syria on the right bank of the Euphrates, was added to the province of Syria. Samosata, the principal city of Commagene, received the legionary garrison of Legio VI Ferrata and perhaps part of Legio III Gallica, while the important bridge crossing at Zeugma further down the river was probably garrisoned a few years earlier by Legio IV Scythica.[64]

The extent of the Roman military presence on the Euphrates further south from Zeugma at the time of Vespasian's military reorganization is difficult to establish. The discovery of a Roman milestone 27 km north-east of Palmyra dating to 75 is often used as evidence for the construction of a Roman road leading from Palmyra to the Euphrates at Sura.[65] This conclusion has resulted in the assertion that Sura was garrisoned by Roman troops from the time of the Flavians, which is then used to claim that there were Roman outposts extending as far as Birtha Asporakos (Zenobia) for the protection of the province of Syria in the first century AD.[66] The discovery of this milestone is the only evidence used to conclude that Sura was garrisoned at this stage, and it is clearly slender evidence on which to base an assumption about Sura's fortification at this time.[67]

Commagene's annexation and inclusion in the province of Syria, at a similar time to the transformation of Cappadocia into a military province, may be used to suggest that the stretch of the Euphrates from its upper

reaches in Cappadocia to the bridge crossing at Zeugma represented a practical line designed for the defence of Syria by the end of Vespasian's reign.[68] This section of the Euphrates through Cappadocia, Commagene and Syria down to Zeugma now had four legions in fortifications close to or on its right bank – with obvious defensive benefits. While able to act in a defensive capacity, the legions strengthened Roman power across the Euphrates in Armenia and allowed attack on Parthian-influenced Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. The garrisons at Satala, Melitene and Samosata would have been particularly useful in this way, and the garrison at Zeugma guaranteed the bridge crossing into Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. The proximity of the legions to the Euphrates would also allow the quick movement of troops down the river, which is what appears to have taken place in the 160s. In Vespasian's reorganization of territory, the role of the Euphrates had developed from symbolic boundary to a more practical and military one that assisted the Romans in later territorial expansion.

In the ongoing debate about the nature of Roman frontiers, Vespasian's organization of the legions on the upper and middle Euphrates is often used in support of particular theories. The obvious offensive purposes of Vespasian's actions have been rightly emphasized, but there is also some merit in the sentiment of caution expressed by Crow that 'it is important not to predict a frontier system for the Flavian period' because the system took some years to develop.[69] The defensive purposes of military developments on the Euphrates under the Flavians have also been downplayed to an extent in the ongoing debate about the nature of Roman frontiers, but it is important not to understate the defensive capacity of four legions located in relatively close proximity to each other and to the Euphrates.

An important part of analysing the effects of Vespasian's establishment of this concentration of troops is to consider the context of his reorganization of the provincial system in the Roman Near East.[70] Along with the reorganization of Judaea, Commagene and Cappadocia, the smaller kingdoms of Chalcis and Emesa were also absorbed into Roman territory, while some suggest that Palmyra was brought firmly within Roman provincial territory under Vespasian.[71] The importance of Syria and the client-kingdoms of the Euphrates to Vespasian's elevation to the principate had demonstrated to him the potential importance of the region to the stability of his reign. Tacitus reported that after Vespasian was first hailed as Augustus at Alexandria on 1 July 69, the soldiers in Judaea did so on 3 July, while those based in the province of Syria – together with the client-kings Sohaemus of Sophene and Antiochus of Commagene – acclaimed Vespasian as Augustus on 15 July.[72] Much of the momentum for Vespasian's elevation to the principate came from the eastern provinces, which he set about to completely reorganize soon after overcoming Vitellius. With the disappearance of the client-kingdoms and the expansion of Roman provincial territory, the aim was to reduce the capacity of the

Parthians to exert influence in the territories on the Euphrates. Indeed, Josephus tells us that the reason for Commagene's annexation under Vespasian was that its king, Antiochus, had colluded with the Parthians even after hailing Vespasian as Augustus.[73] This was a considerable problem, according to Josephus, as Samosata in Commagene would allow easy passage for the Parthians in the event of a war with Rome.[74] Writing approximately 20 years after these events, the poet Statius gives the impression that defence was an issue on this section of the Euphrates, particularly at Zeugma. In the *Silvae*, Statius says: 'Achaemenium secludit Zeugmate Persen' (Zeugma sets bounds to the Achaemenian Persian) and 'Zeugma, Latinae pacis iter ...' (Zeugma, the way of the peace of Rome).[75] When considered in the context of Vergil's poetic use of the potential dangers posed by unrest, and invasions on the Euphrates during the civil war between Octavian and Antonius, it is possible to demonstrate a long-held concern in literature about invasions across the Euphrates. It is important, therefore, not to underestimate the defensive significance of the fortifications and legions on the Euphrates under Vespasian and his successors.

From Trajan to Lucius Verus

In the first half of the second century, evidence emerges to indicate that Roman power on the Euphrates and across it continued to expand. It is argued that as a consequence of Palmyrene control of sites on the lower middle Euphrates, the Romans controlled the Euphrates below Dura in the district of Anatha because they controlled Palmyra in the first century AD. Datable evidence demonstrates that there was a Palmyrene presence at the islands of Anatha, Bijan and Telbis on the Euphrates as early as 98, and this is used to argue that the Palmyrenes were in military control of these sites.[76] By implication, therefore, fortifications at Anatha and its environs were under Roman control, but Dura Europos, further up the river, was under Parthian control as the papyri of this period demonstrate. If this was the case, the Euphrates below its confluence with the Khabur was under partial Roman and Parthian control, possibly indicating that the situation as Strabo described it late in the Augustan period still maintained a century later. The nature of Roman control over Palmyra and its territory at this time, however, is not necessarily as obvious as current scholarship suggests, meaning that conclusions about Roman control of sites in the vicinity of Anatha are difficult to make. The complexities of the relationship between Rome and Palmyra with respect to the situation on the Euphrates are considered in more detail in Chapter 2.

Following the reign of Vespasian the garrisons of Satala, Melitene, Samosata and Zeugma on the upper and middle Euphrates remained in their locations until Trajan's Parthian invasion 40 years later. They also appear to have remained at these locations after Trajan's gains were

Figure 1.3 Remains of the triumphal arch of Trajan at Dura Europos (AD 116).

largely given up by Hadrian. Trajan's Parthian war of 114–117 saw a brief extension of Roman control along the Euphrates to Dura Europos and almost certainly beyond, but it is well known that his gains were short-lived and barely survived the last year of his reign.[77]

While the outcome of Trajan's campaigns saw little added to Roman territory, the campaigns had some important long-term ramifications in the eastern provinces. A part of Trajan's army had marched all the way to Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and even beyond to the Persian Gulf. Trajan himself visited Spasinou Charax, the capital of Characene, a kingdom largely independent of Parthia that had important connections with Palmyra.[78] Dio argued that the motive for Trajan's invasion was ultimately a desire for glory, but Fronto referred to the economic motives for Trajan's invasion when he described the emperor's reorganization of the customs dues (*portoria*) on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, a move possibly directed at controlling the price of goods when they arrived in the cities of the empire.[79] It is probable that Trajan's war weakened the Parthian presence on the middle Euphrates, giving the Palmyrenes the opportunity to strengthen their presence at sites on the river.[80] If this was the case, Palmyra developed the mechanism through which Rome would come to control the middle Euphrates more directly between the reigns of Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus, and then formally in the early decades of the third century AD.

Of particular importance in the invasion of Parthia was Trajan's use of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers as effective invasion routes. Indeed, addressing Lucius Verus in 163, Fronto referred to Trajan advancing the Roman Empire beyond the hostile rivers, possibly referring to the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.[81] In the centuries that followed, numerous Roman invasions of the Parthian/Persian empires followed the same routes and were often undertaken in conscious emulation of Trajan.[82] The brief establishment of the province of Mesopotamia under Trajan was probably also an example later followed by Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus.[83] The formal establishment of Roman control across the Euphrates to the upper Tigris, together with the glory that would be gained from defeating the Parthians, became increasingly important to emperors later in the second century and beyond.

If there was any link between Vespasian's provincial reorganization in the 70s and the invasion of Parthia under Trajan it was in the form of concerns over Parthian activity in Armenia. The Parthian failure to seek Trajan's consent before crowning a new king of Armenia, by virtue of the agreement between Rome and Parthia made during the reign of Nero, was what had brought Trajan to the East in the first place.[84] The first year of Trajan's eastern campaign was spent establishing a section of Armenia as a Roman province under the authority of the governor of Cappadocia.[85] The garrisons at Satala and Melitene on the upper Euphrates in Cappadocia, established in Vespasian's reign, probably played an important role in pressing Roman claims in Armenia under Trajan while Parthian activity in Armenia potentially threatened the provinces of Syria and Cappadocia.[86] The problems between Rome and Parthia over Armenia were central to conflict between the two great powers in the first century AD, and this continued for centuries afterwards.[87]

The activity begun by Vespasian on the upper Euphrates was continued to some degree during the reign of his sons and was strengthened and consolidated under Trajan and Hadrian.[88] Legio XVI Flavia Firma, which had been the garrison at Satala, was transferred to Samosata after Trajan's death, while Legio XV Apollinaris formed the new garrison at Satala.[89] There was also a fortification constructed during Trajan's reign at Zimara on the upper Euphrates.[90] By the reign of Hadrian there were not only the legionary bases at Satala and Melitene but also a legionary vexillation at Trapezus on the Black Sea. Further to this an eight-metre-wide, largely unbroken stretch of 'military' road has been traced along the right bank of the Euphrates north from Melitene for a distance of approximately 160 km.[91] According to Mitford, 'a series of auxiliary forts seems to have stood on, or at points east of, the road at intervals of a day's march'.[92] This is held to be indicative of a strongly fortified line connected by a major road from the Black Sea to Melitene running through Cappadocia and western Armenia.[93] With regard to archaeological evidence for fortifi-

cations, however, Mitford admitted that 'most of the sites hitherto proposed … should be dismissed, but genuine sites have proved elusive. Only at Dascusa has excavation been possible, to reveal fourth-century work, rather than the original fort'.[94] Some reservations, therefore, should be expressed regarding this road as representative of a line of fortifications in the early second century but it is clear evidence of the longer-term military presence on the upper Euphrates.

Given the disputes that had taken place over Armenia between Rome and Parthia since the middle of the first century BC, and particularly in the reign of Nero, this military organization strengthened Roman power in Armenia considerably and Trajan formally established Roman power there by setting up a short-lived province of Armenia.[95] If there were smaller fortifications between the legionary bases, and if the road traced by Mitford was built by the early years of Hadrian's reign, the fast movement of troops into Armenia could be achieved and the defensive potential of these fortifications should also not be underestimated.

The campaigns of Lucius Verus and their aftermath

Under Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, a successful war against Parthia resulted in an extension of Roman control along the Euphrates. This is reflected in a military presence below the confluence with the Khabur and also in increased power in northern Mesopotamia and Osrhoene in the second half of the second century AD. The changes that came about under Verus were later consolidated by Septimius Severus when he reorganized territory in Syria, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia.

The catalyst for Lucius Verus' Parthian war, like Trajan's war, was a development in Armenia. Taking advantage of the succession of the new Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in 161, the Parthian king, Vologaeses III, placed a member of his own family on the Armenian throne without reference to Rome, again in contravention of the agreement under Nero.[96] Fighting broke out between Roman and Parthian forces on the upper Euphrates soon after and Syria came under threat. The initial outcome for Rome was serious, with the death of the Roman governor of Cappadocia and the destruction of a Roman legion.[97] Lucius Verus marched to Antioch to supervise the Roman military response. The eventual outcome of the fighting that followed saw significant Roman gains in 163. By 165 a Roman nominee occupied the Armenian throne, the Parthians were expelled from Mesopotamia and Nisibis was occupied by Roman troops. Osrhoene became a dependent kingdom of Rome, while control along the Euphrates was considerably extended.[98]

The Roman successes against Parthia were achieved mostly under the leadership of the *legatus* of Legio III Gallica, Avidius Cassius, and they were clearly considerable. In Mesopotamia evidence of a military nature

demonstrates that these victories had long-lasting outcomes. There is no clear evidence of a permanent Roman military presence in Mesopotamia as a result of Verus' success over the Parthians, but it should not be ruled out as there was a Roman presence at Nisibis before the Parthian campaigns of Septimius Severus in the 190s.[99] During the wars of Verus, the Romans succeeded in capturing the fortresses of Dausara, Nicephorium and Dura Europos, removing the more immediate Parthian threat to Antioch and the cities of Syria.[100] Fronto's claim that Dausara and Nicephorium were captured from the Parthians at this time indicates that the Parthians had previously been in control of the left bank of the Euphrates further west than Sura. The Parthians had probably not held them for long, but the claim that they were captured by the Romans indicates that the Parthians had probably garrisoned them.[101]

The status of Sura, which lay on the opposite bank of the river between Nicephorium and Dausara, is uncertain at this time. It is thought that Sura represented 'the eastern limit of Roman power before the advance to the middle Euphrates' under Verus, but, as discussed earlier, evidence for the fortification of Sura prior to the reign of Septimius Severus is problematic.[102] We have already seen that a Roman milestone discovered near Palmyra is the only evidence of a Roman military road leading from Palmyra to the Euphrates at Sura and it is the only basis on which Sura is claimed to have been fortified by the reign of Vespasian.[103] It is perhaps telling that Fronto referred to the capture of fortifications by the Romans on the Euphrates both upstream and downstream from Sura but not to Sura itself, perhaps indicating that Sura was not a significant fortification at this time. Lucian refers to a major battle between Roman and Parthian forces near Sura, but this need not indicate that it was fortified.

Further to the battle near Sura, Lucian also referred to a large battle at Europos on the Euphrates half way between Zeugma and Hierapolis.[104]

Figure 1.4 Remains of the fortification at Sura, base of Legio XVI Flavia Firma.

From the evidence of both Fronto and Lucian, the Euphrates, as it looped from Sura up to the vicinity of Zeugma, was the focus of intense fighting between the Romans and Parthians, and there were fortifications held by both Rome and Parthia on the river. This section of the Euphrates acted as a practical line for the defence of Roman Syria and Antioch at this time and as a means of the Parthians attempting to halt the Roman advance into Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. For the Romans the defence was successful and it was quickly turned to attack, which the Parthians were unable to resist. The archaeological evidence from Dura Europos shows that as a result of defeating the Parthians the Romans were able to extend their military power beyond the Khabur confluence, and it is probable that Roman military power extended even further down the Euphrates than Dura.

The evidence, as always, has its limitations. Lucian, a contemporary from Samosata, just upstream from where a majority of the fighting took place, complained of the limited knowledge of the war against the Parthians under Verus. For Lucian, many contemporary accounts of the war were either embellished, too brief or even fictional.[105] Thanks to Lucian and Fronto, however, there is enough evidence to show that a major war with the Parthians had exposed the vulnerability of Antioch to attacks directed from the Euphrates where it turned to the north above Sura. The Parthian concentration of troops on this section of the river may have occurred due to the considerable Roman fortification that had taken place further up the river from Zeugma during and after the reign of Vespasian. A potential Parthian attack on Roman territory had been effectively pushed south as a result, but this made Antioch and northern Syria vulnerable. As the situation in Armenia had again been the catalyst for conflict between Rome and Parthia, a Parthian attack on this section of the Euphrates may also have been designed to draw Roman troops away from their bases further up the Euphrates. Unfortunately for the Parthians, this seems to have demonstrated the defensive strength that the legions and fortifications on the upper and middle Euphrates provided. Troops located in garrisons further up the river could be moved south along the river to meet a Parthian threat to Syria and Antioch quickly. Following the Roman victories over the Parthian forces on the Euphrates, troops advanced down the river and took advantage of the Parthian retreat by extending Roman power further along the Euphrates. In this case, the Euphrates fortifications and their garrisons can be shown to have acted effectively in both a defensive and offensive capacity.

The outcome of the military campaigns of Lucius Verus changed the nature of the middle Euphrates from a Roman perspective. The now stronger Roman presence in Armenia and the new dependency of the kingdom of Osrhoene essentially brought both banks of a large section of the Euphrates under more direct Roman control.[106] The extension of control and a military presence further along the middle Euphrates to Dura

Europos brought troops, probably Palmyrene auxiliaries, closer to Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and it also brought them closer to the desert kingdom of Hatra with which Rome would establish good relations in the third century. Closely connected with this is the increase in Roman power on the Khabur in the direction of Nisibis. While the extent and nature of the Roman military presence in Mesopotamia before the reign of Septimius Severus is not entirely clear, Roman control of the middle Euphrates and the lower Khabur came to play an important role in strengthening and supporting Roman power in Mesopotamia in the third century AD. The Khabur was also the means by which Mesopotamia and Syria were connected, and this becomes more evident following the formation of the Roman province of Mesopotamia under Septimius Severus.

The Parthian wars of Septimius Severus

Having served *c.* AD 180 as *legatus* of Legio IV Scythica at Zeugma, Septimius Severus returned to Syria in 194 to confront Pescennius Niger who had proclaimed himself emperor at Antioch in the previous year.[107] It seems that the kings of Osrhoene and Hatra had supported Niger, and the Parthians had taken advantage of the civil war to strengthen their influence in the region.[108] These were the motives for Severus' campaigns in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, and later against Hatra. Severus took control of Syria quickly and in 195 successfully campaigned against the Parthians in Mesopotamia where forces from Osrhoene, Adiabene and the Arabians (probably Hatra) had begun to besiege Nisibis.[109] It seems that the Edessan king in particular had conspired to rid the kingdom of Roman control by taking advantage of the civil war between Septimius Severus and Pescennius Niger.[110] The siege of Nisibis indicates that it was under Roman military control at this time, but it is difficult to estimate how much earlier this had taken place.[111]

The result of Severus' first Parthian campaign was the conversion of part of the kingdom of Osrhoene into a Roman province and the retention of a client-kingdom at Edessa based on a much reduced portion of the former kingdom.[112] Severus prosecuted a second and more significant war against the Parthians in 197–198 in response to an attack on Mesopotamia in which Nisibis had almost fallen.[113] Once successful in Mesopotamia, Severus invaded Parthia, marched down the Euphrates and captured Babylon and Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[114] The emperor attacked Hatra on his return from Parthia late in 198 or early in 199, and again in 200; but he was unsuccessful in both cases.[115]

The important outcomes of Severus' campaigns in the 190s included the formation of the province of Mesopotamia, the establishment of the province of Osrhoene and the creation of the dependent kingdom of Edessa.[116] Important also was the division of Syria into the two provinces

Map 1.1 The Euphrates south of Zeugma (Ross Burns).

of Coele Syria and Syria Phoenice.[117] The northern half of the old province of Syria constituted Coele Syria and it was in this new, smaller province that the stretch of the Euphrates from Samosata to Dura Europos flowed. The city of Palmyra, more closely linked with the Euphrates through cities such as Dura Europos in Coele Syria, actually became a part of the province of Syria Phoenice.[118] It has also been argued recently that the kingdom of Hatra formed an alliance with Rome soon after the unsuccessful Severan attempts to capture it, but the evidence for such an alliance is not clear until the 230s.[119]

The province of Mesopotamia occupied the area of northern Mesopotamia. It lay to the east of the new province of Osrhoene and the

client-kingdom of Edessa, across the Khabur river and as far east as the upper Tigris.[120] The inclusion of much of the Khabur river in the province of Mesopotamia in the third century AD is indicated by a papyrus of 245 from a village thought to be near modern Hasseke, located just to the west of the Khabur.[121] The papyrus is a petition from a villager to Julius Priscus who is named as *Praefectus Mesopotamiae*, indicating that he had jurisdiction over this section of the Khabur. This is thought to reflect the situation at the time of the province's formation 50 years earlier.

The province of Mesopotamia was created by 198 and received two of three newly raised Parthian legions. Both legions seem to have been established there after the first war of 194/195, I Parthica at Singara and III Parthica probably at Nisibis.[122] The *coloniae* and major cities/fortresses of the new province were Nisibis, Singara and Rhesaina.[123] The province was governed by a *praefectus* of equestrian rank, and its garrison of two legions – the same number as Coele Syria – demonstrates the military and defensive role it was designed to play.[124] The formation of the province took Roman administration and a permanent military presence further east than it had ever been before. It is true that Trajan had established a short-lived province of Mesopotamia approximately 80 years earlier, and from the mid-160s Mesopotamia perhaps experienced a Roman military presence, but Severus' establishment of the province was a long-term undertaking. According to Dio, Septimius Severus said that he had gained this territory in order to make it a bulwark for Syria.[125] Dio's report of Severus' claim is telling with regard to the longer-term significance of Mesopotamia following its formation. Increased power and authority in Syria resulted in the third century. This is the context in which the Roman military presence on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers needs to be considered, a point argued in Chapters 3 and 4. Dio was ultimately critical of the move because Rome had taken control of more territory that had been traditionally Parthian and this led to the empire becoming even more embroiled in wars and disputes with its eastern neighbour.[126]

It is difficult to be precise about the territory encompassed by Mesopotamia as precision seems not to have existed in antiquity. Roman texts referring to Mesopotamia before the last years of the second century do not always mention the area that would become the province of Mesopotamia from Severus' reign. In the second half of the first century AD, for example, Pliny the Elder located what he called the Prefecture of Mesopotamia in the western portion of what was then the kingdom of Osrhoene, containing the principal towns of Anthemusia and Nicephorium.[127] Singara, which would form an important legionary base in the province of Mesopotamia under Septimius Severus and later emperors, was described in the same passage by Pliny as the capital of an Arabian tribe called the Praetavi. The province of Mesopotamia in the early third century comprised quite different territory to the earlier

descriptions, but it probably bore similarities to its definition under Trajan.[128] Lucian of Samosata, however, complained that contemporary writers in the 160s were so ill-informed about Mesopotamia and where it lay that they made serious errors in locating it and the cities it contained.[129] Some precision, however, can be established. The area that comprised the province was focused on the important cities of Nisibis, Singara and Rhesaina, and part of the Khabur river lay within the province.

In the years between Septimius Severus' reorganization of the eastern provinces and events late in the reign of Severus Alexander, the most significant developments relevant to Coele Syria, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia took place in the reign of Septimius Severus' son Caracalla. In 212/213, the client-kingdom of Edessa was itself abolished and became part of the province of Osrhoene, with the city of Edessa becoming a Roman *colonia*.[130] The provincial reorganization set in train following the territorial gains of Septimius Severus was for now complete. There were two provinces across the Euphrates and one of them lay on a section of the upper Tigris.

In 216, Caracalla, like his father, resolved on a Parthian campaign.[131] This took him across the Tigris to Arbela before his murder near Edessa in 217.[132] Caracalla's short-lived successor Macrinus met with defeat at the hands of the Parthian king Artabanus V at Nisibis, but Mesopotamia remained under Roman control.[133] The growing Sasanian challenge to the Parthians was developing, which may be reflected in the inability of Artabanus to press his victory in Mesopotamia. It was not until after the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians was complete that Roman power in Mesopotamia and on the middle Euphrates would be seriously challenged.

Conclusion

The extension of formal Roman control of territory – from the relatively small coastal province of Syria as it was established by Pompey to the considerable territory that comprised the provinces of Coele Syria, Syria Phoenice, Cappadocia, Mesopotamia and Osrhoene under Septimius Severus and his successors – represents impressive territorial gains for the Romans over a period of almost 300 years. Viewed over this period the expansion appears inexorable and unstoppable. There were, however, many difficulties and setbacks along the way, and the resources invested in undertaking some of this expansion were called into serious question in the early decades of the third century AD. The Euphrates river played a pivotal role in the development of Roman power through this period. The Roman military presence on the river grew and was at times considerable, but the defence of Roman territory, in particular Syria, was only one of a number of roles that the fortifications located along it played. The river at times acted in a defensive capacity, and the fortifications on its banks were

useful for this purpose. This was not necessarily the immediate intention of these fortifications, but in practice they came to be important for defence at times. The presence of fortifications on or near the river north from Zeugma not only allowed Roman troops easier access to Armenia but offered better protection to Cappadocia and Syria in the event of a major invasion. Osrhoene and Mesopotamia could be attacked by the Romans using the bridge crossing at Zeugma, but Zeugma was itself seen as providing security against Parthian attacks. The fortifications that had been placed on the upper and middle Euphrates under Vespasian had considerably strengthened Rome's hand in Armenia, while the section of the Euphrates from Europos to Sura had seen heavy fighting under Lucius Verus. The Euphrates had acted as a boundary between Rome and Parthia up to the reign of Lucius Verus and it became the basis of a line of fortifications on its upper reaches that served defensive and offensive purposes.

The Parthian wars of Septimius Severus and their aftermath saw important changes to the nature of Roman control in Syria and Mesopotamia. These came to have a profound effect on Rome's relationship with the Parthian Empire in its last years, and particularly with the Sasanian Persians. The reign of Septimius Severus saw the formal establishment of Roman power in Mesopotamia with the formation of a Roman province garrisoned by two permanent legions. His reign also saw the division of Syria into two new provinces and the establishment of numerous fortifications on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers. The period of Severus' rule also provides the earliest clear evidence of the formal inclusion of Palmyra within provincial territory. A province of Osrhoene was established and a much-reduced client-kingdom of Edessa maintained. Roman power now formally extended across the Euphrates into northern Mesopotamia as far as the upper Tigris. The Euphrates below the Khabur confluence was also under Roman control and experienced a military presence. The territory in between this stretch of the Euphrates and the Tigris was partly controlled by the kingdom of Hatra, but east of the Euphrates and west of the Tigris below Dura lay inhospitable land that probably acted as a natural barrier to troops from either empire. Below the Khabur, the Euphrates was a major transport route and its irrigated banks were an area of important agricultural production.[134] This is particularly important to the history of the region in the first half of the third century AD. The results of Septimius Severus' actions saw much of Rome's power and influence across the Euphrates formally organized and the development of a frontier zone that was based more on the Tigris. The Roman Empire had now formally extended as far east as it had ever been and the Parthians seem to have been unable to challenge this expansion effectively. For the Romans, it would be a very different story following the overthrow of the Parthians by the Sasanian Persians approximately 30 years later.

2

PALMYRA AND ROME FROM THE MID-FIRST CENTURY BC TO THE THIRD CENTURY AD

Introduction

At the same time that the Roman Empire extended power across the Euphrates and into Mesopotamia in the second half of the second century AD, the nature of Roman power changed at Palmyra also. Rome's presence in the Near East had been central to Palmyra's emergence as an important city, and from the middle of the first century BC to the early third century AD Roman power and influence at Palmyra continued to grow. There is a considerable corpus of textual and epigraphic material that indicates the unique nature of Palmyra's status and its relationship with the Romans during this period. Until the reign of Trajan, it seems that Roman involvement with Palmyra was driven largely by economic factors. In the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian the earliest evidence emerges for a Roman military interest in Palmyra, this taking the form of recruiting Palmyrene archers for service in other parts of the empire. It is not until the years immediately following Lucius Verus' extension of power along the Euphrates and in Mesopotamia that evidence indicating a permanent military presence at Palmyra itself emerges. The Palmyrene presence on the middle Euphrates and Rome's increasing power at Palmyra became an important factor in Rome's extension of control along the Euphrates after Verus' victories, and it bolstered Roman power in Mesopotamia. Roman power at Palmyra became more formalized as a result of Rome's growing military interest in Palmyra and its territory, and this culminated in the context of territorial reorganization under the Severans. Before this, Roman power was deliberately less formal so as not to interfere with Palmyra's trading success.

Palmyra's protection of the caravans and the development of trade

The ability which the Palmyrenes developed and exploited to protect the caravans originating in and destined for the Persian Gulf became an essential aspect in the relationship between Rome and Palmyra. The geographical

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location of Palmyra, half way between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates, gave it the opportunity to act as an intermediary for trade bound for the Roman Empire through the ports of the eastern Mediterranean. It was able to do the same for trade destined for the Persian Gulf. The ability to protect trade gave Palmyra the opportunity to levy tariffs on products that passed through the oasis bound for and originating in the Roman Empire, and this was the source of Palmyra's considerable wealth. The Palmyrenes developed a reputation for protecting the caravans with units of mounted archers commanded by *strategoi* as they journeyed to and from the Persian Gulf along the Euphrates and across the Palmyrene desert.[1] It was not just this ability that contributed to Palmyra's success because there is evidence to show that the Palmyrenes were involved in the sea trade routes to India and also around the Arabian peninsula. The evidence is not clear, but it is possible that the Palmyrene archers came to operate as a permanent or standing army in the second century for the purposes of protecting trade.[2]

Palmyra's provision of effective protection to the caravans meant a more reliable supply of exotic and luxury goods demanded in the Roman Empire. Its trading success began soon after the Romans established the province of Syria under Pompey, and its growth in wealth was closely linked to the Roman presence in the Near East. Until the early second century AD, Roman power and influence at Palmyra continued to develop and was expressed in the Roman control of tariff levels on goods as they passed through the city. It was not until the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian that Rome employed the skills of the Palmyrene archers, who had so successfully protected the trade routes, and began using them in frontier regions in other parts of the empire. This continued in the second century until Palmyrene auxiliary units commanded by Palmyrenes who had served in the Roman army were organized as the nucleus of the first identifiable permanent military presence at Palmyra. Palmyrene archers probably formed the nucleus of the auxiliary units that garrisoned Dura Europos on the Euphrates and Koptos in Egypt in the second half of the second century AD. The Palmyrene auxiliary units were essential in assisting Roman consolidation of gains made along the Euphrates, while protecting Palmyra from desert tribal attacks – given its obvious wealth.

Palmyra took advantage of the opportunity to exploit its geographical position for trade as the Roman presence in the Near East and Syria expanded through the first and second centuries AD in particular. Following the collapse of what remained of the Seleucid Empire in northern Syria and the growing rivalry between Rome and Parthia for control of former Seleucid possessions, the whole region went through periods of instability. Rome and Parthia, and a number of smaller kingdoms such as Pontus and Armenia, competed with each other for control of territory in northern Syria and Mesopotamia. The set-back suffered by Rome at the loss of

Crassus and his legions in 53 BC had the effect of halting Roman expansion in the East. Antonius' setbacks in the East from the late 40s to the early 30s BC, coupled with the crippling civil war with Octavian, also contributed to instability. The situation in southern Syria from the middle of the first century BC to the middle of the first century AD was also volatile. The Nabataean kingdom competed with Rome for control of the regions around Damascus and also in Judaea. Palmyra was able to take advantage of its desert location between northern and southern Syria during this time of instability, although Palmyra itself suffered when Antonius attacked it. A further chance for Palmyra to exploit its position for trade came after the peace settlement between Augustus and Phraates IV of Parthia in 20/19 BC.[3] The peace that ensued gave Palmyra the chance to capitalize significantly on its geographical position, which it had already begun to exploit for the safer passage of traded items.[4] As part of this process, some Palmyrenes had established a presence on the Euphrates at Dura Europos, but the community there appears to have been small and remained so until at least the middle of the first century AD.[5] Behind the growth of trade, and the necessity to provide it with protection across the desert from the Euphrates, was demand from Rome. Palmyra's ability to escort vulnerable caravans up the Euphrates and across its guarded desert routes from the Euphrates and on to the ports of the eastern Mediterranean became the economic lifeblood of the city. The wealth that Palmyra generated due to its handling of trade, however, did not substantially begin to express itself at the city until the first half of the first century AD.[6]

Palmyra's structure as a city and region was unlike that of neighbouring client-kingdoms, that comprised the regions to its north, west and south. These regions included Nabataea, Emesa, Commagene and Osrhoene. All were kingdoms which eventually became a part of Roman territory. For the first 100 years of the existence of Roman Syria, Palmyra was governed by a confederation of tribes and it is difficult to establish exactly what comprised Palmyrene territory in this period, particularly to the east. By the reign of Vespasian, the institutions of a Hellenistic city had been established and this structure emerged as the dominant civic authority at Palmyra in the second century AD. This was the means by which Palmyra dealt with the Roman provincial authority in Syria, while culturally it reflected Palmyra's growing status and inclusion in the world of the Roman Near East. Palmyra's relatively late development as a major urban settlement with the many prominent features of a Near Eastern city came as a result of its growth in wealth from trade. This saw a steady expansion in public, religious and funerary building. Palmyra benefited from, and quickly became a part of, the world of Near Eastern Hellenistic culture, which had continued in the western cities of the old Seleucid Empire and also flourished under Roman control. This, combined with a strong Semitic cultural identity, expressed vividly in religion and language,

created a unique culture at Palmyra that assisted its maintenance of an individual identity even when it was clearly a part of the Roman province of Syria Phoenice. It would ultimately be a key feature in Palmyra's demise.

Palmyra and Rome from Pompey to Vespasian

The nature of the relationship between Rome and Palmyra in this period is problematic and in modern scholarship there is considerable debate about it.[7] There are varying hypotheses, which range from Palmyra's inclusion in the province of Syria under Pompey, to its annexation to the empire early in the reign of Tiberius, to its establishment as a tributary city under Tiberius or its integration into the province of Syria under Vespasian. Some conclude that it is more appropriate to see Palmyra under Roman influence rather than under formal control in the first century AD, suggesting that it retained a level of semi-independence at this time.[8] The debate has implications for the nature of Roman control of territory to Palmyra's east, particularly on the Euphrates, as epigraphic evidence indicates a Palmyrene presence at a number of sites on the river late in the first century AD. If Palmyra was formally included in the province of Syria in the first century AD it is a reasonable proposition that the empire extended power to sites on the middle Euphrates below Dura at which Palmyrenes had a strong presence. If the arrangement was less formal than this, Roman power on this section of the middle Euphrates is more difficult to define.

The conclusion of Henri Seyrig in an important article published during the Second World War was that Palmyra had lost its independence by the reign of Tiberius and was annexed to the empire.[9] In drawing this conclusion, Seyrig saw Palmyra as being included in the province of Syria. This conclusion has been influential ever since and those supporting it have attempted to expand knowledge of the events using epigraphy and archaeology while discounting claims made in ancient literature.[10] The suggestion that Palmyra was a tributary city of the Romans from the reign of Tiberius was initially made by Mommsen, with the Semitic language expert G.A. Cooke concurring.[11] This position is also held by two of Palmyra's most distinguished excavators.[12] There are some who assert that Palmyra was within the province of Syria as early as Pompey's formation of the province, with one claiming that the Temple of Bel was constructed later to celebrate the event.[13] More cautious assessments hold that Palmyra was within the sphere of Roman influence in the reign of Tiberius, with the Flavian period providing firmer evidence for Palmyra's inclusion in the province of Syria.[14]

In all, the evidence used to support most current theories on the relationship between Rome and Palmyra in the first century AD is much more

problematic than is generally admitted in scholarship. It is important to consider this evidence in some detail and to admit the possibility of other theories. One such theory is that the good relations that existed between Rome and Palmyra from the early first century AD, and probably earlier, did not necessitate a Roman military presence at the city during that time. There was not the necessity to annex territory due to revolts or suspicions over loyalty as was often the case with the client-kingdoms further to the west. The Palmyrenes knew that a good relationship with Rome was essential to continued economic success, and Rome sought the regular supply of luxury goods from the East without being directly involved in the protection of trade itself. Roman power and influence at Palmyra was, therefore, expressed in terms other than those of a military nature, meaning that the evidence is often more subtle and potentially ambiguous. Rome came to exercise power through the institutions of government that developed at Palmyra and this is shown most clearly in the way Rome controlled Palmyra's tariff structure. It was, therefore, an economic imperative that drove the relationship between Rome and Palmyra at this stage, rather than a military one. It is in this context that the question of how Palmyra was controlled by Rome in the first century AD should be asked, and how this relationship evolved in the second century.

References to Palmyra in Roman texts of the first and second centuries AD

The earliest extant evidence for contact between Palmyra and Rome was a plundering raid by Marcus Antonius, *c.* 41 BC, reported by Appian.[15] It is generally recognized that there are some problems and anachronisms in this account. Appian described Palmyra as being situated not far from the Euphrates, indicating a level of ignorance of regional geography. His suggestion of Palmyra's mercantile success is more reflective of the situation in his own day which he probably reasoned to have also been the case when Antonius attacked the city.[16] Nonetheless, Appian's claim is taken by some to indicate Palmyra's wealth from trade in the middle of the first century BC.[17] In political terms, Appian's account is generally accepted as indicative of Palmyrene independence when Antony's raid took place, but not as a reflection of the time in which he wrote.[18]

The archaeological evidence tends to indicate that the city did not become particularly wealthy until the first century AD. Datable archaeological evidence from Palmyra prior to the first century AD is mostly of a funerary nature and is very limited. Its impressive buildings and colonnaded streets date to the middle of the first century AD and later. The earliest of the tower tombs at Palmyra, which are suggestive of the city's growth in wealth, is datable to 9 BC and out of a total of hundreds that

Figure 2.1 Palmyrene tower tombs to the south-west of the ancient city at dawn.

have been found it is the only one firmly datable to before the common era. It has been suggested that others look older, but this can hardly be used as evidence.[19] Datable evidence of any form at Palmyra prior to the first century AD is confined to an inscription of 44/43 BC, the tower tomb of 9 BC and a dedicatory inscription of 6 BC.[20] There is evidence from Dura Europos of a Palmyrene presence in 33 BC, which reflects Palmyra's development of trading links with settlements on the Euphrates in the first half of the first century BC.[21]

Epigraphic evidence from the early first century AD

Inscriptions referring to Germanicus

Three inscriptions discovered at Palmyra provide some interesting detail on Germanicus' visit to Syria in AD 18/19 and are held to be significant in drawing conclusions about Roman control over Palmyra from this time. One inscription shows that statues were raised to Tiberius, Drusus and Germanicus by the *legatus* of Legio X Fretensis in the Temple of Bel and another shows that Germanicus sent an envoy named Alexandros to Mesene, a kingdom in the Persian Gulf. The third reference comes from

Figure 2.2 Sculpted sarcophagus from a tower tomb and hypogeum of the second
century AD.

the tariff law inscription dating to the last year of Hadrian's reign in
which part of the law was described as having been approved earlier by
Germanicus.[22]

The *cella* of the Temple of Bel is thought to have been constructed
between AD 19 and 32, with the statues and dedicatory inscription honour-
ing the imperial family put up during this period.[23] The temple was clearly
a central point of worship and occupied an important focal point for the
city. The presence of Roman imperial statues in Palmyra's most important
shrine represents an honour to both Rome and Palmyra and demonstrates
clearly that relations between the two were good, but it is difficult to
establish how their presence reflects the nature of Roman control over
Palmyra at this time. As a point of comparison Isaac points out that a
temple of the Augusti existed in Vologesias in Parthia and that this can
hardly imply that the Parthians were in some way under Roman control.[24]

The inscription that refers to the dispatch of Alexandros on an embassy
to the king of Mesene was put up in Palmyrene only and was designed to
honour Alexandros himself.[25] We have no knowledge of the nature of the
embassy on which Alexandros was sent, but it indicates Roman recogni-
tion of Palmyra's trading connections with the kingdoms of the Persian
Gulf – Mesene and Characene being the most important. Connections
between Palmyra and Characene, with its capital at Spasinou Charax,
were particularly important to Palmyra's development as a successful
trading entity. Characene had established independence from the Seleucid
Empire in 127 BC and the kingdom was able to maintain a considerable
degree of independence of the Parthians.[26] The first and early second cen-
turies AD saw Palmyrene merchant colonies (*fonduqs*) established in south-
ern Mesopotamia and it is thought that these colonies survived until the
middle of the third century AD.[27] The importance of both Characene and

Figure 2.3 The cella of the Temple of Bel dedicated in AD 32.

Mesene to the caravan traffic crossing the desert from the Euphrates to Palmyra was vital to the growing wealth of Palmyra in the first and second centuries AD. It has been suggested that Palmyra maintained a level of independence of Rome in a similar manner to the independence that Characene was able to maintain from Parthia. D.T. Potts summarizes this similarity and the reasons for it well:

> In many ways the positions of Palmyra and Spasinou Charax were strikingly comparable. Each city existed with remarkable financial independence in the shadow of a more powerful neighbour, Palmyra in the shadow of Rome, Spasinou Charax in the shadow of Parthia. Both of those powers of whom it was said by Pompeius Trogus that they divided the world between them (Justin 41.1.1), recognized that a *laisser-faire* [*sic*] attitude towards these trading centres would be more profitable than a heavy-handed attempt at imposing too rigid controls on them.[28]

The mission of Alexandros to the Persian Gulf is reflective of this approach.[29] A local Palmyrene was sent on the embassy rather than an individual more immediately connected with the Roman imperial

Figure 2.4 Inscription on base dedicating statues to Tiberius, Drusus and Germanicus in the Temple of Bel. From H. Seyrig, 'L'incorporation de Palmyre à l'empire romain', *Syria* 13, 1932, p. 275.

authority. Over the following century both Palmyra and the kingdoms of the Gulf profited due to Roman demand for the products passing through them, and the good relations that each enjoyed with Rome were important with regard to this.[30]

The third inscription from Palmyra that refers to Germanicus is the tariff law inscription and it indicates that a ruling on the tariff on animals for slaughter was made by Germanicus through the Roman procurator in Syria.[31] The tariff law inscription dates to 137 and was a codification of existing tariff conventions, together with the establishment of new ones. The inscription lists tariffs on some products in a new law and others as they existed under the old law. The old tariff list shows that the Romans set or approved some tariff levels in the first century AD. The earliest of these to be attested is that made by Germanicus, and during the reign of Nero the inscription indicates that Rome was largely responsible for the establishment of the tariff structure at Palmyra through a ruling of the *legatus pro praetore* of Syria, Gaius Mucianus.[32] It was in the context of the ruling by Mucianus that the earlier ruling of Germanicus was referred to.[33] The tariff law, as it was presented in a new form and brought together in its old form under Hadrian, demonstrates a history of Roman involvement in the tariff structure at Palmyra from as early as Germanicus' presence in the East.

Rome's commercial interest in Palmyra is shown no more clearly than in this inscription. Palmyra was to become the most important commercial centre in the Roman Near East at a time when trade throughout the whole region was increasing due to demand from all over the Roman Empire.[34] As a result of this, the tariffs charged on the products that passed through Palmyra on their way to the markets of the empire had the potential to impact significantly on the prices paid by the purchasers of these products. Tariff charges were added to the cost of products and became an important factor in the determination of final prices. Roman rulings on tariffs charged at Palmyra served to limit the amount that could be charged in an

attempt to control prices. This point is illustrated clearly in the discussion of the tariff inscription below.

In the case of all three inscriptions that refer to Germanicus it is possible to show that the Romans exercised power and influence at Palmyra from the early first century AD, but it is difficult to see how any of them indicate that Palmyra was formally included in Roman provincial territory or that Palmyra was a tributary city. Palmyra could not be described as independent of Rome on the basis of these inscriptions, but dependence and independence take many forms and occur at varying levels. When Pliny and Appian referred to Palmyra in later times, they emphasized for literary purposes the unusual status Palmyra enjoyed. As Potts points out, this was a status that was beneficial to its ability to benefit from trade.

It is also important to consider the wider context of Germanicus' mission in the East and his dealings with Palmyra demonstrated in the inscriptions. Germanicus was sent on a mission to the East early in the reign of Tiberius. This was ostensibly to deal with issues in Armenia, but there were other purposes not specifically spelled out. Tiberius clearly thought that a Roman imperial presence was required in Asia Minor and Syria, but he disapproved of Germanicus' visit to Egypt.[35] Germanicus began by settling a dispute in Armenia with the crowning of the king of Pontus, Zeno, as king of Armenia.[36] He also installed governors in the new provinces of Cappadocia and Commagene.[37] These actions were associated with the ongoing struggle between Rome and Parthia for control and influence in Armenia. Germanicus moved on to Cyrrhus, the base of Legio X Fretensis, where he met the governor of the province of Syria, Cn. Calpurnius Piso, with whom he would later have a serious falling out.[38] His dealings with the Palmyrenes probably took place at this stage of the mission, as the dedicatory inscription of the legatus of Legio X Fretensis in the Bel enclosure indicates. At Cyrrhus, Germanicus received envoys from the king of Parthia in response to an earlier embassy. Tacitus told the story of a banquet given by the Nabataean king in honour of Germanicus at which Piso is reported to have behaved inappropriately.[39] It is unclear if the banquet took place at Cyrrhus, or at one of the Nabataean cities such as Petra or Bostra.[40] If it took place at Petra, Germanicus may have visited Palmyra between his departure from Cyrrhus and his arrival in the Nabataean kingdom, but the three inscriptions do not indicate that Germanicus visited Palmyra himself.[41] Following his visit to Cyrrhus, Germanicus travelled to Egypt, without the necessary authority, before returning to Syria where he fell ill and died at Antioch.

During his mission in the East, Germanicus dealt with regions such as Armenia and the Nabataean kingdom, perhaps on a closer level than he dealt with Palmyra. These areas were influenced by Rome, but clearly were not within Roman provincial territory at this time. Germanicus' organization of provinces out of client-kingdoms, which was related to the prob-

lems in Armenia, took place on the upper Euphrates. This organization was to continue for much of the first century, with Commagene reinstated as a client-kingdom under Caligula and Claudius but incorporated into the province of Syria under Vespasian.[42] When Germanicus visited Cyrrhus in Syria, there was no need for provincial organization in Arabia or central Syria as relations with the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes were clearly good. There is also no mention in the sources of the Emesenes at the time of Germanicus' visit, but the kings of Emesa continued to rule as client-kings until at least the reign of Vespasian. It is difficult, therefore, to conclude that Palmyra was part of the province of Syria using the evidence of the inscriptions when the historical context of Germanicus' visit is taken into account.

Boundary markers

The discovery of a boundary marker that identified the boundaries of *regio Palmyrena* at the time in which Creticus Silanus was *legatus* of Syria is another piece of evidence used to suggest that Palmyra became a part of Roman provincial territory early in the first century AD.[43] The boundary marker was found 75 km north-west of Palmyra at Khirbet el-Bilaas in the general direction of Epiphania (modern Hama) and is dated AD 153.[44] The inscription indicating the boundary refers to an earlier restoration of the boundaries of the region of Palmyra under Hadrian in accordance with how they had been set by Creticus Silanus. Creticus Silanus was governor of Syria prior to the appointment of Piso to the office, and his term came to an end just before the arrival of Germanicus in the East.[45] The establishment of the boundaries of *regio Palmyrena*, therefore, predated Germanicus' arrival. The boundary marker's attribution of the establishment of the boundaries to Creticus Silanus almost 150 years later indicates that it is unlikely that Germanicus undertook any territorial reorganization with regard to Palmyra.

Another boundary marker published by Schlumberger was found 60 km west-south-west of Palmyra at Qasr el-Heir West.[46] Qasr el-Heir West lies 60 km south of Khirbet el-Bilaas. The marker indicated the boundary between Hadriana Palmyra and Emesa.[47] The inscription dates to the reign of Hadrian, or later, as Palmyra took the name of Hadrian after his visit to the city *c.* 129/130. It is possible that this inscription indicates the earlier establishment of a boundary at Qasr el-Heir West in a similar way to that indicated on the inscription from Khirbet el-Bilaas, but it does not refer to an earlier boundary.

The establishment of the boundary of *regio Palmyrena* indicates that Rome had the power to mark the boundaries of Palmyra early in the first century AD, and it is important to consider the likely purpose of marking such a boundary. Firstly, the establishment of these boundaries was equally important in marking the boundaries of the region to the west of

Figure 2.5 Khirbet el-Bilaas. From D. Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène', *Syria* 20, 1939, p. 46.

Palmyra, namely the kingdom of Emesa. Emesa was not a formal part of Roman provincial territory in the early decades of the first century AD as it was a client-kingdom of Rome, persisting through most of the first century AD.[48] It was not until at least the last decades of the first century AD that it is thought to have been brought under formal Roman control and included in the province of Syria.[49] On this basis, Millar concludes that in the early first century AD Emesa 'must have represented a zone which the Roman forces did not occupy, and where the Roman Empire did not raise taxes'.[50] There is no reason to suggest that the situation at Palmyra, even further to the east than Emesa, was any different.

Rome and Palmyra in the reign of Vespasian

It has already been noted that the tariff inscription of 137 refers to a number of rulings on tariffs levied at Palmyra made by governors of Roman Syria in the middle of the first century AD. These include those made by Cn. Corbulo, *legatus pro praetore* of Syria *c.* 60–63, and his successor Gaius Mucianus. The determination of tariffs at the instigation of Mucianus shows that during his period as *legatus* the schedule of tariffs was substantially approved by Rome.[51] This, combined with the presence of a milestone of AD 75 from Erech, 27 km north-east of Palmyra, is used

Figure 2.6 Boundary marker naming Creticus Silanus. From D. Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène', *Syria* 20, 1939, p. 60.

either to confirm the formal inclusion of Palmyra in the provincial territory of Syria from the beginning of the first century AD or as an indication that it had taken place by the reign of Vespasian.[52]

The presence of the milestone is thought to be indicative of a Roman military road leading from Palmyra to the Euphrates serving as important evidence for Palmyra being firmly within Roman provincial territory by 75.[53] Very little specific detail was provided on the circumstances of the milestone's discovery and no trace of the road accompanying it has been

found. The milestone marks 16 miles so it is probable that it was found close to its original location as Erech lies approximately 16 miles from Palmyra. The inscription is very fragmentary and reservations about its proposed reconstruction were expressed by the publishers, particularly about the length of the abbreviations.[54] In its published form it appears reasonable to attribute the milestone to Marcus Ulpius Traianus, the father of the future emperor, when he was *legatus* of Syria.[55]

The proposed road is generally described as a military road that ran from Palmyra to Sura on the Euphrates, and this conclusion is used to indicate that Sura was a Roman fortification where the road is thought to have terminated.[56] It is clear that considerable reliance has been placed on this piece of evidence as a means of building further on conclusions about Roman policy towards Palmyra and in the Near East more generally in the first century AD.

The claims of Pliny the Elder on the political status of Palmyra during the reign of Vespasian stand in direct contrast to these conclusions and they are generally discounted in modern scholarship as anachronistic. Writing in the reign of Vespasian and dedicating his work to Titus, Pliny provided a brief description of Palmyra in the *Naturalis Historia*. Palmyra was referred to in the context of Pliny's description of the Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Arabia. It was, he said, 'famous for its rich soil and plentiful springs' (divitiis soli et aquis amoenis) and 'its fields were surrounded on all sides by a vast circuit of sand' (vasto undique ambitu harenis includit agros).[57] Pliny specifically referred to the political status of Palmyra at this time and described it as 'having a destiny of its own between the two empires of Rome and Parthia' (private sorte inter duo imperia summa Romanorum Parthorumque).

Pliny's claim is largely dismissed as anachronistic as it is held to be reliant on an earlier Augustan source.[58] It is worth noting, however, that earlier in his description of the Euphrates and Syria, Pliny specifically refers to Cn. Domitius Corbulo and Gaius Mucianus, the Syrian governors coincidentally named in the tariff inscription, as his authorities on the source of the Euphrates.[59] He clearly had access to their knowledge of the region, which must have been considerable. Corbulo died in AD 66, but he wrote extensive memoirs that were later used by both Tacitus and Dio and were undoubtedly available to Pliny.[60] Mucianus was dead by the time Pliny's work was published, meaning that Pliny either had access to his writings or more directly to his knowledge at an earlier time. Pliny's possible sources on Palmyra and its relationship to the Roman Empire could not have been more contemporary. Further to this, the words 'private sorte' need not indicate that Palmyra was completely independent of Parthia and Rome but that its position was not clearly or officially defined. As argued earlier, this is part of an exotic literary portrayal of Palmyra in Pliny's coverage of the Euphrates and Syria.

Figure 2.7 The grand colonnade at Palmyra with rear wall of theatre to the right. The grand colonnade is thought to be Trajanic in date.

A reflection of this can also be seen in the works of Josephus. Writing towards the end of the first century AD, Josephus referred to Palmyra as a foundation of King Solomon, which is clearly a mythical claim, but it also develops a literary image of Palmyra as an exotic and fabled location.[61] Josephus knew something of the contemporary culture in Palmyra when he noted that the Greeks called the city Palmyra and the Syrians called it

Figure 2.8 Rear section of a flanking arch to the main gateway to the grand colonnade at Palmyra.

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Thadamora (Tadmor). Josephus is emphasizing here the influence of Hellenism on Palmyra, combined with the ongoing strength of local Semitic culture. The large number of bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Palmyrene from Palmyra demonstrate that Josephus was correct in his claims and that these important elements of Palmyrene culture were well known.

Palmyra and Rome in the first half of the second century AD

The visit of the Emperor Hadrian and the tariff inscription of 137

In Hadrian's reign an inscription from Palmyra dated 130/131 provides evidence for the first-known visit of a Roman emperor to the city.[62] In honour of this visit it seems that Palmyra adopted Hadrian's name as part of its name. This is demonstrated in an inscription of 131, the tariff inscription of 137 and one of the boundary markers referred to earlier.[63] Hadrian's visit is believed to have taken place a little earlier than the date of the inscription of 130/131 and is thought by some to have had an important impact on Palmyra's status and the constitution of the city.[64]

It is proposed by Gawlikowski that Palmyra received the status of a *civitas libera*, or free city, as a result of Hadrian's visit.[65] The basis on

Figure 2.9 The agora at Palmyra where the tariff inscription of AD 137 was found.

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which this claim is made is that the tariff inscription indicates that the *boule* had more autonomy than would otherwise be expected. A reference of the fifth century AD stating that the Palmyrenes called themselves *Hadrianapolitanae* because their city was refounded by Hadrian is also used to support this conclusion.[66] If Palmyra was granted the status of a *civitas libera* it implies that the city was previously under formal Roman control with the requirement to remit taxation and supply troops.[67] Seyrig, and others who have relied on his suggestions, marshalled evidence that they thought showed that Hadrian's impact on Palmyra's government was to give greater freedom to the city as they had already accepted that Palmyra was earlier subject to the norms of Roman provincial control and administration.

The suggestion that Palmyra became a free city as a result of Hadrian's visit has recently been called into question, and this has some important implications for the way in which Palmyra's relationship with Rome has been presented in scholarship.[68] The assertion that Palmyra became a free city is one of the outcomes of concluding that the city was part of Roman provincial territory prior to Hadrian's visit only to find that the tariff inscription gives the impression that Palmyra was free of the demands of Roman provincial administration. If we remove the assumption that Palmyra had been firmly integrated into the province of Syria at some

Figure 2.10 The tariff law inscription of AD 137.

stage in the first century AD, the nature of the city's relationship with the provincial administration does not appear to be so unusual.

A number of inscriptions demonstrate that Palmyra developed the institutions and offices of a Greek city from the second half of the first century AD. The tariff inscription shows the structure in its most complete form. There was a *boule/BWL'* (council) and *demos/DMS* (assembly) (Greek lines 1 and 3, Pal line 2) together with offices such as *proedros/PLHDRWT'* (President) (Greek line 2, Pal line 1), *grammateus/GRMTWS* (Secretary) (Greek line 3, Pal line 2), *arkontes/'RKWNY'* (magistrates) (Greek line 3, Pal line 2), *telonontes/MKSY'* (tax collectors) (Greek line 8, Pal line 7) and *dekraprotoi/W'SRT* (ten leading men) (Greek line 8, Pal line 7).[69] The earliest evidence for the *boule* and *demos* at Palmyra is a dedication set up on its authority in a trilingual inscription of 71.[70] From that date until the tariff inscription was set up in 137, a further 17 datable inscriptions survive, mostly in bilingual form, which are dedications made by the *boule* or *boule* and *demos*.[71] This indicates that the Greek civic structure at Palmyra had been in place for over 50 years before Hadrian's visit to the city.

Prior to this, an inscription of 51, which was a dedication to an individual who had supplied furnishings and vessels for use in the Temple of Bel, was simply made by the City of the Palmyrenes in the Greek version (Παλμυρηνῶν ἡ πόλις) and by the people of Tadmor (GBL TMRY') in the Palmyrene version.[72] This was distinctly different to the later dedications by the *boule* and *demos*, which were transliterated directly into Palmyrene. The tariff inscription, put up within a few years of Hadrian's visit, is, therefore, the fullest surviving expression of Palmyra's structure as a Greek city.

The evidence suggests that there was also a transition phase to this form of government from the mid-first century AD to the reign of Hadrian from an older structure based on the tribes. Until the early second century AD, the administration at Palmyra appears to have also been partially controlled by four treasurers (αργυροταμιαι) who represented each of four tribal divisions tracing their origins back to the period before the middle of the first century BC.[73] Teixidor proposes that the *arkontes* of the tariff inscription were their replacement.[74] A total of 16 individual tribes are attested in inscriptions from Palmyra and they continue to be attested at the city even after Aurelian's capture of it in 272, but on the basis of the tariff inscription real administrative power at Palmyra passed to the *boule* and *demos* from the second half of the first century AD.[75] Gawlikowski suggests that the four tribes and the *boule* and *demos* operated in parallel during this period, and it is possible that the tribal representatives came to play a more ceremonial role in activities at the city in the second and third centuries.[76]

The emphasis placed on Palmyra becoming part of Roman provincial territory in the first century AD has contributed to some potentially

misleading suggestions with regard to Palmyra's civic structure. Some scholars, even quite recently, translate the terms *boule* and *demos* as 'Senate' and 'People', suggesting an obvious institutional link with the Roman political system.[77] This translation is not borne out by the evidence. In the earliest reference to the *boule* and *demos*, which is a trilingual inscription of *c.* 71, the *boule* is referred to in the Latin version as 'Bule' and the *demos* as 'civitas'.[78] If the *boule* and *demos* at Palmyra were designed to be reflective in any way of the Roman political system we would expect different terms in the Latin in these instances.

The tariff inscription was headed with Hadrian's titulature to reinforce the authority that Rome exercised at Palmyra over tariff levels. This sent a clear message that considerable authority and power lay behind the codification of the tariffs. References in the inscription to earlier rulings also served to reinforce this. At the same time, it was important to Palmyra's ongoing trading success that the city be seen to maintain some level of autonomy. It is important to note, as John Matthews points out, that the tariff inscription refers mostly to locally sourced products rather than those imported over a long distance.[79] This demonstrates the keen interest taken in limiting the tariffs collected by Palmyra and that even greater interest was probably taken in the tariffs levied on more exotic products bound for Rome itself, given the observations of Pliny that are discussed below. The trading success of Palmyra was an important factor in ensuring the reliable supply of products to the Roman world from the East and that trade originating in the Roman Empire was protected as it was taken east. The imposition of direct provincial administration on Palmyra would potentially interfere with its ability to succeed at trade in areas further to the east, particularly in Parthia. In turn, Rome sought to control the tariff structure at Palmyra as a control on prices.

Pliny the Elder makes a number of references to concerns about the effects of the eastern trade on the Roman economy. In one passage he claims that the trade with India resulted in 50 million sesterces leaving the empire each year; in another he estimates that 100 million sesterces was drained annually from the empire in the trade with India, China and Arabia.[80] How he arrived at these estimates is unknown and for the purpose of this argument it is not relevant. The expression of concern is the key point.

Of particular importance to this discussion is another reference by Pliny that complains of the exorbitant tax charges levied on frankincense originating in Yemen.[81] According to Pliny, frankincense was subjected to numerous taxes by kings and rulers in the Arabian peninsula as it made its way through 65 stopping points before it got to the port at Gaza, where it was taxed again by Roman tax collectors. This had a direct impact on prices, according to Pliny, so that even poor quality frankincense was expensive.

The continued flourishing of Hellenistic cities in Roman Syria and their ongoing significance as centres of elite culture was an important part of the means by which a city such as Palmyra developed its links with the prominent cities of the Roman Near East. The ongoing importance of the Greek civic structure in the cities of the Near East under Roman control was undoubtedly one factor in Palmyra's adoption of the Greek civic model. The older confederation of tribes that seems to have comprised the Palmyrene 'polity' became outmoded as Palmyra came under greater Roman influence and sought to link itself culturally and commercially with the world of the Roman Near East. Rome was then able to exercise some of its influence and power through this structure. This is demonstrated most clearly in the tariff inscription of 137. Well known for his appreciation of Greek culture, Hadrian must have been pleased with what he found at the city when he visited. The honour of the presence of the Roman emperor confirmed to the Palmyrenes the importance of their city and the ongoing favour of Rome. While the evidence from Palmyra in the reign of Hadrian is important, the effect of his visit on the organization of Palmyra should not be overestimated. The tariff law inscription may demonstrate how change took place in the city's government over a period of time, but the most obvious and immediate change coming as a result of Hadrian's visit was the adoption of the emperor's name as part of the city's name.[82] It is possible, however, that the name Hadriana Tadmor/Palmyra barely outlived the emperor himself.[83]

Palmyrenes and the Roman military in the second century AD

There is no evidence for a permanent military presence at Palmyra prior to 167, and before this evidence for a Roman military presence at Palmyra at any stage is occasional.[84] From as early as the reign of Trajan there is evidence that may indicate the use of Palmyrene archers by Rome in Syria, and from the reign of Hadrian there is an indication that they were used in some frontier regions of the Roman Empire. It was not until the territory of Palmyra itself became a factor in Rome's extension of formal control of territory along the Euphrates and across it that a permanent military presence was established at Palmyra. More than any other factor this eventually contributed to a significant change in the territorial status of Palmyra. The reputation that the Palmyrene archers earned in their protection of the caravans was an important element in their eventual employment as auxiliaries in the Roman army and in the initial establishment of a permanent garrison at the city. Palmyrene protection of the caravans was professionally organized and sophisticated, and its archers comprised what one modern scholar refers to as an army; armed private escorts also operated.[85] These developments were to have a profound effect on future developments at Palmyra.

Figure 2.11 Funerary relief sculpture of a Palmyrene archer and camel. From H. Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes 12: Textes relatifs à la garnison romaine de Palmyre', *Syria* 14, 1933, plate XX, 1.

An auxiliary cavalry wing, Ala I Ulpia Dromedarium Palmyrenorum, named in an inscription from Palmyra dating to the middle of the second century AD, is indicative of Trajan using troops from Palmyra.[86] A military diploma from Syria, which names 'a wing of Ulpian cameleers', has been linked with this unit and suggests by its name that it was formed

under Trajan *c.* 100. It is difficult to know when the unit was raised under Trajan, but the name of the *ala* leaves little doubt that it was formed during his reign.[87] There is some evidence to suggest that Palmyra was in control of islands on the Euphrates below Dura Europos from as early as 98, and a Palmyrene presence can be shown at Anatha in 132.[88] It is on the basis of this evidence that Gawlikowski concludes that the Romans controlled these islands through Palmyra from as early as the reign of Nerva. Sommer suggests that this presence was connected with maintaining control of the trade routes rather than having a military function.[89] On this analysis, the nature of Rome's control of these sites is difficult to define.

Four inscriptions from Palmyra, which date from the end of the first century AD to 135, are dedicatory inscriptions to soldiers from Roman legions.[90] There is no indication that they were based at Palmyra, and they were probably Palmyrenes who had been recruited by the Romans as auxiliaries. Their service in the Roman army is the likely reason behind the public honours they received. Inscriptions dating to the early reign of Antoninus Pius indicate the presence of Palmyrenes serving with Roman military units in Africa and Moesia, while there is some evidence for this in Dacia late in the reign of Hadrian.[91] Palmyrene archers would have been particularly useful in Numidia in the vicinity of the Sahara.[92] The geography was different in Dacia and Moesia, but the mobility of Palmyrene archers would have been very useful. Their presence may have been to provide protection for Roman troops operating in frontier regions subject to tribal raiding. The protection that the Palmyrene archers afforded to the desert caravans was well known, and as auxiliaries their skills would have been in high demand.

The earliest indication of a military presence at Palmyra itself in the form of a named auxiliary unit attached to the Roman army comes from the inscription referred to above, which names the *ala* thought to have been raised under Trajan. There is no evidence to suggest that this *ala* was garrisoned at Palmyra, but the unit was clearly present there at some stage. The inscription is a dedication to Tiberius Claudius, who was probably a Palmyrene, and it was made by Marcus Ulpius Iarhai, thought to be the famous caravan leader of the mid-second century AD.[93] Tiberius Claudius had a successful career in the Roman army, which followed the *cursus* typical of a tribal leader brought into the Roman *auxilia*. He had been prefect of Cohors I Augusta Thracum Equitata, a tribune in Legio XVI Flavia Firma and then became prefect of Ala I Ulpia Dromedarium Palmyrenorum.[94] The dating of the inscription is circumstantial and rests on the identification of Marcus Ulpius Iarhai. There are more surviving dedications *to* Marcus Ulpius Iarhai than anyone else at Palmyra. The datable ones fall between 156 and 159, presumably the period in which he was most active and celebrated.[95] This was probably

the same broad time-frame in which he dedicated the statue to Tiberius Claudius.

Other Palmyrenes followed similar career paths in the Roman army to Tiberius Claudius, and they did so in a comparable time-frame. Marcus Acilius Athenodorus, son of Moqimo, received a statue in the agora dedicated by Marcus Ulpius Malko.[96] The inscription is undated, but it is proposed that the statue was put up some time in the reign of Hadrian or Antoninus Pius.[97] Athenodorus had been prefect of a cohort and tribune of a legion, but there is no indication that he was prefect of an *ala*. The dedicator of his inscription, Malko, was honoured with a statue on the console of a column in the precinct of the Temple of Bel as he had served in three equestrian *militiae*, probably troops of Palmyrene archers organized for the protection of trade.[98]

We would expect that the dedicatory inscriptions for Tiberius Claudius, Athenodorus and Marcus Ulpius Malko were put up when their careers were well advanced or even at their retirements, by which time they had become celebrated enough to receive such high honours as dedications in the agora and the Temple of Bel. For auxiliary troops, the length of service had been limited by the Emperor Claudius to 30 years with citizenship granted after 25 years, which included *conubium*.[99] While exact dating of the inscriptions eludes us, it seems that all three were made in the late 140s and 150s. Initial recruitment, therefore, belonged to the reign of Trajan or to a period contemporary with Hadrian's visit to the city. In the first half of the second century there is good evidence for Palmyrenes being used in other parts of the empire, but there is no firm indication that any of them were permanently based at Palmyra in this period.

Alae were normally comprised of auxiliary cavalry from the first century AD onwards and were often raised from particular ethnic groups.[100] They numbered approximately 600 mounts, and in the second century were considered to be the elite cavalry – superior to both legionary cavalry and the *cohortes equitatae*.[101] Hadrian praised the versatility and skill of the *alae* and seems to have been particularly impressed by their parade ground exercises where they showed their superior manoeuvring ability and training.[102] In a recent analysis of Arrian's *Ars Tactica*, the following conclusion is advanced: 'The bulk of the cavalry came from the auxiliary *alae*. Most of these units were raised from nations at one time hostile, and then beaten by Rome and brought into her empire, or brought into her orbit either as client kingdoms or allies.'[103] In an older study, Cheesman claimed that Trajan raised new auxiliary units called *numeri* (*numerus*) from 'the wildest of the border tribes', and that Hadrian 'sought to correct (their) defects by utilizing again in the service of the Empire the clan spirit of uncivilized tribes'.[104] Removing the obvious value judgements from this assessment, the suggestion is that there was a long history of raising auxiliary troops from areas that were not formally established as

provincial territory. Cheesman dated the beginning of the domination of equestrian auxiliary commands by tribal chiefs to some time between the reign of Claudius and the beginning of that of Vespasian.[105] According to him, the *cursus* of *praefectus cohortis–tribunis legionis–praefectus alae* was hardly ever varied after AD 70.[106]

Palmyra's provision of auxiliary troops for service in the Roman army is clear evidence of their status at least as allies of Rome, but this tells us only what we already knew. The tariff structure at Palmyra was set and approved by Rome, which seems to have been the case from early in the first century AD. The government of the city remained with Palmyrenes and revenue from tariffs seems to have remained with the city. Roman power and influence at Palmyra was clearly important by this stage, and its development is further indicated by the recruitment of Palmyrenes as auxiliaries. None of this evidence, however, necessarily indicates that Palmyra had been brought within Roman provincial territory. The military importance of Palmyra as it emerged later in the second century was the probable catalyst for this. While Roman power and influence is evident at Palmyra and was beneficial to it, Palmyra maintained a considerable level of autonomy.

Palmyra and Rome after the Parthian conquests of Lucius Verus

Following the wars against the Parthians under Lucius Verus and the extension of Roman power along the Euphrates and into Mesopotamia, the territory of Palmyra became more important to Rome and Palmyrene auxiliaries were used increasingly in other parts of the empire. This was particularly relevant to Roman military control of the Euphrates as the Palmyrenes already had a presence on the river for trading purposes. Soon after the victories over the Parthians under Verus, the first evidence from Palmyra emerges for a permanent military presence in the form of an auxiliary cavalry wing, and in the early third century AD there is clear evidence that Palmyra was within the Roman province of Coele Syria. It is probable that Palmyra's incorporation into Roman provincial territory took place as a result of the increased military interest that Rome took in the territory controlled by Palmyra after the victories of Lucius Verus.

The earliest datable evidence of an auxiliary cavalry wing, or *ala*, at Palmyra comes from inscriptions found in the Temple of Bel. An inscription dated AD 167 indicates the presence of Ala I Herculiana Thracum commanded by a *praefectus* (ἔπαρχος ειλε), Julius Julianus.[107] Another inscription, which is undated, names Gaius Vibius Celer as *praefectus* of what is thought to have been the same *ala*. The *ala* was described in this inscription as being 'here'; that is, at Palmyra (Γ. Οὐείβιον Κέλερα, ἔπαρχον τῆς ἐνθαδε εἴλης).[108] This evidence demonstrates the beginning of

Figure 2.12 The inscription of Gaius Vibius Celer. From H. Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes 12: Textes relatifs à la garnison romaine de Palmyre', *Syria* 14, 1933 plate XXI, 3.

a process that saw the eventual formation of a permanent garrison at Palmyra.[109]

The growing military importance of Palmyrene auxiliaries to the Romans elsewhere in the empire is demonstrated by an epitaph from Numidia dating to the early reign of Commodus. It shows that a Palmyrene named Agrippa, son of Thaime, was transferred to Cohors I Chalcidenorum in Numidia having been a commander of the Palmyrene archers for ten years.[110] The archers were transferred to the cohort, with Agrippa as their commander, and this cohort later formed the garrison at Palmyra.[111]

Palmyrene graffiti found in the Mithraeum at Dura Europos also belongs to this period. Ethpeni, the *strategos* of the archers at Dura, dedicated a memorial in Palmyrene in the Mithraeum in 168.[112] A dedicatory inscription in Greek of 170/1, also found in the Mithraeum, shows that Zenobios was *strategos* of the archers at Dura.[113] The role of these archers, and the extent to which they comprised a garrison at Dura, has been much debated and it is not clear whether they were already at Dura in the Parthian period or if they arrived soon after the Romans took control of the city. Their honouring of Mithras indicates strong links with the Roman army further to the west, which may indicate that they arrived after 165. They are thought to have formed the nucleus of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, the garrison at Dura attested extensively in the third

Figure 2.13 The Mithraeum at Dura Europos showing the Tauroctonies on which Palmyrene archers carved inscriptions. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, plate II.

century AD, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. There is no indication that the Palmyrenes at Dura were organized in a form such as an *ala*, *numerus* or cohort at this stage, and their command under a *strategos* gives the Palmyrene archers at Dura an appearance similar to those in Numidia.

Other *alae* are attested in inscriptions from Palmyra after Ala I Thracum Herculiana in 167. This unit itself moved from Palmyra to Koptos in Egypt by 185 and Numerus Vocontiorium from Koptos was sent to Palmyra to replace it.[114] As noted earlier, *numeri* were special *auxilia* raised from the 'least Romanised tribes' since the reign of Trajan and they were encouraged to preserve their native fighting traditions.[115] The *numerus* built a new tribunal and campus at Palmyra in the fourth year of the reign of Commodus, *c.* 184.[116] It was at this stage that Seyrig thought the process of forming the garrison at Palmyra was complete.[117] The exchange of Ala I Thracum Herculiana with the garrison at Koptos represented a new military development at Palmyra. The transfer probably took place as both Koptos and Palmyra were major points through which trade bound for the Roman Empire passed, and as they were both desert locations the troops were experienced in similar conditions.

Three inscriptions from Palmyra dating to the early third century, together with an important literary reference, demonstrate the significant

Figure 2.14 The so-called army camp of Zenobia at Palmyra, which may overlay the earlier camp.

Figure 2.15 Inscription of AD 206/207 set up by Cohors I Flavia Chalcidenorum honouring Septimius Severus; reused in the Camp of Diocletian.

changes that took place there either during the joint reign of Septimius Severus and his son, Caracalla, or at some stage before. These changes were a part of the significant reorganization that saw Syria divided into the provinces of Coele Syria and Syria Phoenice, as well as the formation of the provinces of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia under Septimius Severus.

Figure 2.16 Inscription from the grand colonnade of AD 242 naming Julius Aure-
lius Zenobios as *strategos* of the colony. Note the *damnatio memoriae*
of Julius Priscus (PAT 0278).

From this time, the Roman imperial presence at Palmyra begins to
appear in ways more obvious than before.[118] An inscription erected on
the lintel of a monumental gateway leading into the agora is a dedication
of uncertain purpose to Septimius Severus, his son Caracalla and possibly
his wife Julia Domna.[119] It dates to some time between 198, when
Caracalla was elevated to the position of Caesar, and 211 when his
father died.[120] A second inscription found on a reused block in the *prin-
cipia* of the Camp of Diocletian is a dedication to Septimius Severus

made in 206/207 by Cohors I Flavia Chalcidenorum.[121] Another undated inscription, also from a block reused in the Camp of Diocletian, is a dedication by the same cohort to one of Severus' successors, probably Caracalla.[122]

Two events contemporary with these inscriptions are Palmyra's receipt of the rights of an Italian colony and the grant of citizenship to all free men in the empire. Ulpian referred to Palmyra as having the same rights as Emesa, which had been elevated to the status of a Roman colony with the *ius italicum* (right of an Italian colony) in the reign of Caracalla.[123] Starcky and Gawlikowski propose that this took place at the beginning of Caracalla's reign in 211.[124] There are four surviving epigraphic references to Palmyra as a Roman colony. The three that are dated are from some decades later, with the earliest dating to 242 when Julius Aurelios Zenobios was named as *strategos* of the colony when Julius Priscus was Praetorian Prefect.[125] Two others were later and one is undated.[126] It is reasonable to accept that Palmyra's elevation to colonial status took place at a similar time to that of Emesa, given the order in which Ulpian lists the cities; but the specific date is not certain.[127]

From this same period we have evidence for an enlargement of the garrison at Palmyra. We have already seen that Ala I Thracum Herculiana was transferred to Palmyra by 184 and that the camp was enlarged in that year. In 206/207 we have the earliest datable evidence for the presence of Cohors I Flavia Chalcidenorum at Palmyra (referred to above). The cohort is attested at Palmyra in an inscription as late as the reign of Philip, suggesting that it became the permanent garrison at Palmyra in the third century.[128] An auxiliary cohort, a *cohors equitata*, was comprised of both infantry and cavalry. Its size depended on whether it was a *cohors quingenaria* or *cohors miliaria*. The former numbered approximately 500 men, the latter 1,000.[129] The garrison at Dura Europos at this stage was a miliary cohort and numbered up to 1,200 men at times.[130] Cohors I Flavia Chalcidenorum was in Numidia at the time that Ala I Thracum Herculiana enlarged the camp at Palmyra on its transfer from Koptos under Commodus and, as noted on p. 57, it had a troop of Palmyrene archers under its command at that time.[131]

The establishment and enlargement of Palmyra's garrison from the second half of the second century AD to the early third century is broadly commensurate with the establishment and enlargement of the garrison at Dura Europos. The Dura Europos garrison, comprised mostly of Palmyrene auxiliaries who formed Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, significantly enlarged its military quarters in AD 211/212, from which time legionary vexillations also formed part of the garrison. Over 100 km further down the river in the direction of the Parthian Empire, the fortification at Kifrin, probably Becchufrayn of the Dura papyri, appears to have had a Severan foundation and was a part of the developments that took

place throughout Syria and Mesopotamia in the late second and early third centuries AD.

Palmyra's importance from a Roman military perspective began as early as the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, but it was only after the territorial advances under Lucius Verus and the major reorganization of Septimius Severus that it became an important element in strengthening formal Roman control on the middle Euphrates and across the river in Mesopotamia. Its importance from a military perspective was the catalyst for its inclusion in Roman provincial territory by the early third century, and it played an increasingly important role in Rome's establishment of military control on the middle Euphrates in particular after 165. Roman provincial reorganization and expansion had clear implications for Palmyra. As Rome can be shown to have had significant influence on the Euphrates beyond the vicinity of Sura from the late first century BC, rather than a clear military presence there, so too it could be shown to have had power and influence over Palmyra during this period, though it was not necessarily formalized. After the Romans took control of the Euphrates below the Khabur the territory of Palmyra became more important to Rome militarily, and this was probably the impetus for Palmyra's inclusion in Roman provincial territory by the early third century AD. Until the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, Rome's power and influence at Palmyra had been expressed primarily in economic terms. There were good reasons for Palmyra continuing to have a level of autonomy so that its trading success could continue and grow. At the same time, the impact of tariffs on the prices of luxury products needed to be controlled, hence Rome's setting of the tariffs that could be charged on individual products. Pliny the Elder demonstrates that in the second half of the first century AD there were concerns over the exorbitant prices merchants charged on imported eastern products, partly because of the tariffs levied on them and partly because a perception that trade with the East was a serious drain on the Roman economy. The use of auxiliary troops in the Roman army, which was a feature across the empire under Trajan and Hadrian, extended to Palmyra as well. These auxiliaries were employed in other locations where the skills they had developed as a result of protecting the caravans were useful. The use of Palmyrene auxiliaries locally and elsewhere in the Roman Empire under Trajan and Hadrian was clearly a success. The employment of Palmyrene troops in the Euphrates garrisons was then an important element in Rome's control of the middle Euphrates from the mid-second century onwards. The establishment of a permanent garrison at Palmyra, which appears to have grown larger in the early third century, was an indication of the military importance Palmyra had assumed as a result of the considerable expansion and reorganization of provincial territory by Septimius Severus.

It is often assumed that Palmyrene trade declined as a result of the events of the Severan period because there is a considerable decline in

inscriptions honouring the caravan leaders at Palmyra in the third century. The probable explanation is the military importance of Palmyra and its archers eclipsing its significance in terms of trade. Michael Sommer points out that there are only three inscriptions honouring caravan leaders after the Severan period, but argues that this was not necessarily because trade through Palmyra declined.[132] Sommer suggests this is probably associated with the emerging dominance of the family of Odenathus who developed a stranglehold on honorific statues and inscriptions. This is a useful suggestion, and it is important to bear such possibilities in mind when considering the role played by Palmyra in the third century.

The considerable reorganization of territory in the Severan period gave Palmyra and its militias a more significant military role in eastern Syria in the third century. The organization of Palmyrene archers into auxiliary units must have diverted their activities more to Roman territorial imperatives than the protection of trade. The elevated status that the Palmyrenes now enjoyed in the empire and the Roman army would have increased their prestige and importance throughout Syria and Mesopotamia. The increased military importance of Palmyra and its skilled archers is a likely catalyst for the eventual rebellion of Palmyra following the death of Odenathus in 266. With the Roman emperor Gallienus now in such a weak position, the Palmyrenes – under the leadership of Zenobia – took their chance following a century of Roman reliance on their military skill and prowess.

3

ROMAN MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES IN THE THIRD CENTURY AD

Introduction

The culmination of military and political developments on the middle Euphrates, Mesopotamia and Palmyra in the second century AD came during the reigns of the Severan emperors. We have already seen that Mesopotamia was established as a two-legion province under Septimius Severus and that Palmyra's garrison grew from an auxiliary *ala* to a cohort during his reign. On the middle Euphrates, new fortifications were constructed, such as that at Kifrin, while at Dura Europos the army camp and the garrison were enlarged towards the end of the first decade of the third century AD. A consequence of the formal extension of Roman power in Mesopotamia and also at Palmyra was the increased presence of Roman soldiers and fortifications along a considerable stretch of the middle Euphrates and Khabur river valleys. This probably began earlier than the Severan period; however, it was during the reign of Septimius Severus and his sons that this presence was expanded and intensified.

A recent study of Syria and Mesopotamia by Nigel Pollard, which focuses on relationships between the military and civilians under the Romans, provides some good insights into the activities and purposes of the Roman military presence in the Near East.[1] Pollard sums up this purpose, generally speaking: 'Ultimately the Roman army was the occupying force of an imperial power, and a primary function of the army was the control of conquered territory'.[2] Apart from performing military and defensive functions when wars were fought there were numerous other ways in which the army was crucial to controlling conquered territory. While noting that there is little evidence for direct military involvement in the government of cities, even those such as Dura Europos located on the frontiers, Pollard suggests that this probably did take place, in most cases for the sake of public order.[3] There is clear evidence for Roman officers being involved in civic politics in cities throughout Syria, particularly in

the second century AD, and there is also evidence for officers being honoured as benefactors in cities such as Dura.[4]

Of increasing importance during the period of Roman control in Syria and Mesopotamia were the judicial roles played by military officers. The fact that, up until the reign of Diocletian, governors of Syria were also military commanders meant that military authority and justice went hand in hand. Pollard notes the delegation of these judicial powers to legionary officers such as centurions and cites a number of relevant examples from Dura and Palmyra in the third century AD.[5] Further to these judicial roles, and closely related to them, was the use of soldiers as police and in tax collection. Policing was the practical means by which judicial decisions were enforced and public order maintained. This was usually undertaken by centurions and often done at the request of a petitioner, as the Dura and Euphrates papyri demonstrate in the third century AD. Soldiers also emerged as increasingly important to the physical collection of taxes from the first century BC to the third century AD. This development is thought to have had its origins in soldiers assisting civilian officials in collecting taxes, and over time it saw soldiers increasingly involved in the physical collection of taxes themselves. There is also evidence for soldiers being stationed at customs points to give greater authority to civilian officials responsible for the collection of tariffs and tolls.

Fortifications and settlements on the Euphrates and Khabur rivers

The papyri discovered at Dura Europos, together with the more recently discovered Euphrates papyri, show that there were numerous fortifications and other settlements along the Euphrates to the north and south of Dura, and also along the Khabur river, in the second and third centuries AD.[6] The files of part of the third-century garrison, Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, show that detachments of soldiers from Dura were stationed at these locations along the Euphrates and Khabur rivers and demonstrate that Dura Europos had become a centre of military organization on the middle Euphrates by the early third century AD. It is also clear that Dura was an important centre for civil administration throughout the same area and that the soldiers of the garrison played an important role in this function. The many smaller fortifications at which soldiers of the Dura garrison were based in this region were an important means by which Rome controlled the middle Euphrates and lower Khabur, using the various methods discussed previously. Defence in time of war was an obvious role for these soldiers and fortifications, but they were generally not large enough to be effective in the event of a large-scale invasion.[7]

The military papyri from the Roman period, together with papyri of a civil nature from the Parthian period, also indicate that a number of
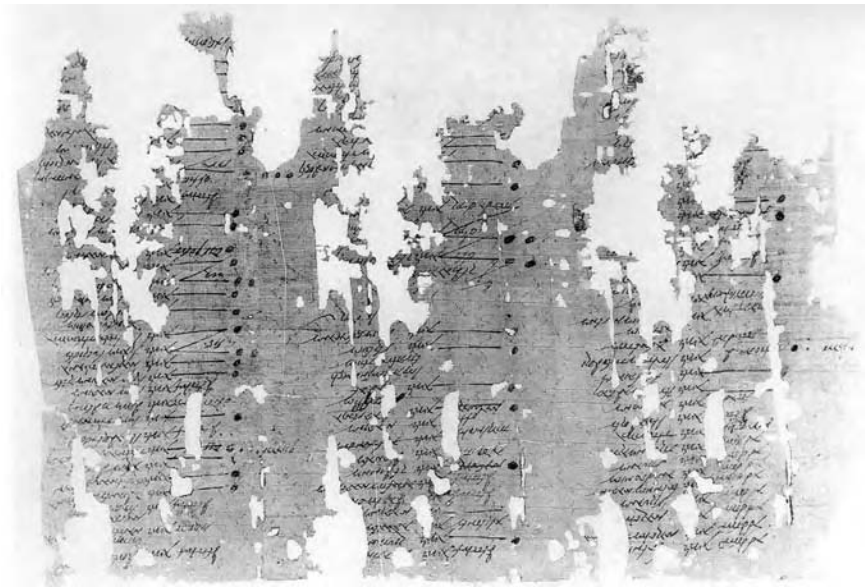
Figure 3.1 A section of *P.Dura 101*, a strength report of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum of AD 222. From C.B. Welles, R.O. Fink and J.F. Gilliam, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report Volume V, Part 1: The Parchments and Papyri*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, plate XLV.

fortified settlements across the territory of the middle Euphrates and the lower Khabur were in existence for centuries before the Romans arrived. Clearly, Dura played a significant role in civil administration in the Parthian period and this continued in the Roman period. The new element that the Romans brought to the region and to Dura itself was the significant role the Dura garrison and its soldiers would play in the process of Romanization.

The extent to which the territory of the middle Euphrates and lower Khabur rivers was controlled in military and administrative terms in the third century is demonstrated by the considerable list of locations named in the papyri of the Dura garrison. Roman soldiers were clearly present on the landscape, and the functions they performed were part of the process of establishing a long-term Roman presence in the area. It is worth considering just how extensive and regular the military presence was on the middle Euphrates and lower Khabur rivers as one way of understanding the consolidation and expansion of Roman power in Syria and Mesopotamia under the Severans. Some of the locations referred to in the papyri at which soldiers were stationed can be confidently identified today, others are the subject of speculation, while the locations of

others are unknown. The list of cities captured in the invasions of Shapur I in the early 250s, and recorded on the *SKZ*, is also useful evidence when considering the military organization of the middle Euphrates in the third century AD. Despite problems in definitively identifying a number of relevant sites, the attempt at establishing the whereabouts of these locations provides a snapshot of the Roman military presence over a broad area.

The parchments and papyri discovered at Dura Europos include a number of documents, mostly dating to the third century, that originated in other villages, fortifications and settlements on the Euphrates and Khabur rivers. These documents include deeds of sale and loan contracts, as well as marriage and divorce contracts. Some documents may have been brought to Dura with people fleeing from smaller fortifications and villages at the time of the mid-third-century Persian invasions, but in most cases they were probably there due to the presence of a registry office at the city.[8] While civil in nature, they also provide some information on the Roman military presence, particularly on the Khabur, and they clearly demonstrate Dura's role as a centre of civil administration in the Roman period and that this continued from the Parthian period. The Euphrates papyri also indicate some of the locations on the Khabur that acted as administrative centres late in the middle of the third century AD, but they provide little information on military sites.

Some of the locations of the sites mentioned in the Dura and Euphrates papyri may be identified with references to them elsewhere in antiquity, and possibly by the names of modern villages on the lower Khabur and middle Euphrates today. The *Parthian Stations* of Isidore of Charax is an important ancient text that lists the names of settlements and fortifications on the section of the middle Euphrates under discussion. While it dates to a period 250 years earlier than the third century, some locations it refers to are also referred to in the Dura papyri of the second and third centuries. In a number of cases it can be shown that settlements, fortifications and administrative regions continued in use from the period of Parthian control to the Roman period. Isidore described the overland trade route from Syria to India, and the section of his description relevant to this discussion is quoted as follows, beginning at Nicephorium/Callinicum on the left bank of the Euphrates:

> Then Nicephorium by the Euphrates, a Greek city, founded by King Alexander, 5 schoeni, farther on, by the river, is Galabatha, a deserted village, 4 schoeni. Then the village of Chumbana, 1 schoenus; farther on Thillada Mirrhada, a royal station, 4 schoeni. Then a royal palace, a temple of Artemis, founded by Darius, a small town; close by is the canal of Semiramis, and the Euphrates is dammed with rocks, in order that by being thus

checked it may overflow the fields; but also in summer it wrecks the boats; to this place 7 schoeni. Then Allan, a walled village, 4 schoeni. Then Phaliga, a village on the Euphrates (that means in Greek half-way), 6 schoeni. From Antioch to this place, 120 schoeni; and from there to Seleucia, which is on the Tigris, 100 schoeni. Nearby Phaliga is the walled village of Nabagath, and by it flows the river Aburas (Khabur), which empties into the Euphrates; there the legions cross over to the Roman territory beyond the river. Then the village of Asich, 4 schoeni; beyond which is the city of Dura Nicanoris, founded by the Macedonians, also called by the Greeks Europos, 6 schoeni. Then Merrha, a fortified place, a walled village, 5 schoeni. Then the city of Giddan, 5 schoeni. Then Belesi Biblada, 7 schoeni. Beyond is an island in the Euphrates, 6 schoeni; there was the treasure of Phraates, who cut the throats of his concubines, when Tiridates who was exiled, invaded. Then Anatho, an island in the Euphrates, of 4 stadia, on which is a city, 4 schoeni; beyond which is Thilabus, an island in the Euphrates; there is the treasure of the Parthians, 2 schoeni. Then Izan, a city on an island, 12 schoeni.

(trans. W.H. Schoff)

There has been considerable scholarly attention paid to the identification of the sites mentioned by Isidore of Charax. The *Parthian Stations* was essentially a description of the main stopping points and the distances between them on the main overland caravan route from Syria to India late in the first century BC, although in reality the route described ended in Afghanistan. As some of the locations Isidore mentions are able to be identified, attempts have been made at identifying the locations of all of the sites because he gave exact distances between them.[9] As already noted, Isidore's text is much earlier than the period under discussion and not all of the sites in the above extract from Isidore are relevant, but the text is relevant to this chapter because some locations it mentions appear in the Dura papyri of the second and third centuries AD.

  Modern names of sites have also been analysed in an attempt to derive their ancient names. Musil, Chapot, Dussaud, Bell, Sarre and Herzfeld and Poidebard are notable examples of scholars who made such attempts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their interests generally lay in a broader time-frame than the second and third centuries AD, but their observations are potentially important for the identification of some sites mentioned in the Dura and Euphrates papyri. Most of these scholars did not have knowledge of the Dura and Euphrates papyri when they identified sites and their possible ancient names on the Euphrates and Khabur. Their identification of sites has in some cases continued to hold, but in other cases they have been challenged.

The Euphrates below its confluence with the Khabur

Clearly, the most significant civilian and military settlement on this section of the Euphrates in the Seleucid, Parthian and Roman periods was Dura Europos. The district to which Dura Europos belonged, and of which it may even have functioned as a type of capital in the Seleucid, Parthian and Roman periods, was known as Parapotamia. The limits of this district are difficult to establish and its nature as a jurisdiction is not easy to ascertain.[10] In a passage of Polybius, much neglected by scholars of Dura, the term 'Parapotamia' was used to describe the area of the Euphrates in which Dura was located in the Seleucid period. Referring to the Mesopotamian campaigns of Molon, the satrap of Media who rebelled against Antiochus III in 222 BC, Polybius stated
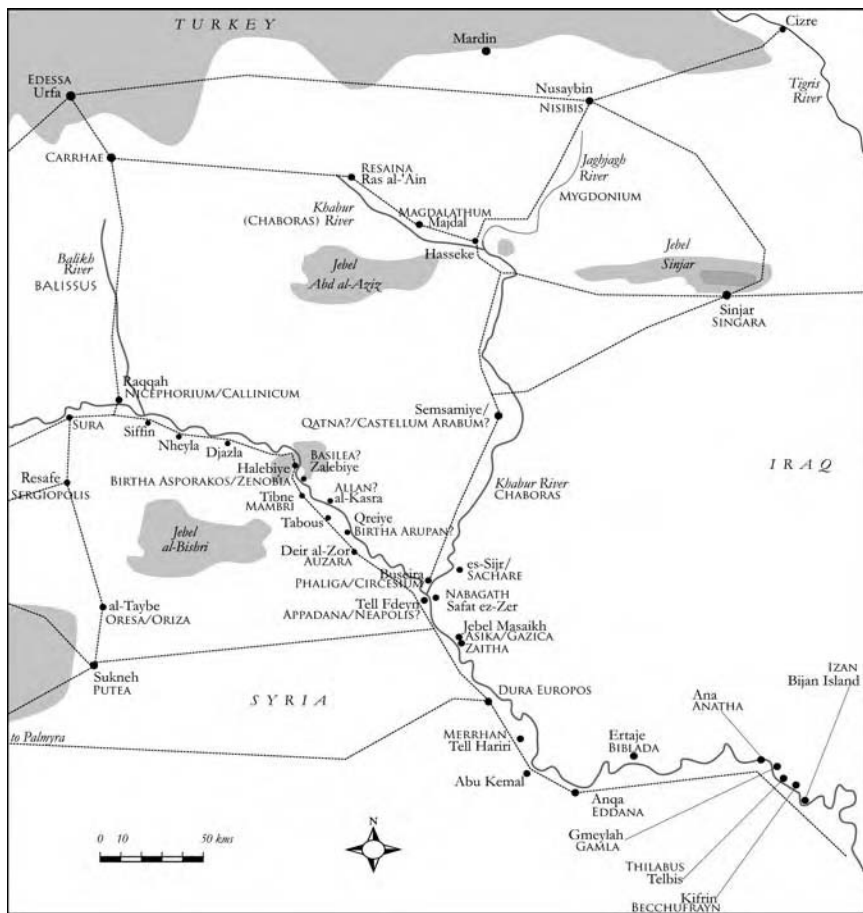
Map 3.1 Eastern Syria and Mesopotamia showing modern attempts to locate ancient sites named in papyri and ancient literature (Ross Burns).

that Molon 'occupied Parapotamia as far as the town of Europos'.[11] The region was also known as Parapotamia in the Parthian period on the basis of references in three papyri of AD 87, 88/89 and 121.[12] The term 'Parapotamia' continued in use in the Roman period as it is referred to in *P.Dura 55*.[13] This is a fragmentary letter from the reign of Elagabalus (218–222), written from provincial headquarters at Antioch to the tribune of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, and appears to address problems with military discipline in Parapotamia. While the fragmentary nature of the letter makes its purpose difficult to establish beyond doubt it makes a clear reference to Parapotamia, showing that the name was still in use *c.* 220 and thus reflecting some continuity in divisions of administrative territory from the Seleucid and Parthian periods.

The Dura papyri indicate that there were a number of locations holding troops who formed part of the Dura garrison in the third century on the section of the Euphrates below its confluence with the Khabur to Dura and beyond. One of the earliest datable military papyri from Dura, *P.Dura 60B* of 208, provides valuable information regarding fortifications along the Euphrates in the early third century. The papyrus is particularly important as it predates the enlargement of the Roman army camp at Dura by approximately three years and suggests that Dura's military role on the Euphrates and Khabur may not have been as important as it was to become later. The papyrus was addressed by Marius Maximus, the *legatus* of Syria and imperial biographer, to *tribuni*, *praefecti* and *praepositi* of the *numeri* stationed at Gazica, Appadana, Dura, Eddana and Biblada.[14] The letter contained instructions to the garrison commanders to provide hospitality to Goces, an otherwise unknown Parthian envoy who was about to make his way along the Euphrates on an embassy to Septimius Severus and Caracalla who were at this time on the northern frontier in Britain. The order in which the names of the towns was listed is interpreted as the order in which a courier would have reached them travelling down the river, having been sent from Antioch.[15] The analysis of this papyrus is often undertaken with reference to Isidore of Charax's *Parthian Stations*.

The first location listed in *P.Dura 60B*, Gazica, is usually identified with Asicha in the *Parthian Stations* of Isidore but it is otherwise unattested. Its location is thought to be modern Jebel Masāikh on the left bank of the Euphrates 29 km from its confluence with the Khabur in the direction of Dura.[16] It has recently been suggested that Jebel Masāikh is also the location of the tomb of Gordian III, referred to as Zaitha by Ammianus and Zosimus.[17]

The second location in *P.Dura 60B*, Appadana, also occurs a number of times in the remains of four different rosters of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. The rosters show that soldiers from the cohort were stationed there *c.*220–240. *P.Dura 100* (AD 219), *P.Dura 101* (AD 222), *P.Dura 102* (AD 222–224) and *P.Dura 116* (AD 236) all indicate this. The name also appears in two letters: *P.Dura 63B* of 211 and *P.Dura 64A* of 221.

Further to the papyrological references, Appadana also appears in two graffiti from the House of Nebuchelus located at the intersection of the cardo and decumanus at Dura (Inscriptions 221 and 227, *Dura Prelim. Rep. IV*). It is possible that Appadana was the Apphadana of Ptolemy's *Geography* and Apatna in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.[18] Older scholarship identified Appadana with Tell Fdeyn on the right bank of the lower Khabur river, 25 km from its confluence with the Euphrates.[19] Most prefer a location for Appadana on the Euphrates due to the order in which it appears in *P.Dura 60B*. While not having access to the papyri, Chapot was uncertain about the location and thought that Appadana lay opposite Deir-ez-zor on the right bank of the Euphrates, and the editors of the papyri thought that it lay at the mouth of the Khabur.[20] On the basis of *P.Dura 60B*, Geyer and Monchambert believe that it should lie somewhere on the Euphrates between Dura and Asicha.[21]

A number of the Euphrates papyri refer to villages that were dependent on Appadana. Feissel and Gascou conclude that this was the same Appadana as the Dura papyri and accept Rostovtzeff's location of Appadana on the right bank of the Euphrates north of Dura as most likely.[22] The extent to which Appadana appears in the Dura papyri demonstrates that it was regularly supplied with troops from Dura. *P.Dura 100* of AD 219 shows that 63 soldiers of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum were stationed at Appadana, and *P.Dura 101* provides the names of 49 soldiers who were stationed there in 222. It is assumed that these troops comprised the whole garrison of Appadana, but local recruits may also have been in the garrison. The graffiti from the House of Nebuchelus are undated, but almost certainly belong to the third century and are thought to be records of shipments of supplies up the river from Dura to Appadana.[23]

The Euphrates papyri provide information on Appadana that is largely of an administrative nature. This information complements the slightly earlier military references to Appadana in the Dura papyri. A number of the Euphrates papyri make reference to Appadana and a location called Beth Phouraia. Beth Phouraia is described in *P.Euphr. 1*, dated 28 August 245, as in the territory of Appadana (ἀπὸ χώμης Βηφφούρης χυριαρχῆς τῆς περὶ Ἀππάδαναν).[24] Beth Phouraia is the location in which another six papyri of the Euphrates archive were written. The earliest is dated 232 (*P.Euphr. 11*) and the latest 13 June 252 (*P.Euphr. 9*). The dates of the other four are as follows: *P.Euphr. 15* (12 December 235), *P.Euphr. 13* (1 October 243), *P.Euphr. 12* (June 244) and *P.Euphr. 8* (27 January 251).

P.Euphr. 8 is a contract for the sale of a slave, originally purchased at Nisibis, that referred to a district known as Theganaba and to a resident of one of its towns as an Abourene.[25] Feissel, Gascou and Teixidor interpret the term 'Abourene' as meaning those who lived in a broader district encompassing the Khabur between Nisibis in the north and Appadana, which they locate at the confluence of the Khabur and Euphrates.[26] In their

estimation, modern Hasseke on the Khabur is the likely centre of this district as it was a meeting point for a number of roads.[27] A number of other Euphrates papyri were either written in Appadana or deposited there, reflecting the administrative role it played; *P.Euphr. 14* (21 April 241), *P.Euphr. 2* (245–250), *P.Euphr. 5* (written in Sphoracene, subscribed in Appadana 27 May 243), *P.Euphr. 3* and *4* (252–256). *P.Euphr. 3* and *P.Euphr. 4* are particularly important: they indicate that a change took place at Appadana at some stage in the late 240s, as it was by this stage called Neapolis. These papyri were petitions by a member of the *boule* of Neapolis who was resident at Beth Phouraia and indicate that Appadana had emerged as an important settlement on this section of the river.[28] The military papyri from Dura, together with the Euphrates papyri, are indicators of the complex nature of military and administrative organization on the Euphrates and lower Khabur rivers from the 220s to 250s. Appadana is a particularly good example of the extent to which villages and towns on the Khabur and Euphrates relied on administrative and military organization, which was undertaken both at a local level and also spread over considerable distances.

Isidore of Charax referred to a fortification (ὀχυρῶσις) and walled village (κωμόπολις) called Merran, five *schoeni* (approximately 24–30 km) below Dura on the Euphrates.[29] There are no references in the Dura papyri that are possible to link to Merran. Its modern location is thought to be the ancient site of Mari (Tell Hariri) on the right bank of the Euphrates, 26 km downstream from Dura.[30] Musil tentatively suggested that the site of al-Kišmi on the left bank of the Euphrates, 29 km downstream from Dura, may be Merran but noted that this would be six *schoeni* instead of five.[31]

The next site named in *P.Dura 60B* after Dura is Eddana. This is thought to be Hindānu referred to in Assyrian texts and Giddan of the *Parthian Stations*.[32] Musil was confused about its likely modern location, identifying the ruins of al-Gabrijje as Hindanu/Giddan/Eddana in one part of his work but later suggesting that the ruins of aš-Šejh Ǧâber were the most likely location.[33] The identification of Eddana/Giddan is now generally accepted as the site of Anqa on the right bank of the Euphrates, 26 km downstream from Tell Hariri and 51 km downstream from Dura.[34]

Biblada of *P.Dura 60B* is probably Biblada Bilesi of the *Parthian Stations*. Musil identified it with Ertâǧe on the left bank of the Euphrates 33 km below his identification of Giddan.[35] Musil described the ruins as 'medieval walls which form an oblong enclosed by a mighty rampart with eight semicircular towers'.[36] Dussaud referred to Biblada as the likely equivalent of Harada mentioned in Assyrian texts, but did not attempt a modern identification.[37] Little else has been done to identify the modern location of this site. It was not mentioned by Chapot, Sarre and Herzfeld or Poidebard, while Geyer and Monchambert were forced to limit their investigations of the Euphrates at the modern border between Syria and

Iraq. Rostovtzeff thought that Biblada was the last fortification controlled by the Romans on the Euphrates in the early third century, but this was before the now confident identification of Kifrin with Becchufrayn on the Euphrates below Anatha.[38] Neither Eddana nor Biblada was referred to in any of the other Dura papyri. Cumont thought that both Eddana and Biblada were dependent on Dura on the basis of *P.Dura 60B*, and Gawlikowski maintains that *P.Dura 60B* 'provides a list of outposts under the Roman commander of Dura'.[39] The fact that the letter was addressed to individual commanders at the various sites in 208 is more indicative of independence of Dura than dependence on it. *P.Dura 60B* also has implications for our understanding of the garrison at Dura before the enlargement of the camp, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

P.Dura 60B stops with Biblada, but archaeological evidence and other references in the papyri show that there were fortifications further down the river and that some were dependent on Dura later in the third century. The next fortification along the Euphrates from Biblada was Anatha, the first city listed in Shapur's *SKZ*. Anatha was an island fortress in the middle of the Euphrates, but little is known of its significance or status as a Roman fortification in the first half of the third century AD.[40] It lies approximately 50 km downstream from Anqa/Eddana and approximately 100 km downstream from Dura.[41] Links between Anatha and other cities in the region in the second and third centuries AD are indicated by inscriptions at Dura Europos, Palmyra and elsewhere. Anatha established links with Palmyra from at least the first century AD due to trade passing between the two cities. The military nature of Palmyra's control of trade meant that Palmyrenes garrisoned Anatha after the arrival of the Romans on the middle Euphrates, and Palmyrene archers were based there beforehand as discussed in Chapter 2. Two Palmyrene inscriptions from Palmyra and another from Umm as-Selabikh on the Palmyra to Hit road refer to a Palmyrene military presence at Anatha. One inscription is dated 132 and refers to a 'cavalryman in the stronghold and in the camp at Ana'. A later inscription, which probably dates to the late second/early third century, was erected 'by the cavalrymen of the unit of Gamla and of Ana', while the inscription from Umm as-Selabikh dated 225 was set up by a '*strategos* of Ana and of Gamla'.[42]

The excavations at Dura Europos uncovered a temple to Aphlad, which was dedicated in 54.[43] In the dedicatory inscription, which shows that the temple was built by traders from Anatha, Aphlad is referred to as a god of Anatha, and the continuing use of the temple in the Roman period indicates a probable ongoing link between the two cities. A temple to Azzanathkona, a deity that probably originated from Anatha too, was also discovered at Dura.[44] The temple of Azzanathkona was constructed by AD 12–13 and is claimed to have become the headquarters of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum in the third century.[45]

While the numerous military papyri found at Dura Europos show that troops from Dura were located at Kifrin, further down the Euphrates than Anatha, Anatha itself is not mentioned among the numerous fortifications referred to in the papyri – though it is the first fortification listed in the *SKZ*. This could be explained by the suggestion of Kennedy and Northedge that Anatha did not come into Roman hands until the 231–233 campaign of Severus Alexander against the Sasanian Persians, a decade after the dates of the most complete rosters from Dura; however, it is more likely associated with Palmyra's control of the island.[46] The absence of any reference to troops from Dura being located at Anatha may be explained simply by the fragmentary nature of the papyri. It is possible, though, that Anatha was supplied with troops directly from Palmyra due to its long-standing involvement with the island since the reign of Hadrian and probably earlier. A Palmyrene inscription referred to previously, dating to 225, names a *strategos* of Ana and Gamla, which is a likely indication that Palmyrene troops supplied the garrison at the island by this time.

A number of fortifications below Anatha, including Kifrin, housed small Roman garrisons in the first half of the third century AD. These include Gamla, Kifrin, Telbis and Bijan Island. Gamla is thought to be located 4 km downstream from Anatha at modern Gmeylah.[47] Its military control was clearly linked to that of Palmyra and Anatha on the basis of *PAT 0319* of 132, discussed earlier. Kifrin is almost certainly Becchufrayn of the Dura Europos papyri, which held soldiers of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum between 219 and 233 and probably beyond this specific time-frame.[48] Further reference is made to Becchufrayn/Kifrin in an undated letter, *P.Dura 46*, written by a soldier from Antioch to a former colleague in Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, referring to his service with the army in Becchufrayn/Kifrin. Kifrin is located on the left bank of the Euphrates, 20 km downstream from Anatha.[49] Invernizzi, director of the salvage excavations at Kifrin in the 1980s, dates its establishment as a Roman fortification to the early reign of Septimius Severus.[50] Invernizzi proposes that Kifrin was taken by Ardashir after the withdrawal of Severus Alexander in 233, or by Shapur following Gordian III's defeat at Meshike in 244.[51] Sommer suggests that Kifrin may have played a role similar to Dura on this section of the Euphrates.[52] There is some disagreement as to the foundation date of Kifrin, which is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Bijan was probably fortified in the early Severan period, but has a much earlier history as a settlement from references in the itinerary of Isidore of Charax and centuries earlier in Assyrian records.[53] The date of the fortification of Telbis is unknown.[54] Bijan is an island in the middle Euphrates that lies 25 km downstream from Anatha and approximately 5 km downstream from Kifrin.[55] Telbis lies 12 km upstream from Bijan and 7 km upstream from Kifrin. Bijan is identified as the Izan of Isidore's *Parthian Stations*, and Telbis is thought to be Isidore's Thilabus.[56] Gawlikowski

notes that no coins were found at Bijan after the reign of Severus Alexander, which he takes as an indication that the site ceased to be occupied some time before the invasion of Shapur I.[57] Gawlikowski also proposes that the *strategos* of Ana and Gamla in AD 132, referred to earlier, probably had military control of the smaller islands of Telbis and Bijan.[58] On the basis of Palmyrene inscriptions found in the Wadi Hawran dating to as early as 98, Gawlikowski argues that the Palmyrenes controlled the islands of Anatha, Telbis and Bijan even before Trajan's Parthian war.[59] This may be reflected in the *SKZ* inscription of the mid-third century in which only Anatha appears. The inscription refers to the capture of Anatha and its surrounding territory; a claim also made for the other cities named in the inscription. The capture of smaller fortifications such as Telbis and Bijan was probably included, therefore, in the capture of the more central fortification at Anatha.

The Euphrates/Khabur confluence

The modern locations of Phaliga and Nabagath, both mentioned by Isidore, are the subject of considerable discussion. It is clear that they both lay in the vicinity of the confluence of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers. The modern confluence is approximately 56 km north-north-west from Dura Europos and approximately 90 km south-east of Halebiyeh/Zenobia.[60] In a recent survey, Geyer and Monchambert attempted to locate Phaliga at modern Buseire, the site of the fortress of Circesium, which in antiquity occupied the exact point where the two rivers met.[61] Poidebard located Phaliga on a tell to the north of Buseire, which cannot be located today.[62] Arrian referred to Trajan's fleet sailing past a location called Phalga in 114, which is a possible reference to Phaliga.[63] Phaliga is also referred to in *P.Dura 20* of 121 during the Parthian period of control of Dura and Parapotamia. This is a loan document originating in the village of Phaliga (line 2 – Παλίγα κώμη). The garrison commander (φρουράρχος) was a witness to the loan (line 3), indicating that Phaliga was fortified at this time. The contract was to be renewed at Europos (line 19) at the appropriate time, demonstrating the nature of Dura as a centre for the registration of documents over a considerable area late in the Parthian period. The editors of the Dura papyri argued that Phaliga was probably the last Parthian outpost against the Roman Empire at this time.[64]

Little is known of Circesium before its enlargement by Diocletian, but it is referred to in the *SKZ* as one of the cities captured by Shapur I in the first Syrian campaign beginning in 252/253. Michael the Syrian claims that Seleucus Callinicus (247–226 BC) built two towns on the Euphrates, one called Callinicum (modern Raqqa) and the other Carcis.[65] It is possible that Carcis is the Hellenistic origin of the name Circesium.[66] Circesium was referred to by Ammianus Marcellinus as weakly defended until Diocletian

Figure 3.2 The modern confluence of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers.

refortified it, and in the sixth century AD, in a well-known passage of Procopius, the fortress was described as exceedingly strong.[67]

Nabagath, which Isidore described as a walled village (κωμοπολις) nearby Phaliga, has recently been suggested to be the remains of a fortification at Safat ez Zer, lying on the Euphrates across the Khabur, 3 km east of Buseire.[68] This identification is different from the earlier identifications made by Poidebard and Musil. Geyer and Monchambert reject Poidebard's suggestion that Nabagath lay on the left bank of the Khabur, 2 km upstream from the confluence at Buseire, claiming that it should lie on the Euphrates itself.[69] Musil located Nabagath in the southern half of Buseira, claiming that Phaliga and Nabagath were actually on the same large tell.[70] Nabagath is referred to in *P.Dura 25* of 180, which was a contract for the sale of a vineyard and slave at Nabagath. The vendor was a citizen of Europos but resided in Nabagath, which was described as being in the *hypparchy* around Gabalein (τῆς περὶ Γαβαλεῖν ὑπαρχείας, line 21).[71] There are difficulties in establishing the precise locations of Phaliga and Nabagath due to a number of factors, including the fact that the confluence of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers has moved to the south-east of its confluence in antiquity. Modern settlements and agriculture have taken a heavy toll on ancient remains, leaving them as little more than mounds of refuse. What is clear from the Dura papyri, the references in Isidore and the archaeological remains is that there were a considerable number of settlements in the area of the Euphrates/Khabur confluence and that a number of them were fortified in both the Parthian and Roman periods.

Figure 3.3 The remains of ancient Circesium (Karkisia).

Fortifications and settlements on the lower Khabur

The Dura papyri indicate that there were also a number of fortified locations and villages on the lower Khabur. *P.Dura 17A*, a deed of gift, and *P.Dura 17D*, a loan document, both dated *c*.180, refer to the villages of Tetyrus (Τετύρως) and Laceite (Λακείτη). *P.Dura 17A–D* was published as a collection of related documents, and their similarity to *P.Dura 25*, securely dated to 180, led the editors of the papyri to suggest a date of *c*.180 for them.[72] Like *P.Dura 25*, individuals were referred to as citizens of Europos, but the property relevant to the loan was located in the vicinity of these two villages. This led to the suggestion that the village of Tetyrus, and by inference Laceite, were also on the lower Khabur.[73] Unlike Nabagath, there is no indication that these villages were fortified. Like *P.Dura 25*, these two documents are evidence for Dura's role as a centre for registration of deeds and contracts in the second century AD, a role that continued from the Parthian period. The continuation of Dura in this role from the Parthian to the Roman periods is demonstrated particularly in two papyri that refer to another settlement thought to lie on the lower Khabur.[74] *P.Dura 23* of 134, written when Dura was still under Parthian control, is a loan contract made by a resident of Europos to a villager from Ossa. *P.Dura 31* is a

divorce contract of two residents of Ossa and is dated 204, by which time Dura had been ruled by the Romans for approximately 40 years.

The papyri of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum refer to a number of sites that can be more securely located on the lower Khabur than can most of the sites mentioned in the papyri of a civil nature discussed above. Some of these locations appear in the rosters of the cohort as places where soldiers were stationed, indicating that they were probably fortified. Other papyri from Dura refer to locations at which soldiers were stationed but the documents were not in themselves military in nature. The Euphrates papyri make references to sites that are also mentioned in the military papyri from Dura. They provide information from a slightly later period than most of the military papyri from Dura and help to shed some light on the administrative organization of the Khabur valley.

The two large rosters of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, *P.Dura 100* (AD 219) and *P.Dura 101* (AD 222), show in both cases that 11 soldiers were stationed at a location called Magdala. MGDL is an Aramaic word for 'fortress' meaning that Magdala could be any one of a number of smaller fortified sites on the Euphrates or Khabur rivers. Poidebard discussed unpublished aerial photographs of towns on the Khabur, including one called Magdalathum (Tell Meğdel).[75] Chapot identified this site as Magdalathon, and on Poidebard's map it lies on the left bank of the Khabur, approximately 140 km from the Khabur/Euphrates confluence.[76] This is a considerable distance from Dura (approximately 200 km), but six soldiers

Figure 3.4 The lower Khabur river.

listed in *P.Dura 101* of 222 were also at Barbalissos, approximately 300 km up the river from Dura, demonstrating that soldiers of the cohort served in locations over a wide area. Musil noted two Arabic references to Saladin's capture of a town called al-Maǧdal and other settlements along the Khabur in 1182.[77] In *P.Euphr. 5*, a petition of *c.* 245–250, the petitioner came from Magdala, which was described as a village in the territory of Sphoracene.[78] It is possible that Birtha Asporakos/Zenobia was the centre of administration in Sphoracene at this time. Magdalathum lies approximately 130 km north-north-east of Birtha Asporakos, which may be too great a distance for it to be positively identified as the Magdala of the papyrus. Significantly, Magdala is only referred to as a village in *P.Euphr. 5* whereas it was clearly a fortification of some kind in the Dura papyri approximately 30 years earlier.

   P.Dura 26, dated 227, is a contract for the purchase of a vineyard on the Khabur river. The vineyard was purchased by Julius Demetrius, a veteran of Cohors III Augusta Thracum whose winter quarters were at a location called Sachare (Σαχάρη). Julius Demetrius lived in a village called Rakoukaitha (Ῥακουκαίθα) and the land he purchased was in Sachare-da-hawarae (Σαχαρη-δα-αουαράη – translated as the White Barrage by the editors). This village was probably close to the fortification at Sachare. The land is described as being bound by the Khabur to its east, which places it and the village on the right bank of the Khabur. Sachare may be the settlement observed by Musil at the modern village of as-Sičer.[79] As-Sičer lies on the left bank of the Khabur, 15 km from the confluence with the Euphrates, at the point where the ancient Dawrin canal begins. As the Khabur is a small river, the fortification of Sachare may have been on the right bank and the villages in its vicinity on the left. Musil thought that the Dawrin canal was part of the Sacouras river described by Ptolemy, which rose east of the Khabur and emptied south-east of it into the Euphrates.[80]

Figure 3.5 View of Birtha Asporakos/Zenobia from the ruined fortification of Zelebiyeh.

Sachare is thought to have taken its name from the river. Musil traced the Dawrin canal as it parallels the left bank of the Euphrates from as-Sičer to at-Tatar on the Euphrates, a distance of 112 km.[81] Geyer and Monchambert recently traced the canal from close to the modern village of as-Sičer for a distance of 116 km to the vicinity of Abu-Kemal, the modern Syrian border town before entering Iraq.[82] They too indicate that as-Sičer could be the Sachare of *P.Dura 26*, and that the Sacouras river of Ptolemy is probably the Dawrin canal.[83]

The stationing of Cohors III Augusta Thracum on the lower Khabur by 227 shows that Dura was not the only garrison in the region. We do not know if this cohort was a *cohors quinquengaria* or *miliaria*, and there is no evidence to indicate how long it had been at Sachare. Like Cohors XX Palmyrenorum at Dura, it was probably stationed on the Khabur because of its versatility as an auxiliary unit comprised of both infantry and cavalry, with its soldiers performing duties similar to those at Dura.

Another military unit thought to have been garrisoned on the lower Khabur is Cohors XII Palestinorum (σπείρης Δωδεκάτης Παλαιστεινῶν Σεουηριανῆς Ἀλεξανδριανῆς). The reference to this cohort is made in a marriage contract of 232.[84] The marriage was between a soldier of the cohort and a resident of Qatna, where the cohort is thought to have been based. It is possible that Qatna's location lay on the Khabur river approximately 100 km from the confluence with the Euphrates, as Dussaud noted a location on the Khabur referred to as Qatni in Assyrian records.[85] This would place it 85 km north of the winter quarters of Cohors III Augusta Thracum. The attachment of Severus Alexander's name to that of the cohort indicates that it was either raised as part of the emperor's Persian campaign or that it served with distinction in the campaign.

P.Dura 100 of 219 and *P.Dura 101* of 222 locate seven and two soldiers respectively at a location called Castellum Arabum. Castellum Arabum has long been identified as modern Tell Araban on the right bank of the Khabur.[86] Dussaud seems to have equated Qatna and Araban, claiming that Qatna was the site's Assyrian name and that it was known as Araban in the accounts of Arabic authors.[87] Poidebard gave no dimensions for Araban, but Sarre and Herzfeld provided a rough estimate of the site's dimensions as 700 paces long and 400 paces wide.[88] The castellum was located roughly in the middle of the site at an elevation of 30 m above the Khabur according to Sarre and Herzfeld's plan of the site.[89]

There was clearly a considerable connection between Dura Europos and fortifications and villages on the lower Khabur. This is demonstrated in more detail in the military papyri of the third century, but earlier papyri of a civil nature from the Roman and Parthian periods show the importance of Dura as an administrative and legal centre for the Euphrates and the lower Khabur. This was the case from at least the early decades of the second century when the Parthians controlled the city, and

Figure 3.6 The Khabur river and its irrigated banks from the ancient tell at Souar.

it continued into the Roman period. The extent to which Dura supplied soldiers to fortifications along the Euphrates and Khabur rivers in the third century is also borne out by details in the papyri. There were numerous Roman fortifications of varying sizes along the Khabur in the third century, although caution must be exercised as some of these locations have only been identified as likely locations on the Khabur and the identification of ancient sites on the basis of modern place-names can be problematic. Some of the fortifications would have been significant to local populations on the Khabur, as the Dura papyri inform us that there was at least one cohort based on the lower Khabur in the mid-220s (Cohors III Augusta Thracum), and there were probably two in the early 230s (Cohors XII Palestinorum).

From Birtha Asporakos to the Euphrates/Khabur confluence

The section of the Euphrates from its confluence with the Khabur, heading in a north-westerly direction towards Nicephorium, contains the archaeological remains of numerous fortifications and settlements on both banks that can be confidently dated to the Roman period. A number of these locations were discussed in Chapter 1 with reference to the nature of the Roman presence on the Euphrates in the late Republican and early Imperial periods. By the third century AD, the most important fortification on this section of the river seems to have been Birtha Asporakos. Birtha Asporakos has been identified for some time as the fortress of Zenobia at modern Halebiyeh and may have been a military and administrative centre in a region called Sphoracene in the first half of the third century AD.[90] The archaeological remains at Zenobia mostly date to the reign of Justinian, and Procopius claimed that the site was enlarged by Zenobia of Palmyra – which is how the site derives its name.[91] References in two papyri from Dura Europos, dating to 219 and 222, name soldiers of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum stationed at a location called Birtha, which may be Birtha Asporakos. As previously mentioned, *P.Euphr. 5*, dated 27 May 243, is a petition by a villager from Magdala in the district of Sphoracene (χώ(μης) Μαγδάλης τῆς Σφωραχηνῆς). It is proposed that the name Birtha Asporakos derives from the name of this district and that it was the most important town or fortification in Sphoracene at this time.[92] It is unclear as to the extent of the fortification at Zalebiyeh in the third century, which lies on the opposite bank just downstream from Birtha Asporakos, as so much of it has since collapsed into the Euphrates. It offers commanding views of the river looking back to Birtha Asporakos/Zenobia, and in combination with the latter would have operated to control this very strategic section of the river.

The evidence of the *SKZ* inscription becomes important for this section of the river as the two cities listed after Anatha are thought to belong to

Figure 3.7 Birtha Asporakos/Zenobia from the left bank of the Euphrates.

this area. Like Anatha and the other cities listed in Shapur's first campaign, Birtha Arupan and Birtha Asporakos were both described as being captured along with the countryside in their vicinity.[93] This probably indicates that, like Anatha, they were fortifications central to certain districts with a number of smaller fortifications and watch posts in their vicinities. The remains of a number of smaller fortifications have been discovered on the right bank of the Euphrates in the vicinity of what is thought to be Birtha Arupan (Qreiye) and Birtha Asporakos/Zenobia. These are the fortifications at Djazla, Nheyla and Siffin, discussed in Chapter 1.[94] All three were built on the edge of the cliff face created by the flow of the Euphrates, which gives them commanding views of the Euphrates valley. Similarities have already been noted between these fortifications, and it is proposed that they were originally constructed late in the Seleucid period and reused under Diocletian.[95] In an earlier analysis by Mouterde and Poidebard, and in a survey by Kohlmeyer, it was proposed that the three fortifications were built in connection with the Romano-Parthian confrontation of the first century BC, but the archaeological evidence presented by Napoli does not concur with this conclusion.[96] The conclusion as to the late Seleucid foundation of Djazla's walls rests primarily on a comparison with the walls of Dura Europos, which are dated to the middle of the second century BC.[97] Napoli maintains that all three fortifications were established

as a result of the growing Parthian threat to Seleucid Mesopotamia and Syria, which developed significantly in the latter half of the second century BC.[98] There is no evidence to suggest that these fortifications were restored and enlarged by the Romans until the reign of Diocletian, but it is, of course, possible that they were used by the Romans prior to their renovation under Diocletian.[99]

It is also likely that a fortification whose archaeological remains have been found at Tabous, 28 km downstream from Zenobia, played a role in the military presence established on the Euphrates from the second half of the second century AD.[100] There has been considerable discussion about the ancient name and identification of Tabous. Sarre and Herzfeld visited Tabous and drew a sketch plan of the site.[101] In the Parthian version of the *SKZ*, two fortifications known as Birtha (BYRT) are listed after the capture of Anatha in the first Syrian campaign of AD 252/253. These were BYRT 'RWPN (Birtha Arupan) and BYRT 'SPWRKN (Birtha Asporakos), the latter clearly the same location as that listed in the Greek version. Birtha derives from the Aramaic BYRT' meaning 'fortress'.[102] Maricq identified Birtha Arupan as modern Qreiye, photographed and described by Poidebard, on the left bank of the Euphrates 14 km north-west of Deir-ez-zor on the Euphrates and approximately 45 km north-west of the Euphrates/Khabur confluence.[103] Lauffray thought that this was incorrect and preferred the identification of Birtha Arupan with Tabous, 16 km upstream from Qreiye

Figure 3.8 View of the Euphrates from the escarpment at Nouhaila.

Figure 3.9 The south wall at Nouhaila.

Figure 3.10 The east wall at Djazla, which is thought to be Diocletianic and lying on a late Seleucid socle.

in the direction of Zenobia.[104] Recent surveys undertaken by a team from the University of Helsinki also identify Tabous with Birtha Arupan.[105] The archaeological remains at Tabous date to the Diocletianic and early Byzantine periods; however, the Finnish team suggest that it probably played an earlier role in the Roman military presence on this section of the Euphrates in the second and third centuries AD through a Palmyrene military presence. The German excavations at Qreiye, which are continuing, maintain that Qreiye should still be identified with Birtha Arupan of the *SKZ*.[106] This demonstrates further the difficulties inherent in attaching precise ancient identifications to modern remains of Roman military sites. The numerous archaeological remains on the Euphrates north-west of the Khabur confluence demonstrate, however, how regular the Roman military presence was and that the activity of Diocletian and later emperors was building on an earlier military presence connected with Rome's formal extension of territorial power in the Antonine and early Severan periods.

A number of locations are attested in the Dura papyri as holding soldiers of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, which are either very difficult to identify or appear to have been at locations a considerable distance from Dura. *P.Dura 101* (AD 222) shows that one soldier was at Alexandria.[107] The whereabouts of this particular Alexandria are unknown, but it may have been Alexandria-ad-Issum (Alexandretta).[108] There were also at least six soldiers at Barbalissos on the bend of the Euphrates beyond Sura in 222 according to *P.Dura 101*. A location referred to as Chafer Avira held seven and four soldiers in the respective rosters, and to date there are no suggestions as to where its modern location might lie. *P.Dura 82* of 233 refers to two soldiers returning to Dura from an otherwise unknown location called Atha. *P.Dura 100* located two soldiers at Bartha, while *P.Dura 101* lists one soldier at Capera. The two soldiers returning from Atha may have been delivering and receiving messages on behalf of the garrison, while the soldiers at Alexandria, Bartha and Capera were probably there for similar purposes. The identification of these locations is unknown, but they are a further indication of the extent to which the Euphrates and lower Khabur rivers were controlled and monitored militarily by the Romans over a broad area.[109]

It is uncertain as to whether the numbers of soldiers stationed at various sites represented the total garrisons at those locations, which in turn has implications for estimates of the sizes of these fortifications. In some cases where archaeological remains can be reasonably identified with sites named in the papyri, such as Becchufrayn/Kifrin, the size of the garrison and the proportion of troops from Dura that comprised it is more achievable. The largest presence of troops from Cohors XX Palmyrenorum at a known location is 91 at Becchufrayn in 219. The totals of soldiers at many other sites were much smaller. Based partially on a number of surviving strength

Figure 3.11 The fortification at Qreiye, often identified as the Birtha Arupan of the SKZ inscription. From A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le Désert de Syrie*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1934, vol. 2, plate 86

reports dating to 219–240, the size of the garrison at Dura is estimated at 3,000–5,000 men, including those from both Cohors XX Palmyrenorum and legionary vexillations.[110] During this period there were also at least two cohorts in garrisons on the Khabur river, and there were many smaller fortified locations along the middle Euphrates and on the Khabur.

While the military role played by these fortifications was partially directed towards defence there were long periods of time where there was little military activity, and none of the fortifications were sufficiently equipped to deal with major invasions.[111] The defensive capacity of the fortifications was clearly limited; however, they could provide early warnings of impending attacks such as that in 252/253. Any defensive effort at the smaller fortifications would have been futile. In the Sasanian attacks of the 250s, the larger fortifications probably fell quickly with the smaller ones being abandoned before the invading Persian army arrived.

The evidence of the SKZ – Shapur I's campaign beyond Birtha Asporakos

We have already seen that the list of cities provided in the *SKZ* inscription of Shapur I at Naqsh-i Rustam, near Persepolis, allows some consideration of the military organization of the middle Euphrates and that it complements the evidence of the Dura and Euphrates papyri. The *SKZ* also allows us to go geographically beyond the area containing most of the fortifications mentioned in the papyri to consider how the middle Euphrates and lower Khabur region was located in the broader military and administrative organization of Mesopotamia and Coele Syria in particular.

The inscription refers firstly to the defeat of a Roman army numbering 60,000 men at Barbalissos on the Euphrates before listing the individual cities that were captured as a part of the campaign in Syria and Cappadocia:

> (10) The nation of Syria and whatever nations and plains that were above it, we set on fire and devastated and laid waste. And in that campaign <we took> (the following) fortresses and cities from the nation of the Romans: (11) the city of Anatha with its surrounding territory,[112] Birtha Asporakos, (BYRT 'ARPN (Parthian only), Sura, Barbalissos, Hierapolis, (12) Beroea, Chalcis, Apamea, Rephanea, Zeugma, Ourima, (13) Gindaros, Larmenaza, Seleucia, Antioch, Cyrrhus, (14) another Seleucia, Alexandria (Alexandretta), Nikopolis, Sinzara (Larissa), Chamath (Epiphania), (15) Aristia (Arethusa), Dichor, Doliche, Doura, Circesium, Germanicia, (16) Batna, Chanar and in Cappadocia, Satala, Domana, (17) Artangil, Souisa, Suid, Phreata, a total of thirty-seven cities with their surrounding territories.[113]

The direction and strategy of the Persian forces as they made their way up the Euphrates to Antioch has been described and debated ever since the discovery of the *SKZ* in the 1930s. Emphasis is often placed on the order in which the cities appear in the inscription and how this might indicate the route taken by the Persian army as it marched through Syria, with

considerable work done to identify the sites captured.[114] The first city listed in the *SKZ* is Anatha, which was discussed earlier and is known to have been an island fortress belonging to the Persians at the time of Julian's invasion in 363. Little is known of its significance as a Roman fortification in the mid-third century; however, it may have been controlled by Palmyra from the early first century AD before becoming part of the complex system of fortifications on the Euphrates under Septimius Severus. As noted earlier, a number of smaller fortifications to the north and south of Anatha appear to have formed part of its military jurisdiction.

Following the capture of Anatha, Birtha Arupan and Birtha Asporakos, Sura is listed as the next city captured by Shapur I.[115] The obvious omissions between Anatha and Birtha Arupan are Dura and Circesium, which are listed well after the capture of Antioch and cities within its vicinity. This has been the subject of considerable speculation and is dealt with below. Sura later became important as a Roman fortification at the head of the Strata Diocletiana, which ran from Damascus to the Euphrates through Palmyra in the early fourth century AD.[116] Little is known of its fortification prior to this time. In the first century AD, Pliny referred to Sura as the place where the Euphrates turned east and flowed into the Palmyrene desert.[117] It was noted in Chapter 2 that there is effectively no evidence for Sura as a Roman fortification as early as 75.[118] It is possible that Sura was garrisoned by Legio XVI Flavia Firma from as early as the Severan period, but this too is speculative.[119] Interestingly, Sura is not mentioned in any of the papyri from Dura, while epigraphic evidence from Dura attests to the presence of vexillations of Legio XVI Flavia Firma from *c.* 211–250, claimed by some to be garrisoned at Sura at this time.[120] If Legio XVI Flavia Firma was the garrison of Sura during this period it is surprising that Sura is not mentioned in any of the papyri.

Sura does appear to have been an important bridge crossing in the middle of the third century AD, this being indicated by a reference in *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*. Sura was considered important enough in the middle of the third century for the author of the oracle to specifically describe it as the location through which Mariades passed as he fled to Persia, and it has been argued that Sura was the natural place for someone to pass through when leaving western Syria and heading to Persia.[121] After leaving Antioch and arriving at the Euphrates, the crossing at Sura placed traders and troops on the left bank of the Euphrates along which they made their way to the Khabur confluence and then along the Euphrates towards Persia. From the Khabur confluence it would also be possible to travel north along its banks to reach Nisibis in Mesopotamia. The other major crossing of the Euphrates at Zeugma allowed access to Armenia, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. Once the Euphrates was crossed at Sura, Circesium was the last Roman fortification on the left bank of the Euphrates in the fourth century, but in the middle of the third century it

was only weakly defended.[122] If there was a permanent crossing at Sura it is likely that a fortification was located there; because of this it may well have held Legio XVI Flavia Firma in the third century.

Following Sura, the next city listed in the *SKZ* is Barbalissos.[123] Barbalissos is mentioned only briefly in the surviving sources before the fourth century. Ptolemy simply described it as a town in Chalybonitis on the Euphrates, while in the late third/early fourth century AD it became well known as the site at which the Christian martyr Bacchus was killed.[124] It was here that the *SKZ* declared a major victory over the Roman army, which saw a force of 60,000 men destroyed in 252/253.[125] The defeat of the army at Barbalissos was one of the highlights of Shapur's campaigns in Syria as it is described separately and before the long list of cities and fortifications captured, while the capture of Barbalissos itself forms part of that list. While there is no mention of this defeat in the Roman sources, and it is probable that the size of the defeated Roman army is exaggerated in the *SKZ*, a significant defeat should not be discounted as the Persian army appears to have marched without resistance to the north and south of Barbalissos after the battle.

It is argued by Potter that the presence of a Roman force at Barbalissos indicates that Trebonianus Gallus was preparing for an offensive against

Figure 3.12 A cornfield on the right bank of the Euphrates close to the site of ancient Sura. The Euphrates today, as in antiquity, supports extensive agricultural production.

Persia in 252/253.[126] While the *SKZ*'s claim that the Roman army numbered 60,000 is probably an exaggeration, Potter argues that a significant Roman force on the middle Euphrates would have taken too long to organize if it was a defensive operation, given the rapidity with which Shapur's forces attacked.[127] According to Potter, the defeated Roman army had originally been organized to deal with difficulties in Armenia, but when the Persians invaded this force marched to meet them on the Euphrates. Barbalissos was located on the right bank of the Euphrates and at the precise location where the river bends closest to Antioch. It lay approximately 150 km due east of Antioch and 100 km south of Zeugma.[128] The location of Barbalissos made it an appropriate location at which to organize an army to protect Antioch and other key Syrian cities such as Apamea, Beroea and Cyrrhus. Almost a century earlier, this section of the river was the scene of intense fighting between Roman and Parthian forces prior to Lucius Verus' invasion of Parthia. It is likely that a large component of the army that Shapur defeated at Barbalissos was comprised of troops withdrawn from fortifications further east and south, Dura Europos probably being one of them.

One of the most debated issues regarding the list of cities in the *SKZ* is the order in which Dura and Circesium appear. These fortifications lay

Figure 3.13 The Assad dam at Meskene near the site of ancient Barbalissos (modern Balis).

between Anatha and the two Birthas, but they were not listed immediately after Anatha, appearing instead towards the end of the list of Syrian cities captured in Shapur's first Syrian campaign. As the archaeological evidence for the Sasanian capture of Dura points to a date of 256/257 for its capture and the literary evidence indicates a date of 252/253 for the beginning of the campaign at Anatha, Rostovtzeff proposed that Dura fell twice, briefly in 253 and permanently in 256/257.[129] Sprengling attempted to identify Birtha Arupan as Dura, the next city on the *SKZ* in the Parthian version, so as to fit with Rostovtzeff's earlier idea; this is now thought to be incorrect.[130] The belief that the city was taken twice was later quite convincingly refuted, but new readings of middle Persian *dipinti* from the frescoes of the Dura synagogue, together with analysis of other material, indicate that the city probably was occupied briefly before its final capture in 256/257, and as part of Shapur's first campaign.[131] This conclusion resurrects the old problem of the *SKZ* only listing the city once, in conjunction with Circesium, at what appears to be a considerable time lag from the first stage of the campaign. It is presently an insoluble question as to why Dura was not listed between Anatha and Birtha Arupan if it was captured at this time, and there is no archaeological evidence from Circesium to throw light on the subject. If Dura was captured in 252/253 after the capture of Anatha are we also to assume that Circesium was captured but not listed until later? It is possible that the *SKZ*, which was ultimately a work of Sasanian propaganda, only listed cities once because to list them twice would hint at some type of failure.

Conclusion

The papyrological and archaeological evidence from the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers in the third century AD demonstrates that fortifications containing Roman soldiers were located at regular intervals on the irrigated banks of the rivers. The military purposes of these fortifications were not primarily defensive, although they played defensive roles at some stages. Dura Europos itself was a large fortification, but the fortifications at the city were not strong enough to pose any serious problem for a besieging army such as that of Shapur I's in 256/257. Circesium seems to have been the only other fortification of any significance and we are expressly told that it was not a major fortification until the reign of Diocletian. The other fortifications referred to in the papyri were smaller and less significant again, although the fortifications containing Cohors III Augusta Thracum and Cohors XII Palestinorum would have been larger than most. The defensive roles of these fortifications and their garrisons would have primarily involved providing early warning of enemy troop movements and providing support to invading Roman armies such as that of Severus Alexander in 232/233. The soldiers based in these

fortifications were engaged on a day-to-day basis in policing, tax collection and the administration of justice. These were key elements in territory becoming Roman. Despite the wealth of information contained in the Dura and Euphrates papyri, however, there are few specific indications of soldiers undertaking these types of activities. This is due to the nature of the evidence itself, which was not primarily concerned with recording such information. Other evidence, though, provides some assistance. *P.Euphr. 2* and *5* refer to two centurions acting as police on the middle Euphrates and lower Khabur in the 240s.[132] The Palmyra Gate at Dura Europos provides considerable epigraphic evidence for the presence of *beneficiarii* and *statores*, both titles held by soldiers acting as police in the third century AD.[133]

While the specifics might be lacking in the evidence, there is plenty to indicate that Roman soldiers were a regular presence in a fertile and productive landscape, which was a crucial component in the territorial expansion and reorganization most obvious under Septimius Severus. The Euphrates and Khabur rivers are often thought to flow through marginal and inhospitable territory today and in antiquity. The banks of the middle Euphrates, together with the area around the Khabur confluence, are still fertile and productive areas and were probably more so in antiquity. The Dawrin canal, which paralleled the left bank of the Euphrates for over 100 km from the Khabur to modern Iraq, would have significantly expanded the capacity for irrigation on this section of the river in antiquity. The Dura papyri produce evidence demonstrating intensive agricultural activity on the Khabur, which today supplies a reduced water volume due to upstream damming. The expansion of formal Roman power along the Euphrates in the 160s, combined with the extension of formal power across the Euphrates into Osrhoene and Mesopotamia under Septimius Severus, saw an increased military and administrative presence on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers as the rivers and their banks were vital to supporting this activity and added considerably to the security of resources in the newly divided provinces of Syria. It also served to bring this territory more formally under Roman authority following approximately 50 years of less-direct rule assisted by the Palmyrenes.

4

DURA EUROPOS ON THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES IN THE PARTHIAN AND ROMAN PERIODS

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to undertake a detailed analysis of some important aspects of the history of Dura Europos so as to better understand the city's history in light of developments on the middle Euphrates and in Mesopotamia and Palmyra during the period in which the Romans controlled it. A review of the important evidence from Dura Europos from the Parthian and Roman periods is undertaken to illustrate continuity and change at the city as Roman power in the Near East developed from the first century BC. The ongoing importance of Hellenistic institutions at Dura Europos, together with the flourishing of the city in the Parthian period, forms part of the analysis. The remains of Dura's prosperity in the first and second centuries AD demonstrate the city's connections with the cities and regions which came under Roman control and influence in the first and second centuries AD.

The Roman period of control at Dura, and the evidence of a military nature from the city, forms an important section of this chapter. Considerable analysis of the Roman military evidence from Dura has been undertaken over the last 80 years, including the excellent recent studies by Nigel Pollard and Simon James.[1] Pollard undertakes a detailed analysis of the relationship between soldiers and civilians at the city and investigates some important issues such as the possible ethnic origins and composition of the soldiers of the garrison. This study does not seek to replicate or challenge this analysis, but it does ask questions about some of the original assumptions made by the Yale excavation team. There have been various modifications of conclusions made by the original French and American excavation teams from the 1920s to the 1950s, but in some cases observations originally made on slender and difficult grounds are still accepted or are only subjected to limited questioning. Part of this chapter undertakes a review of some of the important material that was originally used to make assumptions about the Roman military presence at the city – assumptions that still hold but require more extensive

Figure 4.1 Aerial photograph from the Yale excavations of Dura Europos taken from the north. Reproduced with kind permission of Yale University Art Gallery.

questioning so as to better understand the regional role played by the Dura garrison. The aim of this chapter is, therefore, twofold: first, it seeks to provide an up-to-date and more regionally contextualized history of one of the most important settlements on the middle Euphrates in the Parthian and Roman periods; second, it seeks to provide a better understanding of Dura's military role by challenging earlier assumptions about the nature of the garrison at Dura and in particular the role of the *Dux Ripae*.

The discovery and excavation of the site

The story of the discovery of the archaeological remains of Dura Europos soon after the conclusion of the First World War was well summarized by Clark Hopkins in his memoir on the excavations by Yale University in the 1920s and 1930s.[2] Despite some earlier visits to the site by German scholars, its significance was not recognized until 1920 when a detachment of British soldiers camping in the ruins unearthed wall paintings of a priest and his family thought to be sacrificing to Palmyrene gods.[3] The paintings were found on the wall of a sanctuary located in the north-west corner of the city that was dedicated to Bel and other Palmyrene gods. Professor James Breasted of the University of Chicago was in Baghdad at the time

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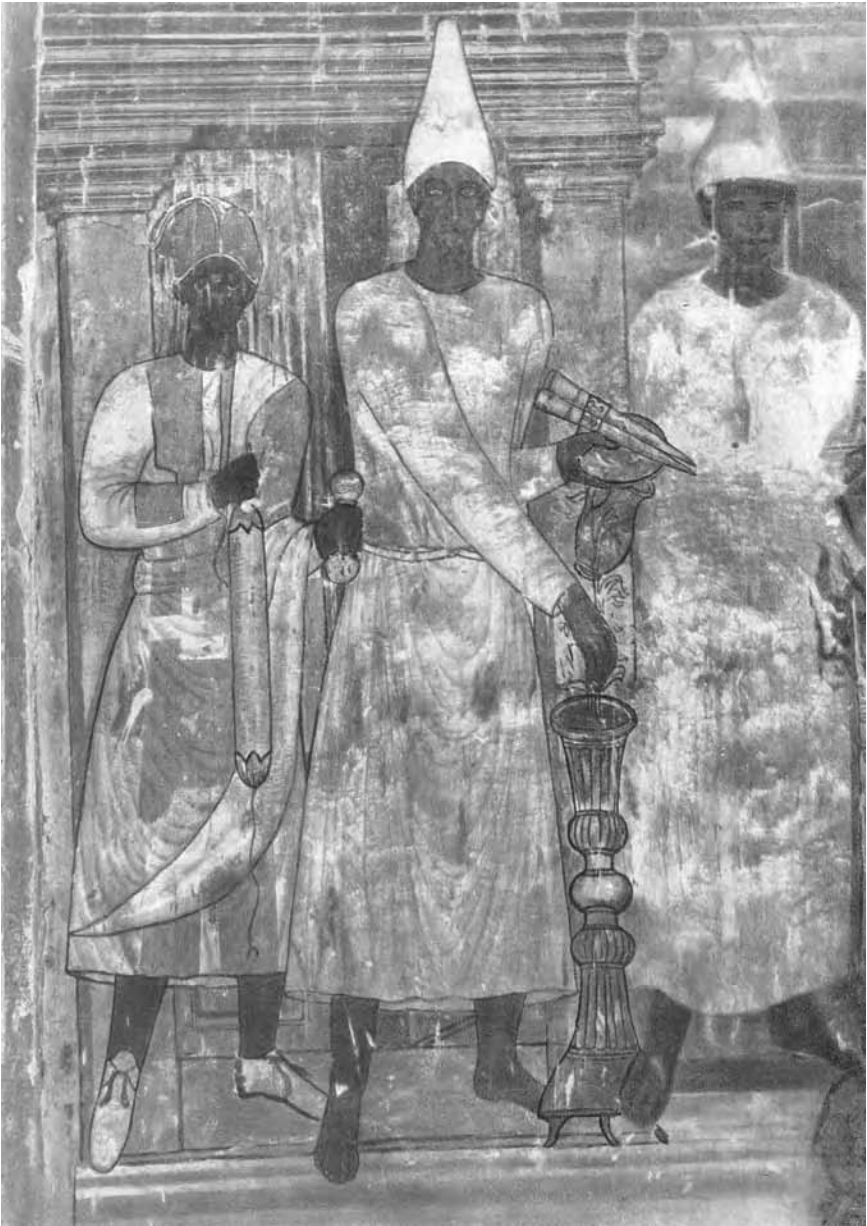*Figure 4.2* The priest Konon sacrificing in the Temple of the Palmyrene gods at Dura Europos. This hand-coloured photograph was produced by James Breasted and is the only surviving record of the painting in its original state. From J.H. Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting: First Century Wall Paintings from the Fortress of Dura on the Middle Euphrates*, Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1924, plate IX.

and made a harrowing trip up the Euphrates to inspect the paintings. The unpredictable political situation meant that Breasted was only able to make a one-day visit to Dura Europos to study the paintings and briefly inspect the site. Breasted published preliminary details of his work at Dura in the newly established journal, *Syria*, before writing his important work, *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting* on the basis of this visit.[4]

The mandates over territories in the Middle East granted to the British and the French based on the San Remo agreement of 1920 saw the establishment of the borders of Syria and Iraq, with the former coming under the protection of the French and the latter under the British. The location of Dura Europos on the Euphrates meant that the site fell within the boundaries of Syria when the provisions of the treaty came into effect in 1920. Brief archaeological campaigns were undertaken at Dura in 1922 and 1923 by the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres.[5] These excavations were directed by Franz Cumont whose first season lasted for two weeks in November 1922. The second season ran for four weeks in October/November 1923. The work concentrated on the completion of the excavation of the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods and the adjacent tower, a brief analysis of the fortifications, the excavation of some tombs located outside the city and exploration of buildings thought to have been of Hellenistic origin.[6]

From 1928–1937, a joint excavation team from Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres conducted excavations at Dura under the direction of C. Hopkins and F.E. Brown, as Yale was able to secure regular and more sufficient funding for the project, thanks to the work of the driving force behind the whole venture, M.I. Rostovtzeff. The publication of the results of the excavations took the form of a series of preliminary reports on each season followed by final reports on key aspects of the site. The preliminary reports were published on a timely basis up to the report of the seventh and eighth seasons, 1933–1934 and 1934–1935. The three-part report on the ninth season, 1935–1936, was not completed until 1952 as a result of interruptions caused by the Second World War. No preliminary report of the tenth season, 1936–1937, was published, but an attempt has been made to salvage something from the archive of notes and correspondence on the tenth season currently held by Yale University Art Gallery.[7] A number of the final reports were published in the years following the end of the Second World War with others appearing some time afterwards, including one quite recently. Unfortunately, some final reports have never appeared, most notably the volume on the inscriptions.

There were numerous important discoveries at Dura during the period of the Yale/French Academy excavations and they drew interest both scholarly and popular from around the world. The discovery of the remains of religious buildings such as a synagogue, Christian building and Mithraeum drew international attention to the site, while the evidence for

the siege and capture of the city *c.*256/257 also drew interest due to the vivid nature of the evidence. The work performed at the site by the Yale/French Academy team was completed by July 1937.[8]

Excavation did not recommence at Dura Europos until 1982 when a Franco-Syrian team under the direction of Dr P. Leriche began work at the site with the stated objectives of 're-examin(ing) the archaeological data, to make available the entire mass of documentation from previous excavations, as well as to save the monuments from destruction'.[9] Publication of reports of excavations since the Franco-Syrian mission began have appeared in articles in three volumes of *Syria* dedicated to this purpose, also published as *Doura études 1, 2* and *3*.[10] Two separate volumes, *Doura études IV* and *V*, have also been published covering excavation work to 1997.[11] Some annual reports on excavations have also appeared in *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes*.

The foundation of Dura Europos and the Seleucid period

Practically all that is known of Dura Europos in antiquity comes from the archaeological evidence discovered at the site, but there are brief references to the city in three ancient texts. Isidore of Charax states that 'Dura, the city of Nicanor (is) a Macedonian foundation which the Greeks call Europos.'[12] Referring to the Mesopotamian campaigns of Molon, the satrap of Media who had rebelled against Antiochus III in 222 BC, Polybius claimed that Molon 'occupied Parapotamia as far as the town of Europos'.[13] Towards the end of the fourth century AD, Ammianus Marcellinus reported that Dura was in ruins when the invading Roman force he accompanied under the Emperor Julian passed by the site in April 363.[14]

Nicanor, a nephew of Seleucus I Nicator, was governor of Mesopotamia and the founder of many cities in the name of his uncle.[15] He was a well-known figure in Greek colonization and was celebrated as such for centuries afterwards. Indeed, Seleucus Nicator appears to have been revered as the founding patron of Dura Europos throughout the city's entire history as he was still honoured as the official founder of the city on the basis of references in a divorce document of AD 254.[16] Evidence from the Temple of the Gadde, a Palmyrene temple enlarged *c.* AD 159, depicts the protecting god of the house of the Seleucids, Zeus Olympios, as the *Tyche* of Dura, which indicates ongoing links with Seleucus Nicator as the city's official founder, and there are epigraphic instances of his name in Palmyrene from the same temple.[17] In a papyrus from Dura dating to AD 180 reference is made to a priest of King Seleucus Nicator, demonstrating that his cult was still active early in the Roman period of control of the city.[18]

The choice of the site of Dura Europos reflects some of the major criteria of the Seleucid kings for founding a colony.[19] The aspect of Dura Europos, as described by M.I. Rostovtzeff, is as follows:

Figure 4.3 The north wadi at Dura Europos from tower 1.

> The city stood in a position of great natural strength, on a rocky plateau overhanging the Euphrates and flanked by two deep ravines. It was surrounded by strong walls of stone with a super-structure of mud bricks pierced by three monumental gates and including a citadel on the river front.[20]

The city, as Rostovtzeff further indicated, was situated at a vital point on the Euphrates for military and commercial traffic between upper and lower Mesopotamia. In addition to its possible importance as a trade centre, Dura also had the advantage of being surrounded by fertile territory. The documents from the Parthian and Roman periods indicate the extent of this fertility, and this was almost certainly the situation in the Seleucid period.[21] While it may have been geographically remote to the later Seleucids, the Parthians and the Romans, the productive nature of this section of the Euphrates and the lower Khabur made it an important region, considering the harsh countryside that surrounded it.

The population of Dura Europos appears to have been quite small until the middle of the second century BC, from which time many of the surviving Seleucid features of the city were constructed.[22] These features include the defences, the citadel palace, the redoubt, the agora and perhaps some temple foundations. It is likely that the plan and layout of the city dates back to its founding, but there is very little evidence of an early Seleucid nature at Dura

Figure 4.4 The Palmyra Gate at Dura Europos was the main entrance to the city in the west wall.

other than the coins.[23] The division of the civic area into rectangular *insulae* and the establishment of the main east–west road, beginning at the Palmyra Gate, is a typical example of a Macedonian town founded in the East in common with many cities in Asia Minor, Syria and Mesopotamia.[24] The imposing city walls with their towers and the presence of a citadel palace overlooking the city are classic features of Hellenistic fortifications.[25] Besides the citadel a second fortress, the 'redoubt', was built on a height in the eastern part of the town. The redoubt contained a Hellenistic palace and to the south a temple, thought to be of Zeus Olympios. It is possible that the redoubt was the seat of the *strategos* of Dura.[26] The citadel palace, like the other Hellenistic features at Dura, is mostly late Seleucid, its construction dating to the middle of the second century BC.[27] While some changes to the perimeter walls of the city were effected in the Parthian and Roman periods, the main features of the walls as they currently stand, being the socle, towers and most of the curtains, were constructed in the last 50 years of the Seleucid occupation of the city.[28] On the basis of recent archaeological work it also seems that the Palmyra Gate was constructed in this period.[29]

Excavations uncovered the fragmentary remains of what were identi-fied by the Yale excavators as a Temple of Artemis and a Temple of Zeus

Megistos dating from the Seleucid period. Thorough excavation of the numerous temples belonging to the Parthian period shows no evidence that there were earlier Seleucid versions of them.[30] As Dura does not appear to have had a very large population during most of the Hellenistic period, the two Seleucid temples are thought to have catered sufficiently for the population.[31] These temples were rebuilt many times in the Parthian and Roman periods, and their layouts in the Seleucid period are difficult to reconstruct.[32] Indeed, Downey casts doubt on the identification of these buildings as temples in their earlier phases, noting the extensive reconstruction work done on their plans by the Yale team.[33]

Of approximately 14,000 coins catalogued in the final report of the coins found at Dura, 1,024 were identified as Seleucid.[34] In his analysis of the Seleucid coinage, Bellinger attempted to link the presence of almost every coin to wider events in the region during the city's 550-year existence, which has led to a number of problems in reconstructing the city's history. Little more can be done historically with the Seleucid coins than to demonstrate a pattern that is also reflected in the numismatic evidence of the Parthian and Roman periods. A large majority of them originated from the Antioch mint.[35] It is significant that the same observation can be made

Figure 4.5 The irrigation belt looking from the south-east corner of Dura Europos.

of the Parthian period as this is a further reflection of how closely linked Dura was to the Hellenistic and Roman Near East both commercially and culturally during 250 years of Parthian control of the city.[36] Dura's military importance in the Seleucid period seems to have been at its greatest late in the Seleucid period when the Parthians increasingly threatened the eastern possessions of the Seleucids, and it seems not to have assumed military importance again until the Roman period.

Dura Europos in the Parthian period

Dating the Parthian occupation

It appears that Dura Europos was occupied by the Parthians towards the end of the second century BC, but it is difficult to be more precise than this despite the tendency in many publications to suggest a date of 113 BC.[37] The date of 113 BC for the Parthian occupation of Dura Europos was first suggested by Bellinger on numismatic grounds and has been largely accepted ever since. This date was, by Bellinger's own admission, a very tenuous one and a review of the method by which he arrived at it demonstrates the problematic nature of his conclusion. The date relied on the identification of countermarks on coins from the mint at Antioch from the first reign of Antiochus VIII (120–113 BC).[38] The countermarks were

Figure 4.6 View of the Euphrates at Dura Europos with tower 5 in foreground.

identified by Bellinger as Parthian, although he admitted that the nature of the countermarks was not certain. The countermarks were limited to a total of six coins out of 90 found from the first reign of Antiochus VIII, which ended in 113 BC. The catalogue dates these coins no more specifically than to the years of the first reign of Antiochus VIII (120–113 BC), and the assumption that the six countermarked coins in question date to the last year of his first reign is no more than guesswork. Potentially problematic also to Bellinger's conclusion is the presence of the same marking on one earlier coin from the joint reign of Antiochus VIII and Cleopatra (125–120 BC).[39] Bellinger's argument was ultimately circular, as he claimed '[b]ut if we abandon 113 there is no other date for which we can find numismatic support'.[40]

The beginning of Parthian control of Dura Europos can only be a matter for speculation in the context of wider historical events in Mesopotamia and Syria as the site itself provides no convincing evidence for the beginning of Parthian occupation. There is a general dearth of datable evidence from Dura Europos from the late second century BC until the beginning of a major building phase in the second half of the first century BC.[41] The Parthians were not clearly in control of Mesopotamia until the early years of the first century BC, and the frontier between Rome and Parthia seems to have been fluid for much of the first century BC.[42] After the Parthians captured Seleucia on the Tigris in the late 140s BC, the Seleucid Empire steadily lost territory to the Parthians. At the time Sulla met with a representative of Mithridates I of Parthia in 92 BC it seems that Rome's influence was felt on the upper Euphrates and everything below it was under some form of Parthian influence.[43]

The disintegration of the Seleucid Empire gathered pace during the prolonged civil war of Antiochus VIII and Antiochus IX (120–96 BC) with many of the coastal cities of Seleucid Syria obtaining formal recognition of their freedom between 111 BC and 81 BC.[44] After Pompey's establishment of the province of Syria *c.* 65 BC, the upper Euphrates and a section of the middle Euphrates was conceived as a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests, though we saw in Chapter 1 that no Roman fortifications appeared on the river for another 130 years. By the end of the first century BC the Khabur may have acted as a type of boundary, but we know nothing of its extent and nature.[45] Dura Europos came under Parthian control at some stage in the process of the Seleucid disintegration of the late second/early first century BC, and it was well within the territory considered to have been under Parthian suzerainty during the first century BC. We know little of the nature of Parthian control at the city until the late first century AD, but it is clear that the city enjoyed prosperity during the Parthian period. Much of this was due to the city's links with the world of the Roman Near East rather than with the Parthians.

Temple construction in the Parthian period

While the population of the city appears to have been small in the Seleucid period, its fortifications, the citadel palace, the redoubt palace, the agora and the grid-pattern layout of the city were established by the time of the Parthian occupation.[46] The Parthian period saw the city assume what Leriche calls 'its essential aspect'.[47] This is represented most vividly in two significant phases of temple construction during the Parthian period. Both phases reflect the city's growing prosperity from trade and the productive nature of the territory on the banks of the Euphrates that it was responsible for administering.

The construction of temples is observed from the second half of the first century BC to the middle of the first century AD and again in the middle of the second century AD. The Temple of Artemis was 'radically rebuilt' from 40 to 32 BC and the temple of Zeus Megistos underwent a major reconstruction at about the same time.[48] In addition to this a small temple was built outside the walls by two Palmyrenes in 33/32 BC.[49] The first half of the first century AD saw a number of important temples constructed in their first phases at Dura Europos. These were the temples of Azzanathkona, Zeus Kyrios, Atargatis, Bel (Palmyrene Gods) and Aphlad.[50] The middle of the second century saw the construction of the temples of Zeus Theos, the Gadde and Adonis.[51]

The Temple of Artemis, having undergone its transformation from 40 to 32 BC, was a major civic shrine from the latter half of the first century BC and well into the Roman period.[52] The temple included what has been called a 'chapel' to Aphrodite from this same period, and its earliest inscription is a dedication by the *strategos* of the city.[53] The ongoing importance of the temple is shown in the Roman period with dedications made in it to the imperial family by the *epistates* of the city and by members of the *boule* in the third century AD.[54] There were many inscriptions from this temple dating from the late first century BC to the middle of the second century AD, and they indicate its use almost exclusively by people with Greek names.[55]

The Temple of Zeus Megistos, which underwent a more extensive renovation than the Temple of Artemis at approximately the same time, was further modified in varying degrees until the last years of Parthian rule and the beginning of Roman rule when another major reconstruction was undertaken.[56] An inscription of AD 169/170, which dedicated sections of the renovation, shows that Zeus Megistos was still worshipped as the cult figure. Fragments of the cult statue, which appears to date to this period, indicate that Baalshamin, probably the Palmyrene equivalent of Zeus Megistos, was also worshipped in this temple.[57] Sculpted reliefs of the camel god Arsu were also found, as were many sculpted fragments of Heracles.[58] It is likely that the honouring of Baalshamin, Arsu and Heracles was a part of the cult activity in the temple for some time before its renovation

Figure 4.7 Relief sculpture of the camel god Arsu. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, plate XXXI, 2.

in the late Parthian/early Roman period. The significance of this temple as a place of worship of Palmyrene gods is discussed on pp. 110–11.

The Temple of Zeus Theos, which was erected by 120/121, has been interpreted as a temple to an Iranian/Parthian god.[59] There is little evidence of significant addition or rebuilding of the temple after this date. It was speculated that the temple was erected at the expense of a wealthy Durene individual, and it is claimed that it was used by 'a relatively restricted group of Dura citizens, members of the aristocracy devoted to a particular form of Zeus'.[60]

A number of temples constructed at Dura in the Parthian period were to deities of a local Syrian origin. The temples of Atargatis, Azzanathkona and Aphlad are examples. The Temple of Atargatis appears to have been closely connected with the Temple of Artemis.[61] The earliest inscription found in the temple dates to AD 31/32, but there is some evidence for an enlargement of the temple some two decades later. A 'chapel' was added in AD 91/92 and the temple was still in use well into the Roman

Figure 4.8 Relief sculpture of the goddess Azzanathkona (seated). From M.I. Rostovtzeff, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, plate XIV.

Figure 4.9 Relief of the Anathan god Aphlad from Dura Europos. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, plate XIII.

period.[62] There is a strong suggestion that the cult figures of Atargatis and Hadad in this temple were modelled on the images of Atargatis at her temple in Hierapolis, while dedications to other Semitic gods, some otherwise unknown, were also found in the temple.[63]

The Temple of Azzanathkona was constructed by AD 12/13 and also shows evidence of a number of enlargements and modifications up to a few years before the Roman occupation of the city.[64] The goddess Azzanathkona is only attested at Dura Europos, and on the basis of an inscription related to the addition of rooms in AD 161 she was identified with Artemis.[65] It is thought that Azzanathkona was originally a deity from Anatha, given the second element of her name.[66] The dedicatory inscriptions and graffiti found in the temple indicate that a mixture of people with Greek and Semitic names worshipped there.[67]

Finally, the Temple of Aphlad was dedicated in AD 54 by an association of traders from Anatha.[68] Aphlad was described as a god of Anatha and like Azzanathkona his temple at Dura is the only known example to have survived. The 11 men of the association referred to in the inscription were representatives of six families and all had Semitic names. Downey points out that the graffiti from the *andron* of the temple are comprised of Greek and Semitic names in roughly equal numbers.[69]

Dura Europos and Palmyra in the Parthian period

The period of Parthian control at Dura Europos has produced evidence for the presence of a community of Palmyrenes at the city.[70] Much of the

Figure 4.10 Camel lamp – a symbol of the importance of trade to Dura Europos found at the site in the excavations of 1931–1932. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, plate XXI, 1.

evidence is religious in nature, comprising dedications and temples to Palmyrene gods. The Yale University excavations in the 1930s uncovered the remains of a small temple outside the city walls, approximately 350 metres west of the desert wall in what became the necropolis during the Roman period.[71] The temple was dedicated by members of two Palmyrene tribes in 33/32 BC, and it is the earliest evidence for a Palmyrene presence at Dura.[72] This temple underwent a number of enlargements and renovations in the Parthian period. These included a new altar in the middle of the first century AD and an enlargement *c.* 100.[73] In the early years of Roman control, a completely new temple was constructed and joined to the old temple, effectively doubling its size.[74] It is proposed that this temple was used exclusively by Palmyrenes from its earliest construction phase in 33/32 BC up to its enlargement *c.* 173 as the individual who was responsible for the enlargement claimed that his ancestor was one of the temple's founders.[75] The temple's location outside the walls of Dura indicates that it was designed for use by Palmyrene traders who camped outside the city, and its long association with at least one of its founders may indicate the presence of a Palmyrene trading dynasty at Dura.[76]

The evidence for the earliest presence of a Palmyrene temple within the city walls at Dura is the subject of some debate. The Temple of the Gadde, as it was termed by the original excavators, was dedicated to the Palmyrene god Malakbel and also the gadde (*Tychae*) of both Dura and Palmyra.[77] In this form its construction dates to 159 on the basis of the inscriptions naming the two gadde.[78] The temple had three earlier forms, all in the Parthian period, with the earliest probably dating to a similar time to the construction of the original necropolis temple.[79] There is no direct evidence to indicate that the earlier phases of the temple were dedicated to Palmyrene gods, and in its earliest phase the 'temple' is thought to have been a house.[80] It is possible, however, to show that in its later phases the building had an ongoing purpose as a Palmyrene temple. The discovery of hundreds of plaster fragments used from the third phase of the temple were used in the floor of the final construction phase and these have been reconstructed to show some fragmentary *dipinti*. The *dipinti* were in Palmyrene script and were mostly Palmyrene names, indicating that the temple was probably used by Palmyrenes in its third phase.[81] The original excavator of the temple, F.E. Brown, concluded:

> [I]ts combined function of sanctuary and meeting place, suggested in the arrangements of Period II, becomes clear in Period III, and determines the final rebuilding of Period IV. This evolution is unbroken and reflects the needs of a group whose character remained unchanged and whose growth was ever expressed in more ambitious schemes of building.[82]

Figure 4.11 Relief sculptures of the Gad of Dura and the Gad of Palmyra. The Gad of Dura is a male, which is rare, and appears to be in the guise of Zeus Olympios, the founding deity of the Seleucid dynasty. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, plates XXXIII and XXXIV.

Perhaps the most prominent evidence for the Palmyrene presence at Dura Europos comes from the Temple of Bel, also called the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods. The discovery of paintings in this temple in 1920 led to the original archaeological interest in the site. The impressiveness of these paintings and the extraordinary story of their discovery has contributed to the notion of the general importance of the Palmyrene population at Dura. The paintings are thought to date to *c.* AD 75 and are claimed to be of local Durenes.[83] The earliest inscription from the temple is a dedication in Greek to Zeus Soter dating to AD 50/51.[84] There is no clear proof that Palmyrenes belonged to the clientele of the temple until just before the Roman period.[85] Distinct from the Temple of the Gadde, it is clear that the area enclosed by the temple was a sacred precinct from at least the middle of the first century AD, but we cannot be certain that it was specifically a Palmyrene precinct until the last years of Parthian control of the city.

The earliest evidence for a Palmyrene presence within the city of Dura Europos is a bilingual Greek and Palmyrene inscription from the Temple of Zeus Kyrios/Baalshamin dated AD 31.[86] The inscription dedicated an image of Zeus Kyrios in Greek and Baalshamin in Palmyrene.[87] The dedication of the building is dated to *c.* AD 28 on the basis of an altar inscription in Greek.[88] While the building was identified by the Yale excavation team as a Temple of Zeus Kyrios/Baalshamin on the basis of the relief sculpture, it has recently been pointed out that a larger niche, perhaps for the temple's main cult figure, existed underneath the considerably smaller niche containing the relief of Zeus Kyrios/Baalshamin.[89] The original identification of the Temple of Zeus Kyrios/Baalshamin, therefore, may be incorrect. Significantly, however, this cult relief demonstrates that in some

Figure 4.12 The Temple of the Palmyrene Gods in the north-west corner of Dura Europos. Accidental discoveries of paintings in this temple in the 1920s indicated the potential importance of the site.

temples at Dura in the Parthian period, Semitic and Greek gods were honoured in the same temples.

The epigraphic evidence for the presence of Palmyrenes at Dura Europos has so far returned 56 inscriptions of which seven are datable.[90] Many are graffiti of no more than a few words. Most of them are names, some are altar dedications and others are from banquet frescoes. The datable ones are more significant inscriptions dedicating temples or cult reliefs. Four date to the period of Parthian control of the city, while three date to the Roman period. The four from the Parthian period are those dedicating the Temple of Bel in the necropolis, the relief of Zeus Kyrios/Baalshamin and the dedications to the Gadde of Dura and Palmyra in the Temple of the Gadde.

The importance of Dura Europos to Palmyra's growing trading success is difficult to establish, but there is little doubt that Palmyra was important to Dura's prosperity.[91] The general conclusion of the archaeologists is that Dura was involved in the caravan trade from Palmyra and was a halting place for the caravans on their way to the Persian Gulf.[92] The archaeologists also conclude that because some of the Palmyrene material from Dura is military in nature, Palmyrene archers were stationed at the city for the protection of the caravans.[93] This position is in contrast with the opinions of those who have expertise in the study of Palmyra. They conclude that Dura was not involved in the caravan trade and that there was only local trade between the two cities.[94] In their opinion, the Palmyrene archers at Dura were serving with the Roman army after the Romans took control of the city and had nothing to do with protecting the caravans.[95] Dirven argues that the trade between Dura Europos and Palmyra was probably a combination of both caravan and local trade. She points out that Dura is situated on the shortest route between Palmyra and the Euphrates, making it an ideal halting place for the caravans.[96] She also notes Gawlikowski's suggestion that the Palmyrenes used boats to transport goods as this was more profitable and faster.[97] Dirven draws attention to the potential importance of Dura as a halting place for the caravans on their way *to* the Persian Gulf. The downstream journey would have begun from the shortest point at which the caravans travelled across the desert from Palmyra, and that was in the vicinity of Dura Europos.[98] When the caravans made their way *from* the Persian Gulf it is thought that they were only able to navigate the Euphrates as far as Hit before disembarking and following the desert track from Hit to Palmyra.[99] This was a journey of approximately 500 km, and the track that the Palmyrenes appear to have used was identified by Mouterde and Poidebard.[100] Further to these observations, the importance of Dura Europos to local trade with Palmyra was the probable provision of agricultural products grown on the fertile banks of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers.[101]

Figure 4.13 The fertile banks of the Euphrates at Dura Europos.

The Palmyrene presence at Dura Europos in the Parthian period is indicative of how the city was more influenced by regional factors than Parthian control of the city, which appears to have been more at a distance; the city's governance left to its own devices and institutions. It has already been shown in Chapter 2 that Rome's increased power and influence at Palmyra from the first century AD to the middle of the second century was expressed more in commercial terms. If Palmyrene archers were present at Dura during the Parthian period for the purpose of protecting trade it does not seem to have presented a problem, despite Palmyra's closeness to Rome. This supports the argument that the nature of Roman control or influence over Palmyra up to the early third century AD was still not clearly defined in provincial terms.

Parthian control of Dura

Parthian evidence from Dura is so limited that questions have been raised as to whether the city was actually under Parthian control.[102] Traces of the Parthian language at the city are negligible, which is paralleled by the evidence of the coins.[103] We have already seen from a brief analysis of historical events in the Near East in the first century BC that Dura was more in the Parthian sphere, and a series of ten documents written in Greek dating from AD 87 to AD 159/160 indicates that the city was under some form of Parthian administration during those years.[104] The documents show that Greek continued as the language of administration and that the city was part of the domain of a Parthian *arkapet*. It seems, however, that Parthian control of Dura was somewhat loose during the Parthian period in a similar manner perhaps to Roman control of Palmyra.

Arsacid Parthian administration in Mesopotamia is considered by some to have been inefficient, with others emphasizing the autonomous nature of cities in Parthian Mesopotamia, which continued to rely considerably on

the civic structures established in the Seleucid period for their day-to-day governance.[105] Arnaud discusses the importance of Greek civic institutions in Parthian Mesopotamia, including Carrhae, Nineveh and Babylon, and that this is reflective of the situation at Dura also under the Parthians.[106] The papyri from the Parthian period are all legal documents and some show that Dura was within the district of Parapotamia, as discussed in Chapter 3.[107] The documents demonstrate that Greek was still the most important language of administration and law and that the institutions of the Greek city continued.[108] The documents also show that the Parthians exercised some control at Dura, using existing hierarchies and civic structures at Dura through which to rule. One papyrus in particular shows that the district of Parapotamia was under the control of an Arsacid Parthian *arkapet* early in the second century AD.[109] At this time, the city was ruled by a στρατηγὸς καὶ ἐπιστάτης τῆς πόλεως. The names of the holders of these offices continued to be Greek and Macedonian in their origins and the titles appear to have been hereditary.[110] The term *Europaios* (*Europaioi* in the plural as it is often found) was used to describe the citizens of Dura Europos from at least 190 BC right up to the last years of the city's existence.[111] The term *Europaios* is thought to have been an epithet indicating citizenship of Dura Europos, and prior to AD 180 was only borne by individuals with Graeco-Macedonian names.[112] During the Parthian period, Dura Europos flourished as a Hellenistic city in a Semitic milieu and as such it was similar to many cities of the Near East under Roman control. Parthian control appears to have been distant and relatively loose, which allowed Dura to engage extensively with the cities and regions under Roman influence and control further to the west – hence the archaeological evidence for the city's prosperity in the Parthian period.

The military role of Dura Europos in the Parthian period

In older scholarship, the political and military roles of Dura Europos in the Parthian period located it as the front-line Parthian fortification on an agreed-upon frontier between Rome and Parthia on the Khabur river.[113] As discussed in Chapter 3, the suggestion of the Khabur as an agreed frontier came from a reference by Isidore of Charax, together with archaeological observations of the walls at Dura made in the 1930s. Writing towards the end of the first century BC, Isidore referred to the village of Nabagath near the Khabur confluence as the place where the legions cross over into Roman territory.[114] This reference, together with reports of a peace agreement between Augustus and Phraates IV in 20/19 BC, were taken as an indication that the Khabur was fixed as the frontier as part of the agreement.[115]

The most extensive analysis of the fortifications at Dura was undertaken in the 1930s by Armin von Gerkan.[116] Briefer preliminary studies of the walls were also made in the 1920s.[117] Von Gerkan concluded that the

Figure 4.14 The desert wall and rampart pathway at Dura Europos looking north from near tower 18.

towers of the walls were rebuilt in stone by the Parthians *c.* 65–19 BC and that stone curtains were erected over most of the wall circuit in the same period.[118] The dates were crucial to his interpretation as the work was held to have commenced at the time of Pompey's establishment of the province of Syria and ended with the establishment of the peace agree-

ment between Augustus and Phraates IV *c.*20/19 BC.[119] Von Gerkan and Hopkins were keen to fit observations of Dura's walls into these broader events. In doing so they claimed that Dura was part of the front line of Parthian defences against the Roman Empire after the agreement reached by Augustus and Phraates.[120] Excavations and extensive analysis conducted more recently by Leriche show that the fortifications were mostly completed in the late Seleucid period and that the Parthians undertook very little work on them.[121] It was noted in Chapter 1 that Isidore of Charax's reference is more indicative of a boundary than a defended frontier. It is not until the second half of the first century AD, that we have any evidence for a permanent Roman military presence on the Euphrates, and that presence was much further up the river than the Euphrates/Khabur confluence.[122]

The period of Parthian rule at Dura Europos also witnessed the experience of Trajan's extensive military campaign into the Parthian Empire. The evidence for the impact on Dura Europos of this campaign, which was directed largely down the Euphrates, includes the remains of a triumphal arch located just outside the city, which was dedicated to Trajan in 116.[123] This event is also reflected in the numismatic evidence from Dura with a notable increase in denarii from the Rome mint at the city dating to Trajan's reign.[124] The earliest evidence of bronze coinage from the Rome mint found at Dura also comes from Trajan's reign. There is no evidence from Dura to indicate that the Roman presence at the city during the campaigns of Trajan had any lasting effect. Indeed, the only specific indication of the Roman presence at Dura, other than the triumphal arch, is an inscription from the shrine of Epinicus and Alexander. It dates to 116/17 and records the dedication of new doors for the shrine because the original doors were taken away by the Romans when they left the city.[125]

The Roman occupation of the middle Euphrates and Dura Europos

Roman control of Dura Europos: AD 165–c.200

In Chapter 1 we saw that the war between Rome and the Parthians, which began over a dispute regarding Armenia in 161, had important ramifications for the region encompassing Palmyra, Osrhoene, the middle Euphrates and Mesopotamia. As a result of the Roman campaigns against the Parthians under Lucius Verus the kingdom of Osrhoene became a client-kingdom of Rome and Rome's power was extended down the Euphrates from the Khabur to Dura Europos and beyond.[126] This power appears to have been enforced mostly through Palmyrene troops. It was in this period that a permanent Roman military presence was established at

Palmyra in the form of Palmyrene auxiliary troops attached to the Roman army. The beginning of a Roman military presence in northern Mesopotamia probably belongs to this period also.

The only evidence for the Roman occupation of Dura Europos is archaeological, although literary evidence for the event has been mistakenly attributed to references by Lucian of Samosata who reports a great battle between the Romans and Parthians at a place called Europos. It was claimed that the Parthians lost over 70,000 men in this battle, but Lucian held this to be an exaggeration.[127] Lucian's Europos was clearly not Dura Europos and was located on the upper-middle Euphrates at the ancient site of Carchemish.[128] Like Dura Europos, Europos was founded during the reign of Seleucus I Nicator.[129] Pliny the Elder referred to this site in his list of Syrian cities, describing it as lying between Zeugma and Thapsacus on the Euphrates.[130] The long-standing attribution of the name Europos to this city is demonstrated by the fact that it was still known as Europos in the sixth century AD.[131] The literary evidence shows that the bulk of the fighting between Rome and Parthia in the 160s took place on the Euphrates between Zeugma and Nicephorium. Elsewhere, Lucian referred to a battle near Sura, and Fronto reported victories by Verus' forces at Dausara, upstream from Sura, and Nicephorium (Callinicum) downstream from it.[132] Avidius Cassius' quick march along the Euphrates, which culminated in the capture of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 165, was facilitated by the victories won over the Parthians at the Euphrates fortifications of Europos, Dausara, Sura and Nicephorium.[133]

It is reasonable to accept that Dura Europos came under Roman control at the time of Verus' invasion of Parthia that was directed down the Euphrates in 165, but there is no evidence from the site which conclusively confirms the date of the Roman occupation.[134] There is enough evidence, however, for the date of AD 165 to be established as a reasonable proposition. Cumont reported an undated inscription on a stone column dedicated to Lucius Verus, which was discovered in the Temple of Artemis, and proposed that this fixed the date of the Roman occupation of the city.[135] More recent investigation at Dura by Leriche reports a tunnel or mine found running from the desert and under the secondary gate in the west wall of the city. It is claimed that the mine was dug by the Romans as part of their conquest of the town in 165.[136] The earliest datable evidence of a change in the political control of Dura Europos at this time can probably be seen in the presence of Palmyrene inscriptions in the Mithraeum. The first dates to 168 and is a dedication to Mithras in Palmyrene by Ethpeni, the *strategos* in command of the archers in Dura.[137] The second, in Greek, is dated 170/171 and is a dedication to Mithras by a *strategos* with a Palmyrene name.[138] It is generally accepted that the Roman military presence at Dura took the form of Palmyrene archers as allies of Rome at this time.[139] One school of thought, however, suggests that the archers were already at Dura

for the purposes of protecting the caravans during the Parthian period.[140] It was from these archers that the nucleus of the Roman garrison at Dura in the third century, Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, appears to have been formed.

There is little to mark a significant change at Dura in the first 40 years of Roman control.[141] The ongoing importance of the city's Greek institutions, evident from a papyrus of 180, led the editors of the papyri to suggest that 'Dura must have been relatively free at this period', implying that Rome's assumption of control of Dura and an extended section of the Euphrates was not marked by a major reorganization or military presence.[142] A *strategos* or *epistates* still ruled the city, but it seems that the Romans replaced the family that had held these offices for much of the late Parthian period with another.[143] It is also possible that these offices began to take on a role of military leadership.[144] The numerous temples of the Parthian period and the few which traced their origins to the Seleucid period continued to function. While there were some enlargements and renovations of religious buildings during the Roman period, the building of new ones was limited and appears to have been related more to the Roman military presence at the city in the third century.

The Temple of Artemis continued as a major civic shrine, as it had during the Parthian period.[145] The temple received some additional chapels and an enlarged enclosure to its south, but the main alteration to it was the addition of an odeon in the first decade of the third century.[146] The Temple of Zeus Megistos demonstrated a similarly important civic role with a dedication in 169/170 celebrating various additions funded by Seleukos, who was *strategos* and *epistates* of the city.[147] Other temples whose origins date to the Parthian period, such as the Temple of Adonis and the Temple of Bel in the necropolis, underwent enlargements and changes early in the Roman period of control.[148] The datable evidence indicates, therefore, that in the early years of Roman control, Dura Europos continued in much the same way as it had under the Parthians.[149] The Palmyrene community continued to grow and thrive and the temples continued to function as before, some of them undergoing enlargement and renovation as the city continued to prosper.

While Rome ultimately controlled Dura, its military power was exercised through Palmyrene auxiliaries. This was probably the case for settlements on much of the area of the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers that came under Roman control under Lucius Verus. The third century, however, saw some significant changes that were related mostly to the role Dura Europos was to play in the territorial and military organization of Septimius Severus and his successors. This included a greater military presence on the middle Euphrates and in the newly formed province of Mesopotamia, and it became vitally important to Rome's control of this recently acquired territory. Developments at Palmyra in the same period are closely linked with this activity.

Dura Europos under Roman rule c.*200–256*

Rostovzteff wrote that 'the Roman period in the life of Dura was not a happy and a prosperous one'.[150] Cumont thought otherwise.[151] The interpretation of archaeological evidence is always difficult, but a change is noticeable at Dura Europos in the Roman period and it reflects the city's military role on the middle Euphrates during that time, particularly in the third century. Despite Rostovtzeff's claim, the evidence points to considerable and lively activity at Dura Europos in the third century.[152] The site of Dura Europos became internationally famous as a result of the discoveries of third-century religious buildings such as the synagogue, Christian house and a Mithraeum, which all reflect this activity at Dura.[153] The site also became well known for its archaeological evidence of a military nature, particularly the evidence for the final siege of the city c.256/257, another category of evidence that reflects its role in the third century.

The evidence for the military role of Dura Europos in the third century is significant and demonstrates a marked change in the city's role on the middle Euphrates in the last 50 years of its existence.[154] A permanent Roman garrison had been established in the city by the end of the second century, but in the early third century the north-west sector of the city appears to have been sealed off to act as the military camp. Next to the camp was what has been identified as the headquarters of the *Dux Ripae*, an office that is claimed to have entailed the regional command over the garrisons of the middle Euphrates. At various stages, vexillations from the legions stationed in the provinces of Syria and Arabia were at the city, and some formed a permanent part of the garrison. The considerable expansion of the Roman military presence on the middle Euphrates and in Mesopotamia, which formed an important element of the Severan reorganization, had significant consequences for Dura and the region of which it was a part.[155]

Figure 4.15 The remains of the Christian house-church at Dura Europos.

The Roman military at Dura Europos

The area of the Roman army camp

It is clear from the excavations at Dura Europos that the north-west sector of the city was a military quarter from *c.* 210 until the city's capture in 256/257.[156] The extent of the area of the Roman camp was approximately ten hectares, or 15 blocks of houses.[157] This sector of the city was divided from the rest of the city by a mudbrick wall measuring 1.65 metres wide, although its remains have only been traced four blocks east from tower 21.[158] The existence of a gate in this wall was also noted by the Yale excavation team, and a small section of wall was also claimed to have been found on the eastern side of the camp.[159] A number of significant buildings were found within the area of the Roman army camp and all appear to have had a military function.[160] These were identified as a *praetorium* or *principia*, the offices of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum in the Temple of Azzanathkona, military barracks, an amphitheatre and a bath complex.[161] Significant also in the area of the camp was the discovery of a Mithraeum and a Temple of Jupiter Dolichenus (the Dolicheneum). There was also the 'Palace' of the *Dux Ripae* identified just to the north-east of the army camp, but apparently not within it. It was also thought that a training and

Figure 4.16 The north-west section of Dura Europos, taken in 1936. Note the outline of the Palace of the *Dux Ripae* and the Roman army camp. Reproduced with kind permission of Yale University Art Gallery.
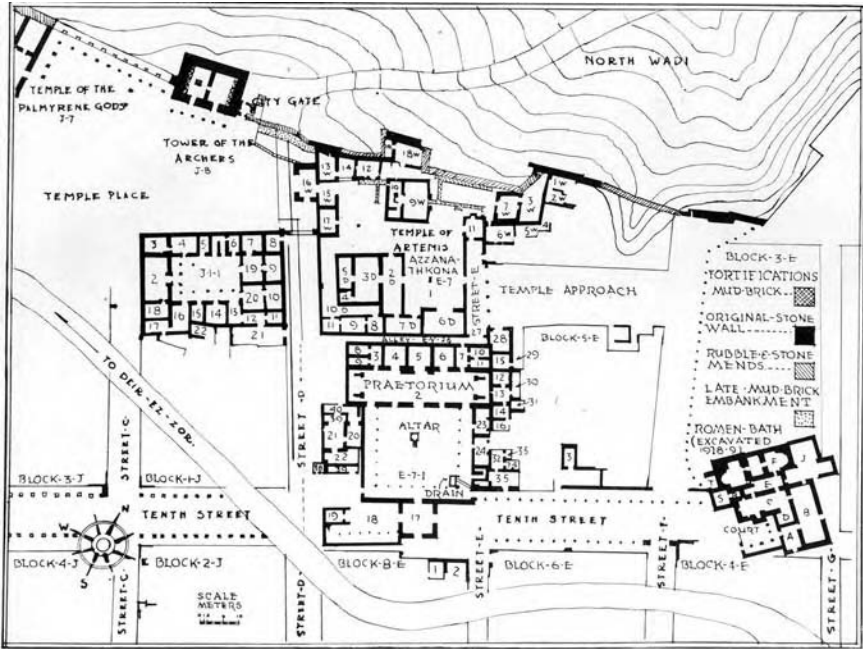
Figure 4.17 Plan of the Praetorium and Temple of Azzanathkona in the army camp at Dura Europos. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, plate III.

drill ground was located outside of the north-west sector near the citadel palace, with the citadel's west wall acting as its eastern limit.[162] While the enlargement of the camp and the military presence clearly had an impact on the city, it remained in many senses a Near Eastern city comprised of an amalgam of Hellenistic and Semitic features and influences.[163]

Buildings of the garrison headquarters

In their preliminary study of the *praetorium*, Hopkins and Rowell described a large house lying directly opposite the *praetorium* that they interpreted as the House of the Prefect or *principia*.[164] In this discussion, Rostovtzeff argued that the *praetorium* should strictly refer to the commander's house and the headquarters to the *principia*.[165] To avoid confusion the term *praetorium* is used here to describe the garrison headquarters. The military nature of the *praetorium* was described by Hopkins and Rowell as being beyond question and the plan of the building is generally accepted as corresponding to a standard Roman type.[166] The House of the Prefect returned very little by way of artifacts and its identification as

the residence of the garrison commander rests on the identification of the *praetorium* opposite it.[167]

Two inscriptions discovered in the *praetorium* are claimed to represent dedications of the building to Caracalla and Geta by military units. This hinges on questionable reconstructions of the names of legionary vexillations in the inscriptions. The following heavily restored inscription is claimed to have been the building inscription of the *praetorium* as it was found above the central doorway into the building:

I]mp(eratori) Caesa[ri Marco Aure]lio
Sev]ero An[tonino Pio] Felici Aug(usto)
Ara]bico Ad[iabenico Ger]manico
Sar]matic[o Parthico max(imo)] Brit(annico) max(imo)
Pon]tifi[ci max(imo) p(atri) pat]riae divi Sept(imi)
Seve]ri Pii [Felicis Brit(annici)] max(imi) fil(io), divi
M(arci) Anto[nini Pii Sar}mat(ici) nepoti, divi
Antoni[ni Pii pron(epoti) divi] Hadriani ab-
[ne]pot[i divi Traiani Parth(ici) et] divi Nervae
[adnep(oti) trib(unicia) potest(ate) XV Imper(atori) II] Co(n)s(uli)
  [III] et
[Iuliae Aug(ustae) matri Aug(ustorum) et c]astrorum
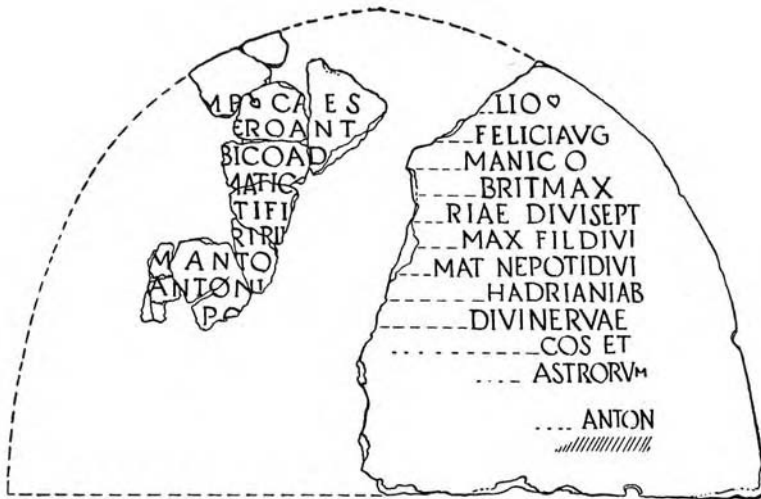[et senatus patriae]

—]Anton(iniarum)[168]

Figure 4.18 Praetorium inscription 1. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932,* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, p. 218.

The accompanying line-drawing of the inscription as it appeared in the preliminary report is shown in Figure 4.18.

There are many different ways in which the inscription could be potentially restored but it appears that there is enough information to conclude that the inscription represents the dedication of building work in the camp to a Severan emperor and that Caracalla is the most likely candidate on the basis of the surviving elements of his titulature. On this basis, the inscription has been dated to 211.

Hopkins and Rowell were keen to interpret the inscription as a dedication by the legionary vexillations whose presence is attested elsewhere in the camp at this time, in particular in the Mithraeum. They reconstructed the surviving letters ANTON in the following way as a means of proving that the legionary vexillations were responsible for the construction or significant enlargement of the *praetorium*, which in turn linked them closely with the building itself:

VEX. LEGG. III CYR. ET IV SCYTH.] ANTON. [ET III GALL.][169]

A dedicatory inscription (inscription no. 558) from the Chapel of the Standards in the *praetorium*, along with the inscription discussed above, served to date the building to 211/212 as it names only Caracalla as the dedicant and shows evidence for Geta's *damnatio memoriae*:

Imp(eratori) Caesari divi Septimi Sev[eri Pii Felicis Arab(ici) Adiab(enici)
Parthici] maximi, Britannici maximi [filio//////////////////
/////////////////////////////////////divi M(arci) Aureli] Anto-
nini Pii Germanici Sarmatici nepoti, [divi Antonini Pii pron]epoti,
divi Hadriani abnepoti, divi Trai[ani Parthici et divi N/ervae
adnepoti a/////////////////////////////////] et
I]u[lia]e Aug(ustae) Piae Felici matri Aug(ustorum) (duorum) et
[castrorum et senatus] et patriae.[170]

The line drawing of the inscription was published as shown in Figure 4.19.

The fragmentary inscription thought to name the dedicator(s) of this inscription was published as a separate inscription (inscription no. 559):

[Senatus] [Aureliorum] An[toninianorum] Europa[eorum] devoti
num[ini] maiestatique eius.[171]

In a similar manner to the military dedication in the *praetorium* discussed above, this inscription was heavily reconstructed to appear as a civic dedication of the building. Hopkins and Rowell argued that legionary names would not fit the relevant sections of the dedication, proposing instead that

Figure 4.19 Praetorium inscription 2. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, p. 221.

a civic dedication fitted better.[172] Speidel proposes that the two inscriptions should be placed together to form one inscription and that where the original publication in *Dura Prelim. Rep. V* restored SENATUS AURELIORUM in inscription no. 559 it would be better to restore MILITES VEXILLATIONIS.[173] This inscription is obviously very fragmentary and its restoration fraught with difficulty. The restoration of AN, in which even the reading of A is questionable, as ANTONINIARUM in inscription no. 559 is clearly problematic.

In all, the suggestion that the *praetorium* was dedicated by legionary vexillations is based on the complete reconstruction of the names of the vexillations. There is, indeed, no clear evidence that inscription nos. 556 or 558/559 were put up by military units. The problematic nature of these reconstructions is further highlighted by the decision to reconstruct the surviving ANTON in inscription no. 556 in military terms, while reconstructing a debatable but possible ANTON in inscription no. 559 in civic terms. More importantly, the most significant problem to have emerged from these reconstructions is that they were the basis for concluding that the *praetorium* was 'reserved for the legionaries' following the enlargement of the camp; this conclusion is still largely accepted.[174]

The presence of soldiers of Legio IV Scythica, Legio III Gallica, Legio X Fretensis or Gemina in the praetorium is indicated by other inscriptions and graffiti, but this is no basis for the claim that it was the exclusive domain of the legionaries.[175] Rostovtzeff modified his position on the *praetorium* as the exclusive headquarters of the legionaries in a later report where he observed that the *praetorium* contained two *tribunalia*, suggesting 'a divided command of the garrison at Dura, perhaps one commander for the legionary vexillations and another for the auxilia'.[176]

The identification of the Temple of Azzanathkona as the headquarters of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was based on the discovery of a number of papyri related to the cohort's activities in the third century in one of the

Figure 4.20 The remains of the *praetorium* at Dura Europos.

small rooms of the temple. The temple was located to the immediate north of the *praetorium* and its identification as the headquarters of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was used to suggest that the buildings of the command of the various elements of the garrison were separate but immediately adjacent to one another. The identification of the temple as a military headquarters was based on a number of discoveries, but only the file of papyri was specifically related to the cohort. In a room adjacent to the room containing the papyri two Roman bronze scabbard tips were found, along with a dedication to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Conservator.[177] The inscription is a dedication made on behalf of Septimius Severus by a tribune of Cohors II Ulpia Equitata. The only other evidence of a military nature from the temple was a graffito inscription, LEGIO ANTONINI, the reading of which was described in the preliminary report as 'very doubtful'.[178]

The discovery of the papyri was important at the time and the knowledge it provides of the workings of a unit of the Roman army is unequalled. The discovery, however, led to the identification of the function of the building and the function of the building was then used to support the identification and 'ownership' of the *praetorium*. These buildings were obviously used by the garrison, but the clarity of their functions and the nature of the organization and command of the garrison is difficult to establish on the basis of this evidence.

The Mithraeum

The military character of the north-west sector of Dura was indicated further by the discovery of a Mithraeum, and an inscription found in it was an important factor in supporting theories about the *praetorium*. The worship of Mithras by Roman soldiers is attested all over the empire and Mithraea have been found at many locations. The Dura Mithraeum is the most easterly yet found and it was located adjacent to the curtain wall between towers 23 and 24 not far from the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods.[179] The excavation and analysis of the Mithraeum was reported in *Preliminary Report VII/VIII* by Rostovtzeff, Cumont, Pearson and others.[180] Further analysis was undertaken later by Cumont and E.D. Francis.[181] In the preliminary report, Pearson suggested a chronology for the Mithraeum as follows:

> The earliest Mithraeum was built probably a little before 168 A.D., the date of the smaller bas-relief … This coincides with the final Roman occupation of Dura. It was then a small chamber opening for a private house. Approximately forty years later, as an inscription (*Prelim. Rep. VII/VIII*, p. 85, Inscription no. 847) and the remains of the building itself show, the Mithraeum was demolished and rebuilt in an enlarged form, in or about 210 A.D. Then, once more, at some point of its remaining forty-five years of existence, it was again rebuilt and enlarged. Judging from the condition of its paintings, the Middle Mithraeum may have existed for about thirty years, leaving fifteen years for the Late Mithraeum, destroyed at the time of the construction of the embankment along the city wall after 256 A.D.[182]

Two bas-reliefs found in the Mithraeum contained inscriptions, one in Greek and Palmyrene and the other in Greek only. They were dedicated by individuals with Palmyrene names who were both *strategoi* of the archers at Dura in 168 and 171.[183] The bas-reliefs were reused in the first enlargement of the Mithraeum, which was dedicated according to an inscription commemorating its restitution by vexillations of Legio XVI Flavia Firma and Legio IV Scythica *c.* 209–211.[184] Cumont concluded it was most likely that Palmyrene archers, horsemen and *dromedarii* in the service of Rome brought the cult of Mithras to Dura soon after its occupation by the Romans.[185] He emphasized the influences of Syria and Asia Minor on the sculptures of the Mithraeum, and in a quotation recorded by Hopkins lamented: 'I hoped to find a temple stemming from the East; but the temple here has come in with the Roman soldiers, so it is not as startling as I had hoped'.[186]
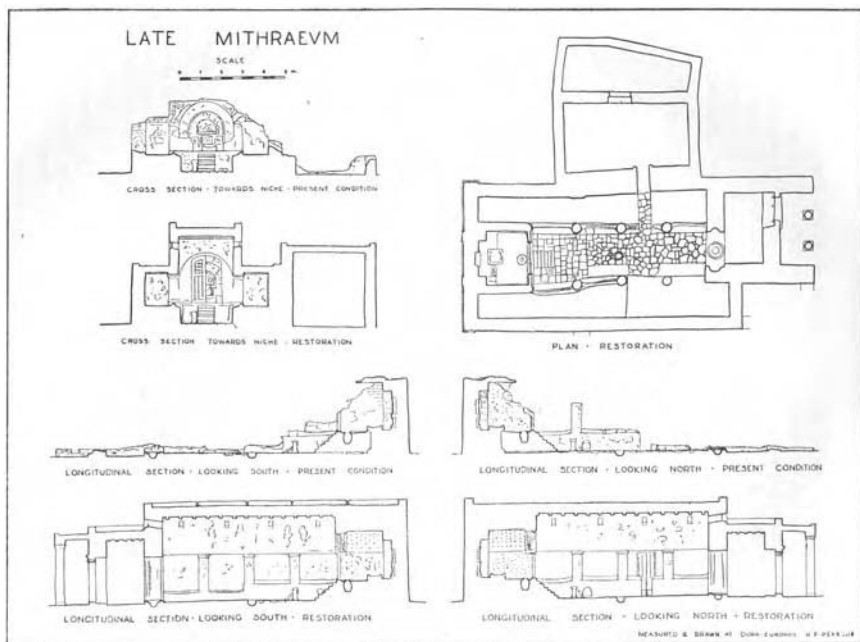
Figure 4.21 Plan and cross-sections of the Mithraeum at Dura in its third phase following its enlargement *c.* AD 211/212. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, opp. p. 76.

Despite the Mithraeum following Roman models in size and shape, and Cumont's reservations, Hopkins was not so convinced and preferred the notion that the worship of Mithras predated the Roman arrival as it had 'a very eastern flavour'.[187] Hopkins emphasized the Parthian style of the paintings and argued that the Mithraeum was first built during the Parthian period and continued in use in Roman times.[188] In this case it may have served as a temple for the Palmyrene archers before and after the Roman arrival. This led to the suggestion that the Palmyrene archers, who probably later formed the nucleus of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, were based at Dura from the late Parthian period. Francis emphasized Palmyrene influence on the Mithraeum and argued that Palmyrene archers serving as auxiliaries in Syria and other locations such as Dacia and Moesia in the second century AD were introduced to the cult of Mithras as a result of serving with the Roman army.[189]

Rostovtzeff and Torrey maintained that the Mithraeum then became the temple of the legionary vexillations of XVI Flavia Firma and IV

Scythica from the time of the dedicatory inscription of AD 209–211, which was published as follows:

> Pro sal(ute) et incol(umitate) d(ominorum)
> n(ostrum) imp(eratorum) (trium) L. Sep(timi) Severi pii
> Pert(inacis) et M. Aurel(i) Antonini [[et L. Sept(imi) Geta[e]]]
>   Aug(ustorum) (trium) tem-
> plum dei Solis Invicti Mithrae sub Minic(io) Martiali proc(uratore)
>   Aug(usti)
> rest(itutum) ab Ant(onio) Valentino (centurione) princ(ipe)
>   pr(aeposito) ve[x(illationum) Leg(ionum) III]I Scyth(icae)
>   et XVI F(laviae) F(irmae) p(iae) f(idelis).[190]

The inscription is largely complete, although a crucial section of it is missing and renders the inclusion of Legio IV Scythica debatable. This inscription appears to have been influential in the heavy reconstructions of the inscriptions in the *praetorium* and is the most complete evidence from the army camp demonstrating the involvement of the legionary vexillations in buildings and dedications.

The presence of the Mithraeum at Dura Europos provides evidence for the spread of a religion widely practised in the Roman army. If Mithraism was introduced to Dura by Palmyrene archers it is a striking and rare indicator of the cultural influence of auxiliaries serving in the Roman army. The Mithraeum's ongoing use at Dura Europos, which is shown in two enlargements or modifications in the third century AD, is an indicator of the growth of the garrison itself and possibly that the cult grew in importance to the garrison. It is obvious that a wide variety of conclusions have been reached on the Mithraeum's origins. The tendency of earlier scholars such as Cumont, Rostovtzeff and Hopkins to establish periods of exclusive use of the Mithraeum, first by Palmyrene auxiliaries and then by the troops of the legionary vexillations, underestimates the appeal of the cult to the soldiers of the Roman army and how, if anything, it may have had a unifying effect. Francis points out that the names of those who appear in the hundreds of unpublished graffiti inscriptions found in the Mithraeum are a combination of Semitic and Graeco-Roman names, which may be more indicative of inclusiveness.[191] Many of the names attested in the graffiti also appear regularly in the papyri of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum. This indicates that the Mithraeum continued to be used by the Palmyrene auxiliaries following its enlargement by the legionary vexillations *c.* 209–211. Only two individuals named in the Mithraic graffiti were linked with their legions. One was attached to XVI Flavia Firma and the other to IV Scythica; however, on both occasions their συνδέξιος was a member of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[192] The name of a soldier called Maximus appears in four graffiti. In two of these he was serving in *Legio* IV Scythica, but in two

others he was in Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[193] Such evidence hardly speaks for exclusive use of the Mithraeum, first by Palmyrene auxiliaries and then after 211/212 by the soldiers of the legions only. More generally the epigraphic evidence from the Mithraeum casts doubt on conclusions regarding the status of the legionaries and auxiliaries at Dura.

The Dux Ripae

The remains of a large building in the north-east of the city have been identified for some time as the palace of a previously unknown officer, the *Dux Ripae* (Commander of the River Bank). The *Dux Ripae* was identified by Rostovtzeff as the commander of the garrisons of the middle Euphrates in the first half of the third century, and the building as his headquarters.[194] These conclusions were based on the discovery of *dipinto* fragments painted on plaster that had fallen from the wall of one of the building's many rooms. Seven fragments were assembled to form inscription no. 945, naming an individual called Domitius Pompeianus who was the 'pious and just commander of the river bank':

1 Μνησθῇ Ἐλπιδηφόρος
   ὁ Βυζάντιος τραγῳδός,
   ὁ Δομιτίου [Πο]μπηιανοῦ
   τοῦ ἁγνοῦ καὶ δικαίου δου-
5 κὸς τῆς Ῥείπης θρεπτός,
   μετὰ πρόβου τοῦ ὑποκρι-
   τοῦ αὐτοῦ. Μνησθῇ ὁ ὧδε
   μένων καὶ ὁ ἀναγεινώσκων.

May Elpidephorus, the tragic-actor from Byzantium, raised as a fosterling (?) by Domitius Pompeianus, the pious and just commander of the river bank (*dux ripae*), be remembered together with Probus his accompanying actor. May the one remaining here and the reader be remembered.[195]

Domitius Pompeianus was referred to by name in two other *dipinti* (inscription no. 947 and probably in inscription no. 946), both from the palace, but the title *Dux Ripae* does not accompany his name in either of these cases.[196] Inscription no. 945 was, therefore, the only reference found in the building to the title *Dux Ripae*. Some reservations have been expressed in scholarship regarding the limitations of the evidence, but there has not been a significant challenge to the interpretations since they were made in the 1940s and 1950s.

    The reference to a probable office of *Dux Ripae* in the *dipinto* quickly led to detailed speculation about the *Dux Ripae*'s rank, role and social

status.[197] The discovery at Dura of other references to *duces* was used to claim that evidence existed elsewhere at the city for the *Dux Ripae* and his role. It was claimed that the *Dux Ripae* was a regular post and that the building of the palace of the *Dux* indicated he took up residence at Dura.[198] The impressive dimensions of the building were used as an indication of the *Dux Ripae*'s importance. It was proposed that he was of equestrian rank and was primarily a military officer with the command of a group of frontier garrisons.[199] It was also proposed that the *Dux Ripae* exercised some type of judicial function as he was referred to in the *dipinto* as 'pious and just'.[200] The date of the formation of the office of *Dux Ripae* was estimated by Gilliam as somewhere between the dates of the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians, *c.* 226/227 and 245, on the basis of a dated papyrus which referred to *duces*.[201] The date of the building was placed in the reign of Elagabalus (218–222), which was then used to assert an even earlier date for the formation of the office of *Dux Ripae*.[202] It was argued that the primary reason for the creation of the office was a response to threats of Persian invasions directed up the Euphrates in the third century.[203]
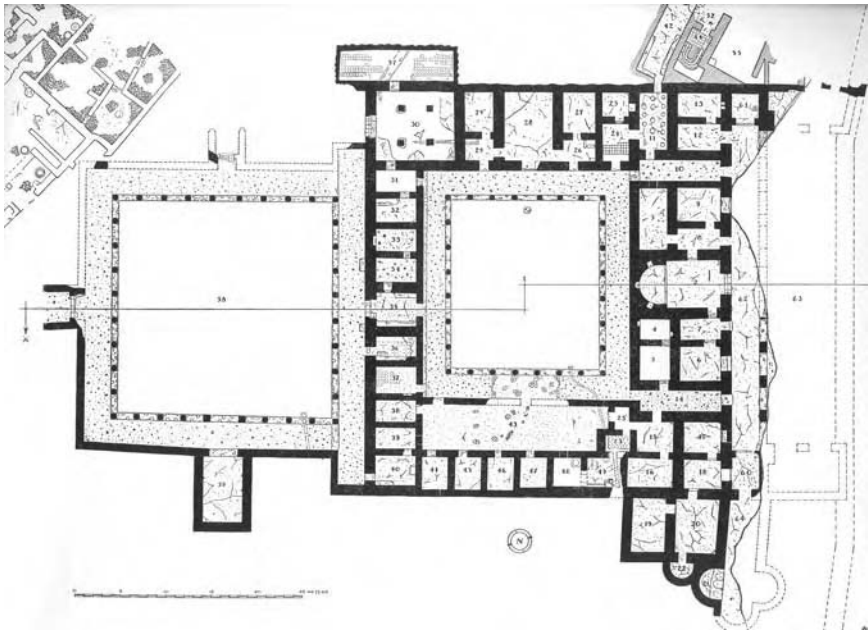

Figure 4.22 Plan of the Palace of the *Dux Ripae*. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, F. Brown and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Ninth Season, 1935–1936, Part 3: The Palace of the Dux Ripae and the Dolicheneum*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952, opp. p. 96.

Ultimately the identification of the office of *Dux Ripae*, and the large building briefly described above as his palace, is based on the one *dipinto* found in the building. The two other *dipinti* naming Domitius Pompeianus at least indicate that he was probably connected with the building, but even this is speculative. Rostovtzeff and Welles thought that the focus of all three *dipinti* was Domitius Pompeianus and they described him as 'the most distinguished person in the city' because of his position and that he was certainly the occupant of the palace.[204] It is important to note that the *dipinto* naming Domitius Pompeianus as *Dux Ripae* did not take him as its subject but rather the actor Elpidephorus. The other two *dipinti* are so fragmentary that their purposes are difficult to establish.

Of particular importance to the discussion and analysis of the *Dux Ripae* and his role at Dura Europos and on the middle Euphrates in the third century are claims of references to the office in other material found at the site and the way this has been used to prove the permanent existence of the office. An inscription of 251 from an altar found in the Dolicheneum was dedicated to 'Zeus the greatest and god of Doliche' by Iulius Iulianus, κρατίστος δουκὸς and a vexillation of Cohors II Ulpia Paphlagonum.[205] *P.Dura* 97 of 251 is a list of cavalrymen attached to Cohors XX

Figure 4.23 The remains of the so-called private suite of rooms commonly identified as the residential section of the Palace of the *Dux Ripae*.

Palmyrenorum that provides the names of individual cavalrymen, including descriptions of their horses, details of their dates of enlistment and who was responsible for approving their enlistments. Two individuals were signed into the cohort by Licinius Pacatianus who was 'tunc dux' (then dux) on 10 and 11 August 245 respectively. Pacatianus may be the same individual mentioned in a very fragmentary papyrus, *P.Dura 128*, which was identified as the journal of a magistrate by the editors.[206] *P.Dura 97* shows that Ulpius Tertius, also referred to as 'tunc dux', was responsible for signing in a cavalryman in 248. In *P.Dura 97*, 11 other examples are present of individuals and their mounts being signed into the cohort with the approval of other senior officials, including prefects, a *consularis* and the *procurator* of the Augusti. The *consularis* is named as Atilius Cosminus, *legatus* of Coele Syria in 251.[207] The procurator, Pomponius Laetianus, was probably a provincial procurator such as Minicius Martialis, the procurator of the two Augusti mentioned in *P.Dura 60* of *c.*208, and the editors of the papyri argued that the prefects were praetorian prefects.[208] On the basis of these identifications, the suggestion was that the authority for signing in new mounts lay with senior military officials, and this in turn was used to indicate the seniority of the office of *Dux Ripae*.

In all of these cases, the *duces* referred to were identified as *Duces Ripenses* without any hesitation as to whether they may represent one and the same office.[209] Gilliam undertook a survey of second- and third-century epigraphic evidence from other locations throughout the empire in which the term *dux* was used as a means of comparing it with the *Dux Ripae*.[210] He showed that from the reign of Marcus Aurelius the term was occasionally used for provincial governors in the North African provinces as a means of giving them distinction.[211] Inscriptions containing the term *dux* that indicated the temporary command of troops for particular campaigns were more common.[212] There was a third category of *duces* from the inscriptions discussed by Gilliam and these were officers who had served as *duces* of individual legions.[213] Gilliam asserted that the office of *Dux Ripae* did not resemble any of those because none of them appeared to be posts that were regularly filled, had jurisdiction over a definite region or had an established number of units under their command.[214] This observation was and remains important as it demonstrates how the initial speculation regarding the *Dux Ripae* was used as proof for the uniqueness of his office. There is nothing to indicate that the *duces* mentioned in *P.Dura 97* were the same as the *Dux Ripae*, and Gilliam's analysis of the *duces* from the wider epigraphic evidence demonstrates that there were many different types of *duces* operating for particular purposes during the second and third centuries. References to *duces* in the papyri, therefore, need not be to the *Dux Ripae*. There is an obvious circularity of argument, and the evidence on which these conclusions were based is very limited and problematic.

Dating the construction of the palace of the Dux Ripae

The dating of the palace's construction and Domitius Pompeianus' occupation of the office of *Dux Ripae* was itself based on the restoration of a particularly fragmentary *dipinto* found in the portico of court 1 of the building. This court was thought to have had some civic function.[215] The *dipinto* was found on 11 plaster fragments and reconstructed as follows:[216]

]VI • MAG •[
]TG[.]R[[M]]A[

The beginning of the dipinto was restored to read:[217]

IMP CAES DI[VI MAG [ANTONINI
AUG PART BRI[T GER MA[X

As this was identified as the name of Elagabalus and would not have been written after his death due to *damnatio memoriae*, it was claimed that the *dipinto* must date the palace's construction as it was painted on the first coating of plaster applied to the walls.[218] As it was observed that the *dipinto* naming Domitius Pompeianus was also painted on the first coating of plaster, he was thought to have been contemporary with the *dipinto* of Elagabalus.[219] It is obvious that the reconstruction of the *dipinto* of Elagabalus is a very difficult one to place any reliance on and it should be noted that due to the *damnatio memoriae* of Elagabalus we might expect all traces of his name to have been destroyed in a building apparently housing a senior military officer.

The restoration of this *dipinto* and observations about the contemporary nature of the *dipinto* naming the *Dux Ripae* became the basis for dating the building and hence the earliest date for the existence of the office.[220] Rostovtzeff argued that because Domitius Pompeianus was probably the *Dux Ripae* in the reign of Elagabalus, the references to *duces* in the papyri 25 years later indicated that the office of *Dux Ripae* was a permanent one as it could be shown to have continued over a period of time.[221] This is a further indication of the circularity of argument that has led to conclusions about the office of *Dux Ripae*.

The Dux Ripae *and the garrison at Dura Europos*

In the papyri of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, which indicate correspondence with the governor of Syria and provincial headquarters, communication was in all identifiable cases directly with the tribune or *praepositus* of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.[222] None of the papyri indicate communication between a *dux* or *Dux Ripae* and the tribune of the cohort. It is important

Figure 4.24 The view of the Euphrates from the residential suite of the Palace of the *Dux Ripae*.

to note, however, that the papyri indicating communication from provincial headquarters in the last 20 years of Dura's existence are not numerous. Nevertheless, if the *Dux Ripae* was the overall military commander of the middle Euphrates from the reign of Elagabalus we would expect that directions of a military nature from the governor were directed through him rather than directly to the tribune of the cohort.

The building identified as the palace of the *Dux Ripae* is located in the north-east sector of Dura but is thought to have been just outside the sector that was divided off for the Roman army camp.[223] The building's location and dimensions were also important to the analysis of the office of *Dux Ripae* and the seniority of his office on the middle Euphrates because the palace is the largest single building found at Dura. It was identified as comprising both military and residential rooms and is of impressive proportions, measuring 87.5 metres long (north-east to south-west) and 62.5 metres wide (north-west to south-east).[224] The building included two peristyle courts and dozens of individual rooms, together with a separate suite overlooking a terrace at the northern section of the building. This suite was carefully separated from what have been identified as the public and household sections of the building and interpreted as the private living quarters of the *Dux Ripae*.[225] One of the courts is interpreted as having a military function, while the other is thought to have been surrounded by household rooms.[226] The court identified as having a military function was

Figure 4.25 The remains of court 1 of the Palace of the *Dux Ripae*.

the only evidence from the building of a military nature, demonstrating the tenuous basis on which the building was held to have had a military function in the first place. All other aspects of the palace are held to give it a civil and residential character.[227]

Attempts were made to identify the functions of some individual rooms, such as the room in which the fragments of the *dipinto* referring to the *Dux Ripae* were found. This was rather imaginatively identified as a room to accommodate actors.[228] In his interpretation of the building as a whole, Rostovtzeff was keen to note the view and the pleasant aspect of the northern wing overlooking the north wadi and the Euphrates.[229] The identification of the various sections of the building and their likely functions has been based, therefore, almost entirely on supposition. This was partly because the building returned very little in terms of objects, and of the 25 *dipinti*, graffiti and inscriptions that were found, many were little more than lists of names.[230]

There are clearly a number of significant problems surrounding the identification of the office of *Dux Ripae*, his function and residence. Speculation in the 1940s and 1950s about the details of his role on the middle Euphrates and the occupation of the building is still largely accepted, with little more than brief notes indicating mild suspicion regarding some of the evidence.[231] The following quotation from a recent publication on Dura underscores the point:

> [I]t is reasonable to suggest that this equestrian post ..., which foreshadows the territorial *ducates* of the fourth century, seems to have been a local command over the forces of the frontier region of Syria Coele facing Persian Mesopotamia/Babylonia. Specifically, he probably controlled those deployed along the river corridor, a likely main axis of invasion in either direction. The post was unusual in apparently involving responsibility for both land and river ... However, it differed from the later commands in that it was apparently confined to a single province ..., and that the dux was subordinate to the provincial governor.[232]

The building was once an impressive structure, and the desire of Rostovtzeff and others to find a senior official for whom it was constructed was strong. They found such an office in the *dipinto* naming the *Dux Ripae*. It has been shown that the *dipinto* is the only evidence for the *Dux Ripae* and that the subject of the *dipinto* was not the *Dux Ripae* but an actor who had died. The location of the palace next to the army camp may indicate some military function, but as it seems that the building was not within the demarcated area of the camp it is possible that its importance to the army at Dura or on the middle Euphrates was actually limited. Given the speculative nature of the conclusions reached about the *Dux Ripae* and the palace it is appropriate to question them seriously and consider alternative uses for the building. We have seen in earlier chapters that documents of a civil nature originating on the Khabur river were deposited at Dura, where it seems that an official registry was located. Dura undoubtedly served this function for other locations on the Euphrates both above and below it. In the final report on the parchments and papyri, the editors showed that a record office was evident at Dura in the Seleucid, Parthian and Roman periods (χρηματιστήριον in the Parthian period and χρεοφυλάκιον in the Roman period).[233] If the record office was a centre on the middle Euphrates for the official deposition of legal and other documentation, and Dura's role became more important in the third century, it would have required considerable space to perform this function. This was perhaps one of the functions the building performed, and there are many other roles it could have performed related to tax collection and the administration of justice.

The garrison at Dura Europos

Cohors XX Palmyrenorum

While Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was probably the most significant component of the Roman garrison at Dura Europos during the third century AD, evidence for its activities is perhaps disproportionate due to the nature of the surviving evidence for the garrison as a whole. Epigraphic

evidence shows that soldiers from legionary vexillations and other cohorts were also present at Dura and locations within its vicinity from the last decades of the second century through to the city's final capture. The relationship between Cohors XX Palmyrenorum and the legionary soldiers is not easily established, although it has been generally accepted that the soldiers of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, the legionary vexillations and other cohorts formed a mixed garrison at Dura from early in the third century AD.[234] The cohort is generally seen as an inferior element of the garrison, which is indicated by the conclusion that the headquarters of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was 'relegated' to the Temple of Azzanathkona and that the *praetorium* was 'reserved' for the legionaries.[235] We have already seen that there is no convincing evidence for these conclusions.

The most detailed analysis and history of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum is still that of J. Frank Gilliam and Robert Fink in the introductory chapters of the final report on the parchments and papyri published in 1959.[236] Welles's article on the population of Roman Dura also makes some useful contributions, and there are a number of examples of summary histories of the cohort and its activities in more thematic works such as those of Dirven, Pollard and James.[237] The cohort's activities are known almost exclusively from the archive of papyri found at Dura during the excavations of the 1920s and 1930s. Only a small number of inscriptions naming the cohort have been found at Dura and only one of these is datable.[238] As noted earlier, it is commonly accepted that the headquarters of the cohort was located in the Temple of Azzanathkona as one of the temple's rooms has been interpreted as acting as an archival storeroom for the cohort. Eighty-four documents, of which 81 relate to the cohort, were found in this room.[239] These documents constitute more than half of the 155 documents found at the site.[240] Two rooms adjacent to what has been designated as the archive room contained a number of graffiti and as a result were identified as the offices of the military scribes.[241] The Temple of Azzanathkona, located near the north wall of the city and within the area walled off for the camp, was partially buried in preparation for the Sasanian siege of the city *c.*256/257.[242]

The most extensive details of the organization of the cohort come from two largely complete rosters of the cohort dating to 219 and 222.[243] Other documents assigned by the editors as belonging to the cohort include fragmentary morning reports, strength reports, rosters, letters and the *Feriale Duranum* and thus provide further evidence for the cohort's organization and activities.

The date of the formation of the cohort has been the subject of debate ever since the first discoveries of its existence were reported by Cumont.[244] While the earliest datable evidence of the cohort's existence is from a papyrus of 208, it was almost certainly formed earlier.[245] A roster of 219 implies its existence as early as 192, and it is probable that the nucleus of the cohort was formed by the Palmyrene archers referred to in the

inscriptions of the Mithraeum.[246] More recent research by Kennedy attempts to demonstrate the formation of the cohort from the time of the Roman occupation, *c.* 165.[247] Speidel places what he refers to as elite troops from Dura Europos, some perhaps from Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, at Septimius Severus' unsuccessful siege of Hatra in 198.[248] Both suggestions are by their own admission speculative, but it is reasonable to accept that the cohort's formation out of the Palmyrene archers took place at some stage towards the end of the second century AD and perhaps a little earlier.[249]

Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was a milliary *cohors equitata*, but its structure is unusual given other textual evidence.[250] According to Hyginus, probably writing in the reign of Trajan, a milliary cohort was then composed of both infantry and cavalry (*cohors equitata*) and contained ten centuries of *pedites* (800) and eight *turmae* of cavalry (240), making a total of approximately 1,000 soldiers.[251] The surviving rolls of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum indicate that it was comprised of both infantry and cavalry and that the total enlistment was similar to Hyginus' claim. The rosters of 219 and 222, however, show only six centuries of *pedites* and five *turmae*, and there was also a small number of *dromedarii*. According to Hyginus, this was the structure of a *cohors quingenaria*, but the total complement of the cohort was the size of a *cohors milliaria* at 1,000–1,200 men.[252]

The total numbers of the cohort in the roster of 219 show 850–860 *pedites*, 335 *equites* and 20 *dromedarii*, with a total of approximately 1,210.[253] The roster of 222 comprises 750–760 *pedites*, 250 *equites* and 35 *dromedarii*, with a total of approximately 1,035 men.[254] Each century in the first roll was, therefore, comprised of 150–160 *pedites*, which was a double century; the *turmae* were also doubles. The unusual structure of the cohort is further demonstrated by the observation that the *dromedarii* were attached to the centuries of *pedites* and appear not to have been grouped with the *equites*.[255] The second roll shows a marginally reduced number of *pedites* and *equites*. The total number of the *pedites*, which survives in two other more fragmentary rolls of 233 and 239, were 914 and 781 respectively.[256] This reflects a similar total number for the *pedites* to the estimates for the earlier, more complete rolls. The numbers of *turmae* for these rolls have not survived. The totals of *pedites* for all four rosters and the *equites* for the two earlier rosters are similar to the totals given by Hyginus for a milliary *cohors equitata*, but Fink expressed concern regarding the differences between the structure of the cohort as it should appear according to Hyginus.[257] His rather obvious explanation was that the organization of a *cohors equitata milliaria* had changed since Hyginus wrote over a century earlier. The structure of the cohort is reflective of the structure of the first cohort of a legion which was milliary and comprised five double centuries according to both Hyginus and Vegetius.[258] In the example of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum it seems that there was more flexibility in Roman military arrangements than earlier commentators were

prepared to allow, and this was probably designed to make the cohort more suitable in the local environment.

The cohort was normally commanded by a tribune, some of whose names we know from the papyri and inscriptions.[259] One tribune of the cohort in particular is known from a wall painting and an epitaph discovered at the site. The wall painting was found in the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods and depicts the tribune, Julius Terentius, accompanied by members of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum sacrificing to a triad of Palmyrene Gods and the *tychae* of Dura and Palmyra.[260] Julius Terentius stands at the head of 21 other soldiers, including a *signifer* with standard, and is identified in the painting as IUL TERENTIUS TRIB. Julius Terentius' name occurs in two other places, one of which may help to explain his fate and to establish an estimate of the date of his tribunate.[261] Substantial fragments of his epitaph were recovered during the excavation of the agora and read as follows:[262]

> Ἰούλιον [Τε-}
> ρέντιον χει-
> λίαρχον Σπείρ(ης) κ´ Παλμ(υρηνῶν).
> Τὸν θρασὺν ἐν στρατιαῖς,
> στεναρὸν πολέμοισι, θανόντα,
> μνήμης ἄξιον ἄνδρα, Αὐρελία
> Ἀρρία θάψε πόσιν φίλιον ὅν ψυ-
> χαὶ δέξασθαι θεαί, ἐλαφρὰ
> καλύψαι τε γαῖα.

> Julius Terentius, tribune of the Twentieth Palmyrene Cohort, the brave in campaigns, mighty in wars, dead – a man worthy of memory, Aurelia Arria buried this her beloved husband, whom may the divine spirits receive and the light earth conceal.

As Julius Terentius was 'the brave in campaigns, mighty in wars, dead' he appears to have died in battle and the epitaph for him was fixed to a wall in the agora. Julius Terentius' death was linked with a graffito scratched on the wall of the house of Nebuchelus, which indicates that the Persians attacked Dura in April 239.[263] A morning report of the cohort dated 239 (*P.Dura 89*) shows that the cohort was at that stage under the command of a legionary centurion serving as *praepositus* rather than a tribune.[264] It has been argued that this took place as a result of Julius Terentius' death in a battle associated with the Persian attack on Dura indicated by the graffito.[265] The links are attractive and plausible, but some reservation must be noted with regard to the temporary nature of the cohort's command by a *praepositus*. *P.Dura 59*, dated with reasonable certainty to 241, shows that the cohort was still under the command of a *praepositus* and that he was not the same person as that named in *P.Dura 89*.[266] It is unlikely that the

cohort would have remained under temporary command for approximately two years and that one temporary commander would be replaced by another. *P.Dura 60B* of 208, a letter from the governor of Syria circulated to Dura and other fortifications on the Euphrates, was addressed to the *tribuni*, *praefecti* and *praepositi* of the various units stationed at these fortifications, which indicates that the regular command of a unit need not always have been occupied by a tribune.

We have already seen in Chapter 3 that the parchments and papyri of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum provide important information on military organization and activity on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers and the garrison's involvement in this. The rolls of 219 and 222 are particularly important in this respect as they indicate that a number of soldiers of the cohort were stationed at other smaller locations up and down the Euphrates from Dura. Other documents from Dura, which are civil in nature and not necessarily related to the garrison, also shed important light on the military organization of the middle Euphrates by the Romans in the third century.

Other military units at Dura Europos

Evidence for the presence of legionary vexillations at Dura in the third century, combined with the evidence for Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, indicates a mixed garrison of legionaries and auxiliaries at Dura in the third century. Pollard claims that 'the division of legions into vexillations for detached service seems to have been regular practice by the third century'.[267] As noted earlier, we know little of how the different elements of the garrison interacted, and emphasis has been placed on the exclusive nature of the command and accommodation of the different components of the garrison, as shown above. There is some evidence for the presence of another cohort at the city late in the second century. An altar inscription of Cohors II Ulpia Equitata dated between 185 and 192 was found at the Palmyra Gate.[268] This cohort is again attested at Dura in 194 and possibly on an undated altar inscription from a small Roman temple discovered near the palace of the *Dux Ripae*.[269] The cohort is not attested again at Dura until 251.[270] The existence of Cohors II Ulpia Equitata is known elsewhere as early as 156/157 and it is thought to have been 'in the (Dura) garrison in the late second century, probably from the reign of Commodus'.[271] It is also possible that this cohort was the regular garrison of one of the smaller fortifications near Dura and that its soldiers were sometimes present at Dura.

Legionary vexillations are attested at Dura Europos at various times in the third century. These vexillations were from the legions of Coele Syria, IV Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma, III Cyrenaica from Arabia and possibly X Fretensis from Judaea. Vexillations of IV Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma are first attested in the restored inscription found in the Mithraeum dating to 209–211.[272] As discussed earlier, the inscription commemorates an

Figure 4.26 The dedicatory inscription found in the Mithraeum at Dura Europos naming one and possibly two legionary vexillations responsible for its enlargement, *c.* AD 211/212. From M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, plate XLIX.

enlargement of the Mithraeum undertaken by the two vexillations, and they may have been under a single commander.[273] It has already been noted that the Mithraeum is often held to have become the temple of the two legionary vexillations from this time.[274] The enlargement included the addition of four columns, which the excavators noted were covered in hundreds of painted and scratched inscriptions. Some of these were inscribed by soldiers of IV Scythica, XVI Flavia Firma and Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, which, as noted earlier, does not support this suggestion.[275]

An altar dedication in the temple of Jupiter Dolichenus (Dolicheneum) reveals a similar inscription to that in the Mithraeum and shows that vexillations of both IV Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma made a dedication there in 211.[276] The *centurio principis praepositus* of the vexillations was the same as that detailed in the Mithraeum inscription. In 216, a vexillation of IV Scythica, along with one from III Cyrenaica, was responsible for erecting a small amphitheatre.[277] Legio IV Scythica is further attested in a *dipinto* from the wall of a corridor in the *praetorium*.[278] The inscription, tentatively dated to 222–223, details the names and ranks of five members of Legio IV Scythica who are thought to have been part of a vexillation of this legion. *P.Dura 100*, a roster of 219, shows that one soldier of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was with Legio IV Scythica, which may mean that he was attached to the vexillation.[279] The only other datable indication of IV Scythica's presence at Dura is from two papyri of 251 and 254.[280] The latter refers to a soldier as a member of the 'local' vexillation of Legio IV Scythica, indicating clearly that it was a permanent element of the garrison.

Soldiers from XVI Flavia Firma are also attested in the papyri in the reigns of Elagabalus, Severus Alexander and possibly Gordian III, although none of these are described as members of a vexillation of the legion.[281] An undated inscription on a door jamb from the Dolicheneum was dedicated by a soldier of XVI Flavia Firma to Mithras Turmusgade.[282] In this case the legion has the epithet 'Antoniniarum' which is suggestive of a date of 211 or later.[283] There was no reference in this inscription to a vexillation, but it seems reasonable to conclude that the soldier was with the Dura vexillation.

Other undated inscriptions refer to soldiers from IV Scythica, XVI Flavia Firma and III Cyrenaica at Dura at a broadly similar time to those discussed above as they all bear the epithet 'Antoniniarum'.[284] It is likely that they were from the vexillations of the legions but there is no specific indication that they were. The presence of soldiers from Legio III Cyrenaica is problematic in some cases. The name of the legion appears clearly in only one instance – and that is an undated graffito from the house of Nebuchelus.[285] It also appears during the reign of Caracalla, according to an unpublished inscription mentioned by Hopkins and Rowell.[286] The identification of a vexillation of Legio III Cyrenaica, which was involved in the construction of the amphitheatre, with a detachment from IV Scythica was made only on the basis of the numeral and one letter '(r)'.[287]

As noted earlier, it is claimed that vexillations of Legio III Cyrenaica and IV Scythica were responsible for the dedication of the *praetorium* c.211/212, but the names of these legions were entirely restored in the inscription on the basis of references found to them elsewhere in the camp.[288] An inscription thought to have dedicated a chapel of the standards in the *praetorium* was also restored to suggest that this was done by a combination of the legionary vexillations present at Dura c.212.[289] It was noted earlier that the inscription is so fragmentary that any restoration is virtually impossible, and the original excavators were unsure as to whether it was even a dedicatory inscription.

The presence of Legio Anto(niniana) X, identified as Legio X Fretensis by Gilliam, is indicated by a graffito from the *praetorium*.[290] Soldiers of this legion were thought to have been at Dura at the same time as the vexillations of IV Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma. The legion represented here could also be Legio X Gemina Pia Fidelis, a legion based in Pannonia and probably involved in the Parthian wars of either Septimius Severus or Caracalla on the basis of gravestones found in the vicinity of Antioch.[291]

The size of the legionary vexillations is estimated at anywhere between 500 and 2,000 men each.[292] In a number of the cases discussed above, the epigraphic evidence for their presence was dedicatory in nature and dates to c.209–211. This is indicative of the legionaries being responsible for the enlargement, and perhaps the establishment, of the army camp in the north-west corner of the city at this time. Evidence from a few years later indicates the construction of a 1,000 seat amphitheatre by legionaries from

Figure 4.27 The rampart pathway at Dura Europos looking north from the Palmyra Gate.

IV Scythica and perhaps III Cyrenaica. This shows that the camp continued to expand and that legionary vexillations were employed in the building projects. It is important to note that a number of references to soldiers of Legio IV Scythica and Legio XVI Flavia Firma do not refer to vexillations, but it is probably reasonable to infer that they were. Sometimes, however, legionaries may have been at Dura for specific purposes and not necessarily from the vexillations.

The argument that the *praetorium* was reserved as the headquarters of the legionaries and that the Temple of Azzanathkona was the headquarters to which Cohors XX Palmyrenorum was relegated underlines the extent to which archaeologists and historians bring preconceptions to the way the Roman military operated on the ground in a frontier region like the middle Euphrates. This is reflected in other assertions about Dura such as the conclusion that the Mithraeum became the temple of the two legionary vexillations from *c.*211.[293] The superiority of the legionaries and the inferiority of the auxiliaries is overstated and runs contrary to the evidence. While it can be shown that soldiers from three legions were present at some stage in the *praetorium*, this does not prove their dedication of the building or that it was their headquarters, an impression that the restoration of the so-called dedicatory inscription has succeeded in achieving. Similarly, while some of the files of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum and some inscriptions of the cohort were found in the Temple of Azzanathkona, this cannot prove

that it was the cohort's headquarters. The enlargement of the Mithraeum by vexillations of Legio IV Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma need not indicate any form of ownership of this temple by the vexillations. Indeed, the unpublished graffiti from the Mithraeum show that soldiers of both the vexillations and Cohors XX Palmyrenorum used the temple after its enlargement. The Dolicheneum, similarly dedicated by the vexillations, was used by soldiers of Cohors II Ulpia Paphlagonum *c.*251 and it is likely that it was also used by soldiers of the Palmyrene cohort.[294]

A further example of modern preconceptions about the auxiliaries and legionaries is the proposition that the *praepositus* of the vexillations was the overall garrison commander.[295] The relationship between Cohors XX Palmyrenorum and the vexillations is practically unknown to us. From the papyri, communication from provincial headquarters was made directly to the tribune or *praepositus* of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, an unusual situation if he was not the garrison commander. Alternatively, are we to assume autonomy between the command of the two units and that separate orders, instructions and communications were made from provincial headquarters to the *praepositus* of the vexillations and the commander of the cohort? Adding further complication to this issue is the theory that the *Dux Ripae* was the overall commander of the military forces on this section of the middle Euphrates when there is no evidence on how the *Dux Ripae*'s command even extended to the Dura garrison, let alone anywhere else on the Euphrates. Indeed, it is possible on the basis of the evidence to argue that the office of *Dux Ripae* at Dura did not exist at all. Attempts at identifying separate command structures and headquarters of the components of the garrison tend to obscure the highly versatile nature of the Dura garrison, which in turn limits considerations of the practical versatility of Roman military structures in frontier regions across the empire. The versatility of the Dura garrison is demonstrated clearly in the wide distribution of its soldiers across the middle Euphrates and Khabur river, and the Palmyrene auxiliaries were ideal for the roles required of soldiers in this region.

Roman strengthening of the defences and the fall of Dura

A considerable amount of analysis has been undertaken on the defences at Dura and the evidence for the fall of the city to the Persians *c.*256/257. The earliest attempt to provide a detailed analysis of the defences was made by Cumont, but the more detailed analysis undertaken by von Gerkan in the 1930s was the most comprehensive early contribution.[296] Cumont attributed most of the construction of the defences to the early Seleucid period, but von Gerkan thought that the Parthians and Romans made considerable additions to them.[297] Von Gerkan's schema suggested that in the Seleucid period the west wall was built of mud brick with a stone *socle*, while the walls on the tops of the north and south wadis were built only of

Figure 4.28 Crenellations partly surviving adjacent to the remains of the Sasanian siege ramp constructed between towers 14 and 15.

mudbrick.[298] He concluded that the main (Palmyra) gate was built at a later stage. According to von Gerkan considerable work was done on the walls in the early Parthian period with the rebuilding of the towers and curtains in stone over the whole circuit wall. Later Parthian work on the walls saw the construction of internal walls in some of the towers and a strengthening of

the *socle* of the west wall. The work of the Roman period was minimal, according to von Gerkan, until the very last years of the city's existence. Earlier in the Roman period, the sentry-go was raised and stairs were built up to it with an unidentified structure built outside the Palmyra Gate. The most important Roman impact on the walls was the construction of enormous interior and exterior embankments against the west wall with interior embankments also built against the north and south walls. The embankments of the west wall were enlarged over a number of stages and mudbrick extensions were constructed along the top of the west wall.

It is now thought that the stone ramparts were mostly constructed in the late Seleucid period of control of Dura.[299] This includes the construction of the Palmyra Gate.[300] It seems that the Parthians did little to the walls during the period in which they controlled the city.[301] A secondary gate in the west wall, approximately 70 metres to the south of the Palmyra Gate, shows evidence of mining and countermining that is attributed to the Roman capture of Dura *c.* 165.[302] The Romans then repaired damage done to a section of the wall in the northern part of the west wall.[303] The study of the work done on the breach indicates ongoing work on the west wall by the Romans, with the last evidence of this activity appearing to date to the reign of Severus Alexander on the basis of numismatic evidence.[304]

Figure 4.29 One of the mines built by the Sasanians under the west wall at Dura Europos and the assault ramp adjacent to tower 15.

The construction of the internal and external embankments against the walls belongs to the last months of the city's existence when it came under threat of attack from the Sasanians. This is concluded on the basis of numismatic evidence. The suggestion of two sieges of Dura, one in 252/253 and the final one *c.*256/257, is discussed in Chapter 3.

The construction of the embankments, and activity associated with the siege, has been discussed and analysed many times since the archaeological discoveries were first made in the 1930s; the details of these analyses are summarized well by James.[305] Considerable reinterpretation of the Yale discoveries, combined with the more recent discoveries of the Franco-Syrian team, has shed much light on the details of the siege.[306] Dura was not immediately abandoned by the Sasanians after its capture as there is some evidence for a brief Sasanian occupation of the city.[307] The evidence from Dura confirms the broader literary evidence for the Persian invasions of the 250s, which indicates that the Sasanians did not retain the cities and territories they captured for very long. The siege evidence from Dura demonstrates that the garrison was well aware that the city's defences were inadequate to meet an invading army, as the walls were effectively buried. This supports the idea that the Roman military presence on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers was not necessarily focused on defence against invasions.

Conclusion

Evidence from Dura Europos in the Parthian period indicates that it was a city linked more with the Roman Near East than with the Parthian Empire. Rome's presence in Syria and Mesopotamia was extended and became more formalized towards the end of the second century AD. In the two preceding centuries Rome's power and influence at Palmyra and on the Euphrates continued to grow, but Rome appears not to have formalized this power with provincial inclusion and a permanent military presence until the Severan period. There was no permanent Roman military presence anywhere on the Euphrates until the last half of the first century AD, yet Isidore of Charax writing approximately 80 years earlier implied that territory on the western side of the Khabur was Roman. Similarly, there was no permanent Roman military presence at Palmyra until the last half of the second century AD, yet Rome was involved in setting Palmyra's tariff structure from the early decades of the first century AD. Influence and power were clearly exercised, but there is no evidence of an expression of this in formal organization or a permanent military presence. Rome's interest in the regions east of the province of Syria during this period appears mostly to have been commercial through Palmyra and the Parthians did not represent an ongoing military threat to the province of Syria. At Dura the evidence speaks for prosperity as a result of the flourishing trade, which Roman demand was responsible for stimulating in the whole

region. Far from acting as a barrier or frontier, the Euphrates and Palmyra promoted Dura's contact with Roman commerce. A level of independence or autonomy enjoyed by Palmyra contributed to its ability to expand its trading enterprise, and it was able to do so partly through the Parthian controlled city of Dura. The remote and distant Parthian control of the city left Dura's government mostly to the institutions that had governed it in the Seleucid period while the government of Palmyra, under some form of Roman influence and control, took place in a similar way.

The arrival of the Romans at Dura on this section of the middle Euphrates did not herald an immediate change, but there were some early moves to establish a military presence using Palmyrene auxiliaries. By the third century, however, significant changes began to take place. Dura Europos received a garrison comprising a military cohort formed out of the Palmyrene archers, together with vexillations of the Syrian legions. Dura also supplied soldiers to numerous fortifications on the Khabur and to other locations on the Euphrates, in some cases hundreds of kilometres away. The north-west sector of the city was walled off *c.* 211 and functioned as the military camp in the city. The functions of the various buildings that comprised the camp and the nature of the command of the garrison are much more difficult to establish than modern scholarship suggests. Considerable reconstruction of inscriptions and other evidence undertaken in the 1930s leads to a view of superior and inferior elements of the garrison. The organization of the garrison was undoubtedly far more fluid than the suggestions put to date and this would have been appropriate for a garrison that required considerable versatility.

Conclusions about the activities of the *Dux Ripae* have clearly been based on questionable evidence, and this has implications for ideas about Roman defensive priorities on the middle Euphrates. The conclusion that the *Dux Ripae* was a regional military commander suggests that the military presence on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers was primarily about providing organized defence in case of invasions. If this assumption is removed, and given the tenuous nature of the evidence there is no reason why it should not be, military organization was not necessarily as co-ordinated as is often postulated.

While the evidence from Dura of a military nature is significant, it is in some cases tantalizing as there is much we do not know at a basic level, particularly with regard to the relationship between the various elements of the garrison. The military evidence also tends to overshadow indicators of the culture of the city in the third century. The nature of the survival of the material, mostly an accident due to the siege of the city, has obviously inflated the relative importance of the military evidence. In the third century, however, we do not see the evidence of prosperity evident in the Parthian period and the first 40 years of Roman control. The existing temples continued in use, but they did not grow while the new temples of the army did.

These include the Mithraeum and the Dolicheneum in the army camp, and the development of the synagogue and Christian house in the third century is often associated with the growing military presence at Dura.

There are times when Dura can be brought into the wider sphere of political and military events in the second and third centuries. The Roman occupation of the city took place as a result of Lucius Verus' extension of Roman power along the Euphrates *c.*165. The enlargement of the garrison and the army camp was associated with Septimius Severus' extension of Roman organization and military power at Palmyra, in Mesopotamia and on the middle Euphrates. The city was attacked in 239, possibly losing one of its senior military commanders in the conflict. This attack was part of the Sasanian Persian challenge to Roman organization and military power in Mesopotamia and eastern Syria and can be placed in the context of Persian attacks on Hatra and the capture of the province of Mesopotamia. The city also appears to have been captured as part of Shapur I's initial advance into Syria in 252/253, while the evidence of the final siege shows that it was taken again by Shapur and thus earning its place on the *SKZ*.

The Roman military presence at Dura, and at many smaller sites in its vicinity, was partly designed to provide a level of security and defence at a local level. It was undoubtedly also designed to provide intelligence on enemy movements and to play a role in major conflicts when they took place; however, these functions were probably secondary in importance. During the long intervals between conflicts what were Dura's soldiers doing? For the most part, the soldiers of the Dura garrison monitored traffic on the Euphrates, assisted in the enforcement of tax collection, intervened in times of public disorder, enforced legal decisions and contributed strongly to the establishment of Roman authority on a significant section of agricultural land on either side of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers. The fact that many of the soldiers were Palmyrenes would have served to demonstrate on the landscape the new order of Roman power in the region. Those recently recruited to the service of Rome were probably its most vocal exponents. Some soldiers settled on the banks of the rivers on their retirement from service. The region of Parapotamia, as it was still known in 220, was an area of great fertility and productivity – an area that supported vineyards and orchards for millennia before the third century AD. Dura continued to act as a central location from the Seleucid to the Roman periods for the official deposition of deeds for those who lived, married, divorced and died in the fertile lands in its vicinity. The siege that saw Dura's capture in *c.*256/257 and led to a brief Sasanian occupation soon gave way to abandonment, reflected in the lament of Clark Hopkins: 'The mute testimony that remained was of a site desolate and forlorn, where the lonely and level sands covered the bones of the city and stretched away across the desert.'[308] This is a stark image of the broader regional changes that the Sasanian invasions brought about.

5

CONFLICT BETWEEN ROME AND SASANIAN PERSIA INVOLVING THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES, MESOPOTAMIA AND PALMYRA, AD 224–258

The Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians and implications for Rome

In the 30 years that followed the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians, Roman power on the Euphrates and in Mesopotamia was seriously challenged for the first time. In the centuries before, conflict between Rome and the Parthians had often developed due to the ongoing struggle for control in Armenia. While Armenia had not become a Roman province, except for a brief period under Trajan, Rome exercised considerable power and influence there even before Pompey's establishment of the province of Syria. The Parthians claimed hegemony over the kingdom, based on long-standing political and cultural links.[1] While the rhetoric of each side consistently claimed hegemony in Armenia, reality saw compromise struck between the two powers in various guises. On numerous occasions both sides attempted to repudiate this compromise. Trajan, Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus all responded militarily to Parthian attempts at asserting control in Armenia and turned these ventures into much larger military undertakings, which resulted in invasions of Parthian territory. Under all three emperors, Roman control in formal and less formal ways came to extend further across the Euphrates towards the Tigris. The extension of control under Verus and Septimius Severus was long-lasting, and while Trajan's advances were short-lived they set a precedent that emperors would seek to emulate for centuries. The formalization of Roman power in Mesopotamia and Osrhoene late in the second century AD, with Mesopotamia established as a garrisoned province, added another element to the conflict between Rome and its eastern neighbour. From this time, a permanent Roman military presence extended to the upper Tigris, formally establishing a considerable extension of Roman power during the previous century into regions that had been more traditionally aligned with the Parthian Empire.[2]

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Figure 5.1 Relief sculpture of Ardashir unhorsing Artabanus V at Naqsh-i Rustam near Persepolis (photo: Jeff Tillitzki).

Internal political developments in the third century AD in both the Roman and Iranian empires changed the nature of conflict on Rome's eastern frontier in the first half of the century. The overthrow of the Parthians was an important factor in this as was the beginning of a period of instability at a number of different levels in the Roman Empire. Roman power and influence, which had advanced considerably in the previous century, was now seriously challenged by the Sasanians, particularly in Mesopotamia. Rome's power in Syria and Cappadocia, areas that had both been Roman provincial territory for centuries, also came under threat.

The royal family of Parthia ruled Iran for more than 350 years until the early third century AD when a revolt took place culminating in a great battle *c.* 223/224, in which the Sasanian Persian prince Ardashir defeated the Parthian king Artabanus V.[3] Ardashir then became *Shahanshah*, King of Kings. A consolidation of this activity followed in which the Sasanians eventually established hegemony over the lands of Iran; Armenia, though, remained a source of dispute. Armenia mostly remained under the kingship of relatives of the Parthian dynasty, who were supported by Rome until the kingdom was divided between Rome and Persia *c.* 387.[4] Prior to the Sasanian overthrow, there is little evidence for the Parthians mounting major military campaigns to reassert their earlier influence and control over Mesopotamia, Osrhoene and the middle Euphrates beyond the Khabur.[5] The most significant effort in this respect took place early in the joint reigns

of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus; that attack was driven back with considerable success by Roman forces. There were, however, ongoing Parthian attempts to maintain influence and power in Armenia and we have seen that these were often met by major Roman military offensives. The situation changed dramatically soon after the Sasanian Persian overthrow of the Parthians as the new regime conducted a number of attacks on Mesopotamia, the middle Euphrates and Roman territory further west.

Ardashir mounted raids on Roman provincial territory in Syria and Mesopotamia in 230, but these were driven back by Severus Alexander a few years later. It was not until 237/238 that Ardashir's most significant invasions of Roman territory took place, and it was only when Persian forces attacked Mesopotamia that the Roman literary sources, namely Dio and Herodian, demonstrated any knowledge of the significant change that had taken place in the government of Iran. The main focus of both writers was on the internal problems which they claimed the Roman Empire faced, with little attention paid to any military strength or capability of Ardashir. This suited the purposes of the last section of Dio's *History*, whose stated aim in that section was to show how from the death of Marcus Aurelius to the reign of Severus Alexander, 'history now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust'.[6] We will see later that while authors of the contemporary and local Syrian text, *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*, recognized the power and determination of the Sasanians in the 240s and 250s, the focus in later Roman and Byzantine texts was also on Roman weakness and internal difficulties in the third century.

The crisis in the Roman Empire and its effects in the East

The Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians coincided with the beginning of a long period of upheaval and instability in the Roman Empire, which is generally recognized as becoming even more pronounced following the death of Severus Alexander. The period has long been described in modern scholarship as a dire time for the whole empire, and contemporaries such as Dio and Herodian had already begun to portray it in this way.[7] A notable feature of this instability was the regular turnover of the imperial leadership from the death of Severus Alexander until the beginning of the reign of Diocletian. Short imperial reigns during this period were often the result of civil wars, and the upheaval associated with them. The depleting effects of civil war together with contemporary complaints of poor military discipline, particularly in the eastern army, might at first have caused problems in meeting the Sasanian attacks on Roman Mesopotamia and Syria.[8] The problem of poor military discipline, however, was not necessarily a new one and the eventual Roman response to the early Sasanian attacks on Mesopotamia was to mount large-scale offensives in a similar way to those that had been undertaken against the Parthians in the

second century.[9] The campaigns of Severus Alexander and Gordian III required significant resources and troops, and in the 250s, when the Persians invaded the Roman eastern provinces throughout most of the decade, the Romans mustered two large armies to meet them in the field. The crisis, as it has been identified at a number of levels, had not yet translated into an inability to place large numbers of troops in the East regularly but imperial resources were clearly under considerable pressure.

There is little doubt that the Roman Empire was more stretched in terms of military resources during the third century than in previous times. This impacted upon military leadership and the ability to supply better organized and disciplined troops for campaigns against the Persians. The extent to which Roman resources were under pressure was particularly evident when Rome faced Persian invasions in the East, coupled with invasions of Germanic tribes on the Rhine and Danube rivers in the West. The Roman army experienced some major defeats on the Rhine/Danube frontier, which included a battle against the Goths in 251 in which the emperor Decius was killed. Rome also lost large forces near Barbalissos in 252/253 and Edessa in 260 when the emperor Valerian and the Praetorian Prefect were among those taken into captivity. By 260, the Roman Empire clearly faced a major crisis in the East and was forced to rely on the Palmyrenes to regroup and lead what remained of its legions there. Following the death of Odenathus of Palmyra and the ensuing regency of Zenobia, large sections of the provinces of Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Arabia and even parts of Asia Minor experienced periods in which Rome was not in military or political control.

The problem for Rome in its eastern provinces during the third century following the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians was not only the effects of unstable imperial leadership and wars on two fronts but what also appears to have been a limited capacity to engage the Persians effectively due to the latter's ability to advance quickly and employ sophisticated military techniques such as siege warfare. The Romans knew little of the events in Iran that had led to the Sasanian Persian victory and, consequently, the military effectiveness required of the Sasanian Persians to defeat the Parthians. While the previous establishment of the province of Mesopotamia had not been seriously challenged by the Parthians, the Sasanians sought to contest Rome's power in the province. They also challenged Roman power in Armenia and an apparent Roman military presence at Hatra in the 230s. The Roman fortifications on the Euphrates and in Mesopotamia were not equipped to deal with the enormity of the invasions that took place in the 250s, and they struggled in the earlier attacks of the 230s and 240s. As the Parthians had never undertaken such significant military campaigns against the Romans, the fortifications were not designed to withstand such overwhelming attacks. On the middle Euphrates and lower Khabur in particular, fortifications were not designed

to withstand significant attacks and were more directed at establishing Roman authority and control over the territory of which they were a part. Roman internal problems, which included poorly disciplined and organized troops in the East, poor knowledge and experience of Sasanian offensive military tactics, and a defensive system not designed to meet large-scale attacks, made an effective defence all but impossible. The Sasanian invasions were to have profound ramifications for the Romans in the Near East, most notably in territory on the middle Euphrates and at Palmyra.

Ardashir's consolidation of victory over the Parthians

Hatra

Before Ardashir undertook any military activity directed at Roman Mesopotamia, he attempted to secure the western portions of his empire by dealing with Armenia and Hatra. Potter points out that neither Mesene in the Persian Gulf nor Adiabene in northern Mesopotamia appear on the *SKZ*, which may indicate that they were also a problem for Ardashir at this time.[10] In 229, only a few years after his investiture as *Shahanshah*, Ardashir attacked the desert kingdom of Hatra, which Dio claimed he planned to use as a forward base from which to attack Roman possessions in the East.[11] This was the first of two attacks Ardashir directed at the city, the second being approximately a decade later in 239/240. Hatra was abandoned by the Persians after its capture in 240 and not used as a base from which to attack the Romans, which casts some doubt on Dio's claim.[12] The motive for the first Persian attack on Hatra is more likely to have been part of Ardashir's consolidation of victory over the Parthians as he mounted an expedition against Armenia and Media before the attack on Hatra.[13] This was probably linked to Rome's provision of support to both Armenia and Hatra. The second siege of Hatra was part of a broader campaign that saw the capture of Mesopotamia in 237/238 and an attack on the Euphrates in 239. By this time, there appears to have been a regular Roman military presence at Hatra as epigraphic evidence shows that an auxiliary cohort was there in the mid-230s and perhaps earlier.

A siege of Hatra was a major undertaking as the city's desert location afforded it great protection. The necessary provisions to conduct a siege over any significant period of time were also very difficult to procure. Furthermore, the city was well defended and contained an ample internal water supply.[14] Ardashir probably invested considerable resources in the first unsuccessful attack on Hatra, but the details of the siege reported by Dio are limited. The size of the Sasanian force and the state of the defences at Hatra at the time of the first Sasanian attack are not known. A number of scenarios can be conjectured on the basis of archaeological evidence and

the more detailed surviving account of Septimius Severus' attempts to take the city approximately 30 years earlier. Severus made two unsuccessful attempts to capture Hatra at the end of the second century and the emperor Trajan also unsuccessfully attacked the city in 117.[15]

Ardashir was soon to experience the difficulties associated with the prosecution of a siege of Hatra. Archaeological investigation of sections of the walls at Hatra drew Gawlikowski to conclude that 'the whole system constituted a formidable triple barrier extending in depth for about 30 metres'.[16] The defences of the city Ardashir encountered were probably much the same as those Septimius Severus encountered 30 years earlier as it is thought they were originally constructed in the middle of the second century AD.[17] There also appears to be considerable evidence at Hatra for the successful Sasanian siege of 239/240.[18]

We are not informed of the length of the first siege of Hatra by Severus but Dio claimed that it accomplished nothing, whereas the second siege lasted 20 days and succeeded in breaching one of the walls.[19] The second siege had been better planned and supplied than the first, but Severus still suffered major losses.[20] Dio stated that Severus was within sight of his goal of capturing the city when he called off the siege in the hope that the Hatreni would come to terms – but this did not happen.[21] Severus' discontinuation of the siege was, according to Dio, the result of a mutiny of European troops who were part of the besieging force.[22] Dio and Herodian both claimed that the surrounding desert and unhealthy climate only allowed a short siege, which was probably an important factor in the cause of the mutiny.[23] Both authors, particularly Dio, attributed the failure to poor military discipline, but there were clearly considerable advantages for the defenders of the city.

The reasons for Ardashir's attack on Hatra were twofold. First, the Romans had shown interest in capturing the city over the previous century. Second, it was probably part of a consolidation of power in the wake of defeating the Parthians because Hatra seems to have resisted aligning itself with the Sasanians.[24] The Romans took advantage of this by supplying an auxiliary cohort, Cohors IX Maurorum Gordiana, to the city c.235.[25] The duration of this cohort's presence at the city is uncertain. Sartre suggests that Hatra became part of the Roman Empire from 217 or even as early as 198, but there is no direct evidence for this.[26] While the evidence does not allow conclusive statements on the size and duration of the Roman presence at Hatra, it is an indication of Roman power and influence at the city, this undoubtedly being a concern to Ardashir in the early years of his reign.

The Arabic historian Tabari asserted that at the time of Shapur I's attack on Hatra, c.239, a noble named Daizan was based there and was known as the king of Mesopotamia.[27] Daizan controlled the tribes in the area, according to Tabari, and his rule extended as far as Syria. It is

probable that Daizan was a relative of Sanatruk II, or even Sanatruk himself who is referred to in another Arabic source of the early eleventh century. Sanatruk II came to power at Hatra by October 231 and was king when the city fell to the Sasanians in 240/241.[28] Hatra's territory, therefore, extended towards the Euphrates in the west. The potential for Hatra to assist invading Roman forces, now that it was well-disposed to the Romans, was also a problem for Ardashir. This is reflected in Tabari's report that Shapur's motive for attacking and destroying Hatra was its treachery while he was away in Chorasan dealing with problems on his own eastern frontier.[29]

Ardashir took a risk in mounting an attack on Hatra at this time. The strength of his forces for the siege is not known, but they were unable to achieve their task. The Sasanian Persian domination of Iran was still in its infancy and at the time Ardashir attacked Hatra, he still had much to do in order to subdue elements of opposition in Armenia. The Persian attack on Hatra may also have been the catalyst that drove Hatra to request military assistance from the Romans. Dio reported that as a result of his losses at Hatra, Ardashir retreated to Media, but this may have been associated with putting down elements of resistance there.[30]

In light of the above discussion, Dio's claim that Ardashir wished to use Hatra as a base from which to attack the Romans must be questioned. Hatra would have been a poor choice for this purpose anyway. Located approximately 60 km west of the Tigris, it was in striking distance of Persian territory for the Romans. The city was located in difficult territory over 200 km east of the Euphrates and approximately 100 km south-east of the nearest Roman legionary base at Singara, making it a very difficult base for the Persians to attack from. Singara was itself a remote outpost for the Romans, who found it increasingly difficult to supply over the following century.[31] Ardashir's motives for the first attack on Hatra were probably more associated with consolidating the overthrow of the Parthians, together with concerns over Roman interest in the city.

Armenia

In considering the interest that Rome and the Sasanian Persians took in Hatra, it is important to consider activity in the whole region, particularly in Armenia. The kingdom of Armenia had been troublesome for Ardashir and had become a refuge for the remnants of Parthian resistance to the Sasanian victory. Roman influence in Armenia perhaps strengthened this resistance, and some Median nobles, still loyal to the Parthians had also fled to Armenia.[32] The chronology of Ardashir's attack on Armenia is difficult to establish in relation to the attack on Hatra, but it seems that it took place at a broadly similar time. Ardashir marched on Armenia, but was not successful due to the defensive efforts of the Armenians, Medes and

the now-exiled Parthians.[33] The Armenian historian Agathangelos described the extent to which Armenia became a centre of resistance against the Sasanian Persians and a haven for those Parthian nobles who had resisted the Sasanians. In doing so, Agathangelos emphasized the importance of Armenia historically as part of promoting an image of a strong Arsacid Armenian royal family in the fourth century. This probably led to an overemphasis of the importance of events in Armenia in the late 220s and early 230s; however, Ardashir's desire to deal with resistance in Armenia was also reflected in the work of Dio.[34]

Agathangelos reported that major attacks were mounted from Armenia on Assuristan in the year following the victory of Ardashir over Artabanus V.[35] In these attacks the Armenian king, Khosrov (Tiridates II), enlisted the assistance of warriors from regions and tribes in kingdoms such as Albania and Georgia. In what was probably an exaggerated claim, these armies mounted raids into Persian territory in Assuristan and even sacked the capital, Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Khosrov also attempted to turn those Parthian nobles who had previously sworn loyalty to Ardashir back to the resistance against Sasanian Persia, which he was now portrayed as leading. More Armenian attacks were claimed to have been directed against Assuristan in the following year (perhaps 229), and it may have been in response to this that Ardashir mounted attacks on Armenia at which time he also attacked Hatra.

Ardashir's attacks on Roman Mesopotamia

The rhetoric of war

In 230 Ardashir turned his attention to Roman Mesopotamia. His attempts at consolidating the western portions of the Iranian Empire probably demonstrated more clearly to him the extent to which Roman influence in Armenia and its presence in Mesopotamia gave support to Parthian resistance against his regime. Herodian and Dio reported that Ardashir made claims to territory as far west as Asia Minor.[36] Herodian's report of this rhetoric was more detailed than that of Dio and claimed that Ardashir specifically demanded the return of Asia, including Ionia and Caria. Ardashir demanded the return of these territories, as Alexander the Great had captured them in the fourth century BC from the last Achaemenid ruler Darius III, and prior to that they had all been under Persian governors.[37] The suggestion flowing from this is that the Sasanians had specific knowledge of the Achaemenid Persian past, which they claimed for their own and used to rhetorical advantage. Strong support for the religion of Zoroastrianism, evident under both Ardashir and Shapur I, could also be seen as an important part of making these links in the early reign of Ardashir.

The Sasanian motivation to restore the hegemony of the Achaemenid Persians, as reported by Dio and Herodian, has been challenged for some time by the idea that the Sasanians knew very little of the Achaemenid past and that Dio's and Herodian's claims should be discounted.[38] It is argued that their claims reflect little more than a classical tradition placing historical knowledge of Persia's great past and its conflict with the city-states of classical Greece in the mouth of Ardashir as he prepared for war against Rome.[39] It is also held that the accounts of Islamic writers such as Bīrūnī and Tabari, which demonstrate some knowledge of the Achaemenid kings and their accomplishments, were taken from a Graeco-Babylonian tradition – that is, a non-Zoroastrian tradition of which the Sasanians were presumably unaware.[40]

Yarshater asserts that the Sasanians looked more to the Hellenized Parthians than to the Achaemenids and that little was transmitted to the Parthians from the Achaemenids.[41] While there is some numismatic evidence to indicate ongoing links with the Achaemenids in Persis in the second century BC, Yarshater argues that there is no evidence that these elements were transmitted into the Sasanian period.[42] Rubin and others maintain that the location of the trilingual *SKZ* inscription carved on the fire temple at Naqsh-i Rustam, directly opposite the tombs of some of the Achaemenid kings, together with the nearby Sasanian rock relief carvings depicting victories over Parthian kings and Roman emperors, do not indicate that the Sasanians were attempting to link themselves to a great Achaemenid past.[43] Further to this, in the *SKZ* inscription Shapur laid claim to the territories of his fathers, forefathers and ancient forebears; but this is held by proponents of the theory to have been a reference to ancestral domains in Persis rather than Achaemenid possessions in Syria and Asia Minor.[44] It is argued that if links were being made with the Achaemenids, the *SKZ* is where we would expect them to have been made explicitly. In short, according to those who adopt this position, Sasanian knowledge of the power of the Achaemenid kings was very limited or non-existent and there were no attempts to make any links to them despite the claims of Dio, Herodian and the Islamic writers.

There are those who think differently. Fowden, for example, presents arguments suggesting that the Sasanians were aware of the Achaemenid past.[45] While the location of the *SKZ* inscription on a fire temple directly opposite the tombs of Cyrus and Darius cannot in itself provide evidence of clear knowledge of the Achaemenid past, and Sasanian attempts to make links with it, it provides some indication that Shapur at least held the area to be of significance. It would be surprising if Shapur had been completely ignorant of the context in which he ordered the inscription and reliefs to be carved.[46] Fowden also notes that Greeks were not unknown at the royal court in Iran and that it is likely that they would have shared information about the past even if the Sasanians were themselves unaware
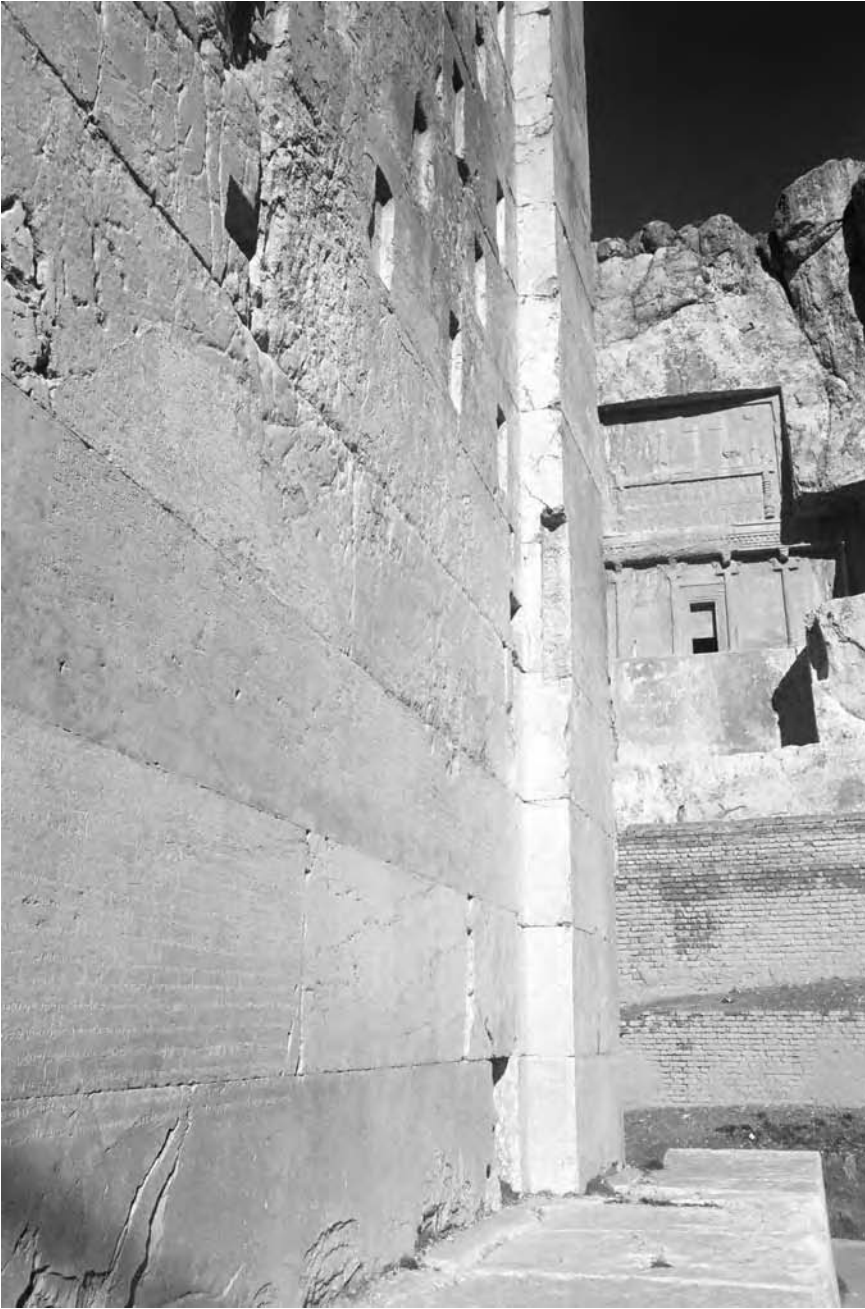
Figure 5.2 The inscription of Shapur I carved on the Ka'abah of Zoroaster at Naqsh-i Rustam. Note the proximity of the monument to the rock-cut tombs of the Achaemenids in the adjacent cliff (photo: Jeff Tillitzki).

of it through their own historical traditions.[47] Fowden also attempts to explain the absence of specific evidence of Shapur linking his victories in some way to the Achaemenid past in the rock carvings and on the *SKZ*.[48] The *SKZ* was put up approximately 30 years later and reflects the message Shapur I wished to convey following his great victories over the Romans and other adversaries. While the war against Gordian III and the invasions of the 250s had been successful there were no territorial gains to speak of. Shapur had been beaten back under the leadership of Odenathus of Palmyra who had remained loyal to Rome, and any suggestion on the *SKZ* that territorial claims had been made by Ardashir and linked with the Achaemenid past would lead to the immediate observation that the wars of Shapur had not achieved the recovery of this territory.

The claims to the former Achaemenid territories that were made by Ardashir in 230 were clearly rhetorical and 30 years later Shapur's advertisement of Sasanian victories over the Romans emphasized the achievements without any need to refer to his father's earlier rhetoric. By the 260s the focus had turned to the new regime and its achievements. The Achaemenid past had now been superseded rhetorically, and rhetorical platforms are often not consistent over time. Ardashir's rhetoric needed to be stronger in 230 when he was about to launch an attack on the Roman Empire for the first time. In spite of overthrowing the Parthians he had no track record in the eyes of the Romans, which is reflected particularly in the case of Dio. Attempting to make links with the Achaemenid past gave Ardashir's territorial claims legitimacy and were designed to create fear among the Romans, and the reports of Dio and Herodian indicate that this strategy met with some success.

Further to these arguments, it is worth noting that when the Persians invaded Roman territory in the 250s they encountered numerous communities of Zoroastrians in Syria, Asia Minor and Cappadocia. The Zoroastrian high priest, Kartir, reported the presence of sacred fires and magi in all of these regions. He emphasized that they had not been harmed during Shapur's invasions and that he had been responsible for setting them in order at Shapur's command.[49] These communities of Zoroastrians, whose origins lay in the Achaemenid period, were 'considerable and flourishing' up to the third century AD and there is still evidence for them in the cities of Roman Asia Minor as late as the sixth century.[50] Kartir's accompaniment of Shapur on the invasion and his activities to protect the Zoroastrian communities of Syria and Asia Minor suggest some prior knowledge that they were there. If we are to assume that the Sasanians knew of these communities prior to the invasion, which may explain Kartir's participation in Shapur's campaign, we would expect some knowledge of their origins under the Achaemenids when they controlled Syria and Asia Minor.

The motives for the Sasanian invasions of Roman Mesopotamia in 230 and later were driven by a number of factors. These factors varied in

importance over the following centuries. The Romans took advantage of the instability that emerged in kingdoms in the western portions of the Iranian Empire as a result of the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians. Armenia became a centre of resistance, which was demonstrated by the fact that some surviving Parthian nobles took refuge there. Rome provided support to Armenia and would soon support Hatra, the latter probably linked to securing and increasing Rome's power in Mesopotamia. At this early stage, the Romans saw the Sasanians as no more of a threat than the Parthians before them and the overall military emphasis continued to be offensive. Concerned that this situation constituted a threat to his recently established hegemony, and as part of the demonstration of his right to all that had been previously under Parthian control, Ardashir marched west and attacked Hatra *c.* 229 before attacking Roman Mesopotamia in the following year. While it is unlikely that Ardashir was actually prepared to take the regions of Syria and Asia Minor from the Romans, it is not difficult to see that his rhetorical claims to all that had once been Achaemenid were genuine.

The Persian campaign of Severus Alexander

Rome was defensively unprepared for what was about to take place as it had not perceived what we see as a looming and sustained crisis in the eastern provinces. The news of Ardashir's preparation for war and crossing of the Tigris was met with panic.[51] In Mesopotamia, this spilled over into a serious revolt that culminated in the death of the Roman military commander at the hands of his soldiers.[52] In 230 Ardashir conducted raids into Mesopotamia and laid siege to the fortress of Nisibis, which had been held by Rome even before Septimius Severus established the province of Mesopotamia.[53] At the same time as the Persian invasion of Mesopotamia, Ardashir's forces also raided Syria.[54] Due to their lack of preparedness the Romans attempted to negotiate with Ardashir to no avail.[55] Severus Alexander's rhetoric in communicating with Ardashir drew on historical tradition in a manner similar to that which Ardashir himself had used earlier. The emperor referred to previous Roman victories over the Parthians under Augustus, Trajan, Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus.[56] This was a clear indication that the Romans did not consider a particular change had taken place in the Parthian Empire. Severus Alexander threatened war, but Ardashir was not deterred.

The Persian campaign of Severus Alexander shows that the Roman response to Persian attacks on Mesopotamia was the same as it had been when the Parthians destabilized Armenia in the second century. It was also the subject of a considerably different historical tradition in the Greek and Latin texts, illustrating the emergence of different traditions about third-century events in the East soon afterwards. The campaign directly involved

Mesopotamia, Palmyra, the Euphrates and the Khabur. Archaeological evidence from all of these areas contributes to an understanding of this campaign and its outcomes.

In 231 Severus Alexander decided on a campaign against the Persians in response to the assaults on Mesopotamia.[57] Due to the necessary preparation time, the campaign was not prosecuted until 232/233. Severus Alexander raised an army of equal size to that of the reputed Persian force and this 'caused the greatest upheaval throughout the Roman world', indicating that Roman resources were stretched.[58] The emperor addressed the army on the Campus Martius at Rome where it gathered before leaving for the East. Some of the soldiers were veterans of the Parthian campaigns of Septimius Severus 30 years earlier and others had served in Caracalla's abortive Parthian campaign 15 years before. Their presence would have carried a certain symbolism, but there were a large number of new recruits among the troops with no battle experience, demonstrating a dichotomy of old soldiers and raw recruits largely unprepared for what lay ahead. The lack of preparation and ability to raise troops who were of prime fighting age was obvious and the emperor was forced to secure a sizeable proportion of the forces needed for the campaign from Illyricum while marching to Antioch.

There were a number of legions based in the East at this time according to Dio. He listed 11 legions in the eastern provinces, including Legions I and III Parthica in Mesopotamia with XVI Flavia Firma and IV Scythica in Syria.[59] There were seven other eastern legions, including two in Cappadocia (XV Apollonaris and XII Fulminata), one in Syria Phoenice (III Gallica), two in Palestine (VI Ferrata and X Fretensis), one in Arabia (III Cyrenaica) and one in Egypt (II Traiana). There were also various auxiliary cohorts in smaller garrisons, such as Cohors XX Palmyrenorum at Dura Europos and Cohors XII Palaestinorum Severiana Alexandriana on the lower Khabur. More generally, Moses of Chorene maintained that Severus Alexander raised troops from Egypt to the Black Sea and also from the desert, which indicates the probable use of a number of these legions and auxiliary cohorts in the campaign.[60] Not all of these troops would have been available as some would have been required to remain in garrison. We would expect that the legions in Mesopotamia and Syria took part in the campaign as well as Legio II Traiana from Egypt, which joined the army at Antioch.[61] By the time Severus Alexander arrived in Antioch his army was of considerable size. This was not a force designed simply to drive the Persians out of Mesopotamia. It was designed to conduct a full-scale invasion of Persia in the way that Roman emperors had done in the previous century against the Parthians.

Reporting Severus Alexander's campaign as a failure, Herodian emphasized the poor preparation of the Roman forces and predictably did not credit the Persians with any success. Dio had claimed earlier that

Figure 5.3 The modern city of Antakya (ancient Antioch) from Mt Silpius.

Ardashir was of no particular consequence, and the rhetoric of Severus Alexander's address to his troops reported by Herodian was designed to create a similar impression of the Persian troops generally. Persian strategy and tactics were derided in the recreated speech of Severus Alexander as being nothing more than raiding and plundering.[62] Severus Alexander emphasized that the superiority that the Romans enjoyed over the Persians was in their commitment to discipline and that they would prevail as a result. Discipline and organization would win the day, the lack of it in the Syrian and Mesopotamian legions being what Herodian identified had caused the problems thus far.

On arriving in Antioch, the emperor sent another embassy to the Persians in an attempt to buy more time and to test the extent of Ardashir's determination to prosecute a war.[63] Severus Alexander believed he had assembled an army nearly equal in power and number to the Persians, which indicates that he was probably attempting to buy more preparation time.[64] The purpose of the embassy was to announce Roman intentions to the Persians in the hope that it would deter their invasion of Mesopotamia. Severus Alexander did not have to wait long to discover the extent of the Persian king's resolve. His envoys were promptly returned and closely following them was an embassy of 400 Persians, outstanding for their physical height and splendid clothing.[65] The message from Ardashir was in much the same terms as those delivered earlier according to Dio and

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Herodian. The Persians would settle for nothing less than the possessions they held to be their rightful inheritance from the Achaemenids. The emperor reacted in a fit of rage as the envoys were stripped of their fine clothes and sent to remote regions in Phrygia where they were resettled.[66] Severus Alexander now had the pretext for a full-scale campaign against the Persians. It is possible that Ardashir's rhetoric was designed to provoke a Roman invasion in the hope of inflicting a serious defeat on his army.

The impact of the posturing and rhetorical statements is difficult to judge. The embassy sent by Ardashir appears to have had its effect. Severus Alexander's petulant response is evidence enough. If Alexander's temperament had been affected, the morale of his troops might also have been affected. Not long afterwards, as Alexander prepared his army to cross the Tigris and Euphrates, mutinies broke out in the Roman armies in Egypt and in Syria where a new emperor was proclaimed.[67] The situation in Syria was an ongoing problem, confirmed by Dio's report of the Roman commander in Syria being overthrown and killed by his troops.[68]

The prosecution of the campaign and its outcome

Herodian's account of Severus Alexander's campaign is the most detailed to survive, but other later and briefer accounts show that there were significant discrepancies on some important points. According to Herodian, the emperor's strategy was to divide his forces into three separate armies so as to launch a three-pronged attack on the Persian Empire. The army was divided in order to weaken the Persian forces by compelling them to divide so that they would be less co-ordinated in battle.[69] The strategy of Severus Alexander was to attack Media in the north through Armenia with one army, drive at the heartland of Persia with the second, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet, while the third force would attack under the leadership of the emperor himself by the 'middle route'.[70]

For the column sent through Armenia, the passage was difficult due the mountainous nature of the kingdom.[71] The Romans were not hindered in Armenia militarily at this time, which indicates that there was no major Persian military presence in the kingdom. Roman attacks on Media were undertaken from Armenia and appear to have been in the form of raids, with looting and burning as the main objectives.[72] The attack on Media was designed to work in concert with the attacks of the other two Roman divisions of the army to create an impression among the Persians that they were being surrounded by Roman troops. The terrain of northern Media was suited to the strengths of the Roman army, which relied more on heavy infantry, than to those of cavalry – the strength of the Persian army. If the Roman attacks on Media included raiding, the army probably also included mounted auxiliary units that were more skilled in this kind of warfare. Herodian reported that the Roman force was so successful at

fighting in this terrain, and the Persian cavalry so unsuited to it, that the latter could not even make contact with the Romans.[73]

As the Romans were attacking Media, the Sasanian king received news of a Roman army appearing in eastern Parthia.[74] We can do little but speculate as to what Herodian meant by eastern Parthia as he appears to have lacked precise geographical knowledge of the Persian Empire. The Roman army that attacked in 'eastern Parthia' was probably that referred to earlier as the second column, 'which was sent to spy on the eastern marches of the barbarian territory, where reports say the Tigris and Euphrates rivers at their confluence drain into extensive marshes'.[75] It has been argued that the column that marched into what Herodian called eastern Parthia was probably sent to Mesene and Elymais in the Persian Gulf before it was supposed to join up with the third column under the emperor to attack Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[76] If this identification is correct, the second division of Severus Alexander's army had actually been sent southeast. Ardashir's response to this news was to leave behind a small force in Media and march south to meet the new threat.

The movements of the column under Severus Alexander are the subject of some speculation. It has been proposed that it first went to Palmyra as a feint to trick Ardashir before marching back to the Euphrates and some way down it before crossing the desert to Singara.[77] The detour to Palmyra is thought to be indicated by an inscription there that reveals a visit to the city by Severus Alexander, his general Rutilius Crispinus and his legions.[78] This is the second known Roman imperial visit to Palmyra and it took place almost exactly a century after Hadrian's visit to the city *c.* 129. The military importance of Palmyra as a result of Rome's expansion of power in the second half of the second century is demonstrated clearly by this event.

A marriage contract of 232, the year of Severus Alexander's campaign, was discovered at Dura Europos and names the winter quarters of an auxiliary unit, Cohors XII Palaestinorum Severiana Alexandriana.[79] The location of the winter quarters in the papyrus is Qatna, which is thought to have been on the Khabur river, approximately 100 km north of the river's confluence with the Euphrates.[80] In 232 the cohort's name included that of Severus Alexander, and this was the same year that the campaign against the Persians began. If the army under Severus Alexander's command marched from Palmyra to the Euphrates and then to Singara, it would probably have done so via the Khabur river. This is likely to have taken the army past Qatna, making it possible that Cohors XII Palaestinorum was recruited for Severus Alexander's campaign.[81]

Mesopotamia is the region that might be best described as the middle route the emperor's army was supposed to take. Herodian stated that Alexander did not advance against the Persians as he was ill due to the hot climate, and the troops were also suffering from illness due to the heat.[82]

Figure 5.4 Jebel Sinjar, with the remains of the Roman fortification at Singara in northern Iraq. From A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le Désert de Syrie*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1934, vol. 2, plate CLIV.

The soldiers from Illyricum suffered particularly as they were used to a cooler climate – and there had been a shortage of food. This is suggestive of the army marching in the area of Singara where the climate was very hot and dry and the land itself inhospitable. Because the column under the emperor failed to advance, the column that had been sent to the 'eastern' sector was wiped out by Ardashir.

According to Herodian, Severus Alexander was eager to head back to Antioch, and he ordered what remained of the column which had attacked Media through Armenia to return to Antioch as well.[83] The return through Armenia was a particularly difficult one due to the harsh cold. Many of the soldiers contracted frostbite and did not make the journey. The column under Severus Alexander also suffered casualties during its return to Antioch. On arriving in Antioch, what remained of the Roman army was able to recover and the emperor attempted to rally the troops for another campaign as news arrived that the Persian army had been disbanded.[84]

Herodian referred to some positive outcomes of the failed campaign. According to him, both sides had lost similar numbers. However, the

Romans had done better as they commenced with slightly fewer numbers and the Persians were not able to prosecute another war for a number of years.[85] This was partly due to Ardashir facing serious problems on his own eastern borders for some time following the war with Severus Alexander.[86] The Persian losses were mostly inflicted by the Roman column that had advanced into Media through Armenia. It was difficult, however, to hide the fact that the Romans had suffered a serious defeat against the Persians. This was due to the emperor's reluctance or inability to prosecute a crucial part of the plan to surround the Persian army by leading the largest of the three divisions, which was under his command.

Pressed by difficulties on the Danubian and Rhine frontiers, where the Germanic tribes were attacking Illyricum, Severus Alexander left Antioch.[87] He headed west to confront the difficulties in Illyricum with the surviving Illyrian soldiers he had taken with him for the Persian campaign. Following the losses in Persia at the hands of the Persian army and the climate, the soldiers from Illyricum were particularly distressed at the news of attacks on Illyricum as it affected their families – an indication that some of them had been based there for some time.[88]

With the disbanding of the Persian army and the retreat of Severus Alexander with the remains of his army, the military situation on Rome's eastern frontier appears to have remained quiet for the rest of his reign. The Persian losses during the campaign of Severus Alexander, together with difficulties on his own eastern frontier, meant that Ardashir could not consider prosecuting a war for another four years.[89] The emperor left behind what he thought were enough troops to defend the Roman provinces in the East.[90] There is no evidence of a formal peace agreement between Rome and Persia at this time, and it seems that Roman provincial territory in Mesopotamia and Syria was largely intact following the campaign.

While Herodian's report is the most detailed of the surviving accounts it differs markedly from others in terms of the outcome. A number of later texts discussed the campaign, but most only referred to it in passing. Many of these texts reported that the campaign was a success and that Severus Alexander engaged in battle with Ardashir and put him to flight.[91] They made no mention of a serious defeat by the Persians or of any other serious losses due to disease or climate. In the cases of the Latin writers Victor, Eutropius, Festus and Jerome, this is probably explained by their reliance on the so-called *Kaisergeschichte*, which is thought to have recorded details of Roman imperial history from the reign of Augustus to Constantine.[92]

In the case of the 'Life of Severus Alexander' in the *HA*, it has been shown that there are close similarities to Victor and Eutropius, while other sections probably derived directly from the *Kaisergeschichte*.[93] The *HA*'s report of the success of Severus Alexander's Persian campaign is thought, therefore, to have derived both directly and indirectly from the

Kaisergeschichte. The *HA* provides the most detailed surviving account of Severus Alexander's campaign against the Persians after that of Herodian. According to the *HA* the emperor commanded the army himself and was constantly exposed to missiles and danger.[94] He routed a large and splendidly equipped Persian army, taking significant amounts of booty and slaves.[95] Herodian's account was specifically rejected by the *HA* in favour of a majority of other accounts that claimed it was a success.[96]

The survival of the Greek tradition begun by Herodian is reflected in the later Byzantine chronicle of Zonaras, which also reported an overwhelming defeat at the hands of the Persians.[97] Zonaras appears to have relied significantly on Dexippus and Petrus Patricius for his information on third-century events, and the similarities of his account to that of Herodian suggests that he may also have been one of Zonaras' sources.[98]

Severus Alexander's campaign against the Persians was in many ways similar to the conflicts between Rome and the Parthians in the second century. The immediate cause of conflict and the creation of opportunities for a Roman invasion of Parthia by Trajan, Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus was unrest in Armenia. In all three cases these emperors brought forces to the East ostensibly to deal with this unrest, but then mounted major campaigns against the Parthians. Instability in Armenia came to act as a pretext for a Parthian campaign. In the case of Severus Alexander's campaign against the Persians it was a Persian attack on the province of Mesopotamia that brought the emperor to the East, and this was followed by a Roman attack on Persia itself. The Persian attacks on Armenia were also an important factor. The outcome for Rome was not the success that the attacks of the second century had been, but the build-up to war and the prosecution of it was similar. Despite the Roman losses, the Persians were forced to retreat from Mesopotamia and were not able to gather an army large enough to undertake another campaign for a number of years. It is perhaps not surprising that the Romans thought of the Sasanian Persians in much the same way as they had viewed the Parthians.

Persian attacks on Hatra and Mesopotamia in 238/239

Despite his failure at Hatra, ongoing Parthian resistance in Armenia and the ejection of his forces from Mesopotamia, Ardashir remained determined to deal with the difficulties he faced but was unable to do so for approximately four years. There is no evidence of any military activity between Rome and Persia until 237/238 when the Persians attacked and captured Mesopotamia. In the years that followed they also attacked the middle Euphrates and Hatra.

The only direct reference to these Persian attacks is a graffito from Dura Europos indicating that the Persians descended upon the city in April 239.[99] There is no evidence to indicate that the Persians were

successful in taking the city and we do not know the size of the Persian force that attacked it at this time. The *HA* made reference to a prospective eastern campaign of the emperor Maximinus Thrax in 238, which probably came in response to the Persian attacks in the East.[100] A further indication of these Persian attacks is found in Syncellus who mentions that Nisibis and Carrhae were recaptured by Gordian III (238–244) having been taken by the Persians during the reign of Maximinus Thrax (235–238).[101]

There is some dispute as to the dating of these events. Loriot dates the Sasanian capture of Mesopotamia to 241/242, but this is challenged by Kettenhofen on a number of key points.[102] Kettenhofen uses evidence for a suspension of coinage from the Mesopotamian mints during the reign of Maximinus to support an earlier date for the Sasanian capture of Mesopotamia.[103] David Oates claimed on the basis of numismatic evidence that the Roman fortification at Ain Sinu, 30 km east of Singara, was captured by Ardashir in 237/238 and it is possible that Singara was also taken.[104] The Persian capture of Mesopotamia towards the end of Maximinus' reign was probably part of a sustained and broader Persian attack on Roman interests that also saw the attack on Dura Europos in 239 and the attack on Hatra in 239/240.

It was noted earlier that the Hatrene kingdom controlled important territory before its demise, according to the Arabic annalist Tabari.[105] In this tradition, Daizan, the Hatrene king, had extended his rule as far as Syria and was also known as king of Mesopotamia. Tabari quoted earlier poets who referred to Daizan as the man who once 'taxed the land by the Tigris and the Chaboras (Khabur river)'.[106] The desert territory east of the Khabur and west of the Tigris, which Tabari claimed was controlled by Hatra, was strategically located between Rome and Persia and it seems that Daizan had carved a sizeable kingdom stretching from the Khabur and middle Euphrates to parts of the upper Tigris. The Roman military presence at Hatra *c.*235, and perhaps earlier, is clearly linked to Roman control of Mesopotamia and also of the middle Euphrates in Coele Syria. The military activity of Ardashir and Shapur in the late 230s was, therefore, a sustained attack on Roman interests across a region that had undergone a significant military bolstering early in the Severan period.

Towards the end of Ardashir's reign, *c.*240/241, his son Shapur was made co-regent with him and it was in this same year that Shapur was responsible for capturing Hatra. Tabari claimed that Shapur I besieged Hatra, which was eventually betrayed to him by Daizan's daughter, and that the siege took approximately two years.[107] We have already seen that in the archaeological record the city was well fortified and that it withstood three Roman sieges in the second century. It had also withstood a

Figure 5.5 The investiture of Ardashir at Naqsh-i Rustam. Photo: Jeff Tillitzki.

siege by the Sasanians a decade earlier. This may explain the length of the siege or that it was conducted over two seasons.

By the end of his reign and the beginning of that of his son, Ardashir had scored some important victories against Rome following some early setbacks. From the time of Severus Alexander's death in 235, Roman imperial leadership was beset with difficulties and this probably explains the lack of a more immediate Roman response to territorial losses in Mesopotamia in 237/238. As in 230, the immediate issue was Mesopotamia rather than Armenia and eventually the Romans responded as Severus Alexander had done. This was the preparation and execution of a campaign designed to drive the Persians from Mesopotamia, followed by an attack on the Persian Empire itself.

Conflict between Gordian III and Shapur

The Persian campaign of Gordian III is important to this analysis for a number of reasons. It is the first engagement between Roman and Persian forces mentioned in the *SKZ*, and this presents a different tradition to that of the Graeco-Roman literature. It also marked the first of a series of victories over Roman emperors, which Shapur advertised on rock reliefs at Naqsh-i Rustam and elsewhere in the Iranian Empire. The death of Gordian III in Persia and Philip's treaty with Shapur have also been used to reach conclusions about archaeological evidence from the middle

Euphrates and Mesopotamia, and the campaign itself directly involved the territory of Mesopotamia and the Euphrates river. It was also the first time since the war fought by Crassus in 53 BC that a Roman eastern campaign ended in the death of its leader.

Gordian III's military response to the Persian capture of Mesopotamia

In 241 the young Gordian III decided on a campaign against Persia at the direction of his father-in-law, the powerful Praetorian Prefect, Timesitheus.[108] While the decision to conduct a Persian campaign took place in 241, preparations did not get underway until the following year. It was not until 243/244 that the campaign began and it saw the return of Mesopotamia to Rome before concluding with an invasion of Persia.

Gordian symbolically opened the gates of the Temple of Janus before leaving Rome to march east and he also sought the protection of Athena Promachos who had backed Athens at Marathon in the battle against the Persians.[109] This is a further indication of how Roman rhetoric in wars with the Sasanian Persians attempted to link campaigns with the classical past, and it is sometimes used by those who argue that reports of Sasanian claims to Achaemenid territory was simply a literary device used by Roman authors. It is difficult to believe that the Persians were not aware of the rhetorical posturing of Gordian III and hence the context of these claims. We are poorly informed about the Persian campaign of Gordian III as most of the detail in the surviving texts referred to the nature of Gordian's death and the elevation of Philip. Herodian's account ended with the accession of Gordian III in 238, and Dio's work finished c. 231. The other surviving sources are mostly later epitomes that provide only brief details of Gordian's life and the Persian campaign. The longest account that survives is the 'Lives of the Three Gordians' in the *Historia Augusta*.

In an important study Kettenhofen traces the route taken by Gordian's army through Asia Minor on the basis of the emperor's *adventus* coinage, which was minted in the cities he visited along the way. Other numismatic observations were also made by Kettenhofen in an attempt to trace and date the march of Gordian's army from Antioch to Mesopotamia. On this basis, he claimed that Gordian's army departed Rome in 242 and marched through Asia Minor by way of Antioch in Pisidia before arriving at Antioch in Syria.[110] The army left Antioch in spring, 243, crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma and made its way to Carrhae before fighting a successful battle at Rhesaina in Mesopotamia.[111] The Persians are thought to have vacated Nisibis, Singara and smaller fortifications in the vicinity of these cities as the coinage indicates that these cities had begun minting again under the Romans by the second half of 243.[112] Kettenhofen con-

cluded that Gordian marched down the Khabur and along the Euphrates past Dura Europos before entering Persian territory where his army fought a battle at Meshike on the lower Euphrates in which he was probably killed.[113]

The differences between the Persian and Graeco-Roman traditions

The accounts of the outcome of the war were distinctly different in the Roman and Persian traditions. The *SKZ* reported a total Persian victory over Gordian III, and the rock reliefs depict him lying dead beneath Shapur's horse. The Roman and Byzantine texts focused more on the fate of Gordian III himself and provided little detail of the campaign. A particular issue to emerge from the Roman and Byzantine texts was whether Gordian III was killed in battle at the hands of the Persians or whether he was killed as a result of a conspiracy of the Praetorian Prefect, Philip. The *SKZ* reported that Gordian III marched against the Persian Empire and that a great battle took place at Meshike on the lower Euphrates where Gordian was killed and the Roman army annihilated.[114] The Naqsh-i Rustam relief carvings depicting the dead Gordian being trampled beneath Shapur I's horse vividly illustrated the Persian claim.[115] In the inscription Meshike was refounded by Shapur as Pirisabora (modern Anbar).

While the defeat of Gordian's army was not mentioned in the Roman and Byzantine texts there were numerous reports regarding his death, but they are difficult to reconcile.[116] The death of Gordian is generally attributed to Philip rather than Shapur. According to *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*, on leading his forces against Persia, Gordian commanded the Roman force against the Persians before being killed in battle near the Euphrates as a result of treachery.[117] Philip is probably the companion referred to in the oracle who was in some way responsible for arranging the betrayal or deliberate exposure of the emperor to danger while he was in the front line.[118] The genre of *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* relied on stories that were well known in order for oblique references to be easily recognized as evidence of faithful predictions. By its nature it was not able to provide intricate detail. Zosimus claimed that 'Gordian fought against the Persians and lost his life in the midst of the enemy's country'.[119] This may suggest that Gordian died at the hands of the Persian king or his forces, but it is a vague reference and no mention is made of a serious defeat of the Roman army as claimed by the *SKZ*.

In an interesting eyewitness account, Ammianus Marcellinus saw the tomb of Gordian III at a location called Zaitha while marching with the army of the emperor Julian in 363.[120] Julian's army marched from the fortress of Circesium at the confluence of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers

and was on its way to the deserted town of Dura Europos when it came to Gordian III's tomb. The tomb was apparently large as it was visible from a long way off.[121] Ammianus did not mention when and where Gordian died, but other texts claimed that Gordian returned from Persia after a successful campaign and that he was murdered at the instigation of Philip.[122] Of these texts there were those that reported that Gordian had first successfully prosecuted the war in Persia before being murdered by Philip just as he was about to arrive back in Roman territory.[123] This would account for the presence of his tomb at Zaitha. Ammianus claimed elsewhere that Gordian had won a major victory over the Persian king at Rhesaina in northern Mesopotamia before he was murdered by Philip.[124]

There were at least some Roman and Byzantine sources that agreed with the *SKZ*'s assertion that Gordian died in Persia, but the nature of his death was the centre of the controversy. The Roman and Byzantine accounts were suspicious regarding Philip's actions, but were not able to be specific – perhaps because Philip succeeded in controlling information to the point where his treachery was suspected but could not be proved. The Graeco-Roman tradition sought an explanation that did not involve Gordian's death at the hands of the enemy and instead laid the blame on Philip, the main beneficiary of Gordian's demise.[125] The burial of Gordian III on the edges of the empire and the deliberate creation of uncertain accounts of his death may have served to deflect questions regarding Philip's negotiations with the Persian king. This was important in establishing his own legitimacy on returning to Antioch and Rome. Shapur, on the other hand, had his own agenda and exploited the events to maximum rhetorical effect.

The wars between Rome and Persia after Gordian III

Much of the written evidence for events after the death of Gordian III comes from the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, the *SKZ* inscription and the Armenian historians. For the reigns of Philip, Decius and Trebonianus Gallus we do not have the *HA*, and its treatment of parts of the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus is not extant. Zosimus provides some information, which he probably derived from the fourth-century writer Eunapius.

The details of the Sasanian invasions of the 250s, which began with an attack directed along the Euphrates river, are known mostly from the *SKZ*. It referred to individual battles and the names of larger fortifications that were captured during the invasions. The archaeological record and the papyri show that there were numerous smaller fortifications and villages along the Euphrates and Khabur rivers that were located in the vicinity of the larger fortresses. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, this material indicates extensive links between larger and smaller fortifications on the Euphrates and Khabur in the first half of the third century and it shows that the Roman military presence was widespread in this area at that time. Fortifi-

cations were present at regular intervals but were generally too small to act effectively in a defensive capacity. They played defensive roles on occasion, but there were other roles that were more regular and important. The extensive nature of the Sasanian invasion along the Euphrates and into Syria was a new development for the Romans, and the fortifications as they existed were powerless to stop them.

The wars of Shapur I are often divided into three distinct campaigns due to the evidence of the *SKZ*. In line 18 of the Greek version of the inscription, Shapur referred to his conquest of Roman territory and cities in Mesopotamia, northern Syria and Cappadocia in 259/260 as 'the third contest' (τῇ δὲ τρίτῃ ἀγωγῇ). The first was what Shapur claimed to be the defence of Persia when Gordian III invaded in 243/244; the second was Shapur's campaign mostly through Syria that began on the lower Euphrates in 252/253. This campaign is often referred to as Shapur's first Syrian campaign and as his second campaign against the Romans.

As the devastation the Persian forces inflicted on the eastern Roman provinces in the 250s is known mostly from a Persian source (the *SKZ*) and a local Syrian one (*Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*), its impact perhaps appears even starker as little survives of the Graeco-Roman tradition to provide alternative versions or traditions. There is detailed archaeological evidence of the Sasanian siege of Dura Europos *c.*256/257, which provides an indication of the Sasanian ability to conduct siege warfare and the grim realities of its affects on local populations. There is also archaeological evidence from sites on the Euphrates and in Mesopotamia providing some indication of developments in Roman military policy in the lead-up to the campaigns of Shapur dating back to the early Severan period. The archive of military papyri from Dura Europos provides considerable information on the location of soldiers from the main element of its garrison over a wide area of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers from the 220s to the 240s. The Dura papyri also show the administrative role played by Dura in the third century and how this drew on a tradition identifiable in the Parthian period and the early decades of Roman control of the city. The recently discovered Euphrates papyri provide some indication of administrative organization on the Khabur river from the last years of Severus Alexander's reign to the eve of Shapur's first Syrian campaign. This material was covered in detail in Chapter 3.

The treaty between Shapur I and Philip

Following Gordian III's death in Persia, his Praetorian Prefect, Philip, was hailed emperor and forced to pay a large ransom to allow his return to Roman territory with what remained of the army. The *SKZ* inscription states that Philip approached Shapur to sue for peace, agreed to pay a ransom of 500,000 denarii and would pay tribute to the Persians.[126] On

Philip's return from Persia, the Antioch mint issued coins with legends including *Pax Fundata cum Persis*, but the treaty was not received well and Philip soon broke the peace.[127] Philip left his brother Julius Priscus in charge of the Syrian army before departing for Rome.[128] The nature of the treaty and its terms has long been the subject of debate regarding its financial arrangements and any territorial concessions that Philip might have made.[129]

Financial aspects of the treaty

The only terms of the treaty that the *SKZ* referred to were financial arrangements requiring the Romans to pay a ransom and ongoing tribute. While the payment of the ransom is described in all three languages in the *SKZ* as 500,000 denarii it is now generally accepted that this was a reference to gold denarii (*aurei*) or possibly Sasanian Persian gold dinars.[130] Sprengling proposed that the payment of the ransom was partly to redeem Roman soldiers who had been taken prisoner by the Persians, as well as the remaining army now under Philip's command.[131] The tribute was probably never paid as Philip appears to have broken the peace treaty soon after his return to Roman territory.

Figure 5.6 Relief at Naqsh-i Rustam of Shapur I on horseback with the Emperor Philip pleading for mercy and Valerian in captivity. Photo: Jeff Tillitzki.

Territorial concessions

Some Roman and Byzantine texts referred to territorial concessions made by Philip as part of the agreement but none reported the payment of a ransom or the requirement to pay tribute as stated in the *SKZ*. Evagrius indicated that Philip gave up the eastern portion of Armenia, later known as Persarmenia, and according to Zonaras he gave up Armenia and Mesopotamia but recaptured them soon after.[132] Zosimus referred to Philip's treaty with Shapur as dishonourable, but he specifically maintained that Philip did not give up any territory.[133] The *SKZ* made no mention of territorial concessions, referring only to a ransom and an obligation to pay tribute. Potter's detailed analysis of the Roman and Byzantine texts, and his consideration of the relevant archaeological and numismatic evidence, provides some sensible analysis of the negotiations between Philip and Shapur regarding the question of territorial arrangements.[134] There are some points, however, that could be addressed further and there are some problems with the sources and evidence relied upon. In short, Potter favours the combined claims of Evagrius and Zonaras who held that Armenia and Mesopotamia were given up by Philip, but concludes that Zosimus' reference should be discounted due to its rhetorical context.

Mesopotamia

The cession of Mesopotamia by Philip would require its capture and re-establishment by Gordian III *c.* 243, as the province had been lost since 237/238 as discussed earlier. It would then need to have been ceded by Philip as part of the agreement in 244 before being recaptured by the Romans by August 245. *P.Euphr. 1*, written in the village of Beth Phouraia on the Khabur river, shows that Julius Priscus was Prefect of Mesopotamia (ἔπαρχος Μεσοποτᾶμίας) on 28 August 245.[135] Archaeological evidence from Roman fortifications at Ain Sinu, east of Singara, and Kifrin, on the lower middle Euphrates, is used by Potter as an indication of the abandonment of both sites at the end of the reign of Gordian III, hence the cession of Mesopotamia. Further to this, an agreement over Armenia by Philip is considered by Potter to be implied in the *SKZ* because it claimed that injustice was later done to Armenia.[136] This was then the pretext for Shapur's first invasion of the eastern Roman provinces in 252/253.

The archaeological evidence used by Potter to support Zonaras' reference to Mesopotamia as part of the arrangement is problematic. This is evident, firstly, in the case of Ain Sinu/Zagurae. The remains of a Roman fort were found at Ain Sinu, approximately 30 km east of Singara. Ain Sinu was briefly excavated by David Oates in the 1960s and the remains of barracks and a *castellum* were identified.[137] The foundation of these

buildings was dated by Oates as early Severan and Ain Sinu's abandonment was dated to the reign of Philip.[138] Ain Sinu was described by Oates as intended for prolonged use and as a staging point or training ground for Roman troops during the Parthian wars of Septimius Severus.[139] Potter maintains that this fortification was permanently destroyed around the time of the reigns of Severus Alexander and Maximinus (*c.* 235–238), but the excavators were far from definitive in their conclusions.[140] Oates dated the abandonment of the site by the Romans to the reign of Severus Alexander because the last coins found at the site dated to his reign.[141] To fit the numismatic evidence into the known historical framework, Oates argued that Ain Sinu probably fell in Ardashir's attack on Mesopotamia in 237/238, was briefly regained by Gordian III *c.* 243, only to be surrendered once more by Philip in 244.[142]

The excavations at Ain Sinu were very limited and the discoveries of coins were mostly surface finds.[143] Numismatic evidence rarely reflects the subtleties suggested by Oates, and the limited nature of the excavations makes the dating of the site's abandonment very difficult when using numismatic evidence as the basis. As a point of comparison, at Dura Europos, where excavation has been much more extensive, all of the latest coins are dated 256/257.[144] They were found buried in hoards or on the bodies of soldiers trapped in mines under a partially collapsed tower. In the two relatively brief excavations of Dura by Cumont in 1922/1923, which preceded the more extensive Yale excavations, the 13 coins found at the site were surface finds with the latest dating to the reign of Philip (244–249).[145] The more extensive excavations produced coins and other datable evidence considerably beyond this date, and more extensive excavations at Ain Sinu may have similar results. Potter thought that the results of the Ain Sinu excavation and that of Kifrin 'should explain Zonaras' mention of the surrender of Mesopotamia' by Philip in 244.[146]

Kifrin, thought to be Becchufrayn of the Dura papyri, was the largest fortification on the Euphrates below Anatha and it is possible that its defences were more extensive than those of Anatha itself.[147] The site lies on the left bank of the Euphrates 20 km downstream from Anatha, approximately 135 km east-south-east of Dura. It lies between the islands of Telbis and Bijan, which have also returned evidence indicating Roman fortification.[148] Kifrin consisted of a town and citadel and appears to have been constructed in the Severan period. The excavation of the site was a salvage operation and the overall conclusions of the Italian excavation team were varied. Invernizzi believes that the fortification was founded by Septimius Severus in connection with his activity against Parthia in the late second century, whereas his colleague, Elizabetta Valtz, holds that Kifrin was founded by Severus Alexander in connection with the colonization of Mesopotamia by Rome during his reign.[149]

The discovery of 40 coins, mostly dating from the reigns of Septimius Severus to Gordian III, is used in a similar way to the material from Ain Sinu to propose a date for Kifrin's occupation and abandonment. The coins include Roman imperial types, together with provincial issues from Antioch and the Mesopotamian cities of Carrhae and Edessa.[150] As at Ain Sinu most of the coins discovered were surface finds, but in the case of Kifrin evidence of artifacts is also used as an indicator of the date of construction.[151] The latest datable coins come from the reign of Gordian III, leading to the conclusion that Kifrin was either abandoned by the Romans or occupied by the Persians during his reign.[152] The suggestion of a Persian occupation, which Invernizzi prefers, is made on the basis of the discovery of a single silver coin from the reign of Ardashir I.[153] In summary, Invernizzi asserts that Kifrin was taken by Ardashir after the withdrawal of Severus Alexander in 233 or by Shapur I following Gordian III's defeat at Meshike in 244.

The proposal that Kifrin fell to the Sasanians during the reign of Severus Alexander was partially developed with evidence from Bijan Island further downstream. The last datable Roman coins found at Bijan were from the reign of Severus Alexander, but it is maintained that both sites probably fell at a similar time due to their proximity to each other.[154] Invernizzi's hypothesis is that Bijan and Kifrin were lost to the Romans as a result of the defeat of Severus Alexander's south-eastern column in Persia in 233 and that only Kifrin was reoccupied by Gordian III as he marched down the Euphrates on his way to Meshike.[155] While the Greek tradition of Severus Alexander's defeat is probably more reliable it is important to bear in mind the distinctly different Latin tradition, which claims a Roman victory. According to Invernizzi, the whole area below Anatha was ceded by Rome following the peace agreement of 244 between Philip and Shapur I.[156] Valtz does not attempt such a detailed conclusion, suggesting only that Kifrin was abandoned in the face of advancing Sasanian troops and that this must have taken place before Shapur I took Dura Europos *c.* 256/257.[157]

The evidence from Kifrin and other sites in its vicinity is as limited and problematic as that at Ain Sinu. Two of its excavators offer markedly different conclusions regarding Kifrin's foundation and when it ceased to operate as a fortification. It is, therefore, very difficult to use such archaeological evidence to support the solitary claim of Zonaras regarding the cession of Mesopotamia under Philip. Ain Sinu was, at least, within the province of Mesopotamia, but Kifrin and other sites on the Euphrates in its vicinity were clearly not in the province.[158] There is also no indication that any territory was lost by Severus Alexander, whichever tradition one chooses to accept. On the contrary, despite losses in the abortive invasion of Persia, the emperor succeeded in removing the Persian threat to Mesopotamia for four years.

In summary, the prevailing scholarly opinion argues for the recapture of Mesopotamia under Gordian III, which is probably indicated by the successful battle of Rhesaina in Mesopotamia in 244, its cession to the Persians under Philip in the same year, and its recapture under Philip by summer 245.[159] The combined evidence from Kifrin and Ain Sinu can only be used to locate their capture by the Sasanians or abandonment by the Romans in the broader period between the Sasanian capture of Mesopotamia in 237/238 and the first Syrian campaign of Shapur I in which Dura was one of the last cities to fall *c.* 256/257. To use such limited archaeological and numismatic evidence to support such intricacies is difficult. The argument as to whether Mesopotamia was ceded to Persia ultimately hinges on the acceptance of Zonaras and the rejection of Zosimus. The *SKZ*'s lack of any reference to Mesopotamia's cession under Philip when it carefully listed the capture of cities and territories in the 250s is surely enough to question the claim of a twelfth-century chronicler.

Armenia

The *SKZ* made no direct reference to concessions of control or influence in Armenia by Philip. As with Mesopotamia, we might expect any cession of Roman control in Armenia as a result of an agreement with Philip to have been mentioned in this inscription.[160] A reference in line nine of the inscription is used to argue that Armenia was part of the agreement between Philip and Shapur:

> καὶ ὁ Κ[αῖ]σαρ πάλιν ἐψεύσατο καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἀρμενίαν ἀδικίαν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ ἔθνος τῶν Ῥωμαίων ὡρμήσαμεν καὶ δύναμιν Ῥωμαίων ἑξήκοντα χειλιάδας ἐν Βαρβαρισσῷ ἀνίλαμεν.

> And the Caesar lied again and did injustice to Armenia. We marched against the Roman Empire and annihilated a Roman army of 60,000 men at Barbalissos.

While the *SKZ* did not directly identify who the Caesar was it has been generally accepted that it is a reference to Philip. According to Potter, the injustice was that the Caesar intervened in the affairs of Armenia contrary to a clause of the agreement Philip made with Shapur, which included the ransom of the Roman army from Persia.[161] Potter proposes that the clause was an agreement by Philip not to help the king of Armenia against Shapur. Philip's intervention in Armenia is then held by Potter to be a specific pretext for Shapur's campaign. This is an agreement that is clearly too subtle to extract from the *SKZ* and there are other arguments that provide a possible explanation for Shapur's reference to Armenia as the pretext.

Zonaras stated that Philip broke his agreement with Shapur by recovering Armenia and Mesopotamia shortly after his return from Persia in 244.[162] If the breaking of a clause about Armenia was the reason for Shapur's campaign it is difficult to explain the considerable delay of eight to nine years before it got under way. If the Caesar is meant to be Philip the injustice would need to have been done by 249, but the campaign did not get underway until 252/253. The Persian reference to the Caesar lying again and doing injustice to Armenia is possibly no more than a general reference to Rome's ongoing involvement in Armenian affairs. The *SKZ* presented what Shapur claimed to have achieved over a period of more than 15 years and through three separate campaigns against the Romans. During this period and earlier, any Roman involvement in Armenia would be presented rhetorically by Shapur as an injustice. One of the first actions of Ardashir following the overthrow of Artabanus V was to attempt to remove the Arsacids from Armenia, where the kingdom quickly became a haven for surviving members of the Parthian royal family. We saw earlier that Armenia became a centre of Parthian resistance following the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians. It quickly became a target for Ardashir and a number of times he attempted to remove the Arsacid family and install his own nominee. Roman support for the Arsacid royal family in Armenia made Ardashir's attempts to take control of the kingdom more difficult and it was probably one of the reasons for Ardashir's attack on Roman Mesopotamia in 230. The Roman involvement and presence in Armenia also represented a physical threat to Adiabene and Media, which was demonstrated in the campaign of Severus Alexander in 232/233. This was a feature of Persian and Roman activity in Armenia for the next 150 years.

The evidence of the Armenian historians shows that Roman involvement in Armenia was also the result of Armenian appeals to Rome for assistance against the Persians. Moses Khorenats'i claimed that Khosrov, the Armenian king, requested assistance from Philip.[163] Agathangelos stated that Tiridates, one of Khosrov's surviving sons, was taken to the Roman emperor's court following a Persian attempt to take control of Armenia in which most of the Arsacid Armenian royal family was killed.[164] These events may have taken place during Philip's reign, but there are some serious chronological flaws in these accounts. While the chronological problems of the Armenian sources make the dating of these events difficult to establish, they form part of the overall evidence for the Romans being called on by Armenia to provide assistance in various ways. While Persian and Roman diplomacy regarding Armenia was crucial to the government of Armenia, the kingdom's ability to maintain a level of formal independence demonstrated its ability to play off the Persian and Roman Empires against each other.

Other sources indicate that conflict between Rome and Persia in Armenia occurred at numerous times during Philip's reign.[165] It appears

that conflict resumed soon after his return with the army from Persia. *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* indicates this in 245/246 and again at a time not long before Philip's death.[166] Significantly, the oracle implies that the Persians were responsible for renewed conflict with Rome. The relevant lines are as follows:

> Then straight away will rule a lover of purple and a warrior, appearing from Syria, the dread of Ares, together with Caesar his son, and he will pacify the entire earth: one name will attach to both of them: upon the first and twentieth five hundreds will be placed. When they will rule in wars and become lawgivers, there will briefly be an end to war, not for long: when the wolf shall swear oaths to the dogs of gleaming teeth against the flock he will ravage, harming the wool-fleeced sheep, and he will break the oaths and then there will be the lawless strife of arrogant kings, in wars the Syrians will perish terribly, Indians, Armenians, Arabs, Persians, and Babylonians will ruin each other in mighty battles.[167]

The warrior and Caesar are identified by Potter as Philip and his son, and the brief end to war was the result of the agreement between Philip and Shapur.[168] As Philip's son was Augustus by the middle of 247, this passage is thought to have been written before that date as he was still referred to as Caesar. The wolf is identified by Potter as Persia and the dogs of gleaming teeth as Rome.[169] On Potter's analysis, the evidence of the oracle implies that Shapur was responsible for the renewal of conflict rather than Roman activity in Armenia, but the oracle is not specific on the detail of Persia's breaking of oaths. The reference to the breaking of oaths was simply an indication that peace no longer existed between Rome and Persia and that Persia was responsible.

The *History of the Armenians* by Moses Khorenats'i contains numerous chronological errors, but it indicates the extent to which competition between Rome and Persia over Armenia was ongoing from the time of the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians until Philip's reign and beyond.[170] According to Moses, the Armenian king Khosrov requested assistance from Philip who wrote a letter commanding some of his forces in the East to assist the Armenians. The chronological errors contained in Moses' history are serious and include the identification of the Persian king as Ardashir and the Armenian king as Khosrov who were both dead by the reign of Philip; this led Potter to reject his evidence completely.[171] While the report is vague and somewhat confused, it is at least reflective of Rome's ongoing intervention in Armenia and the continuing unrest in the kingdom during the reigns of both Ardashir and Shapur.

The ongoing Persian attempt to take control in Armenia by establishing its own nominee on the throne indicates the importance that the Sasanians

attached to this venture. Agathangelos reported events in Armenia from the same period. His account appears to be more chronologically accurate, but specific evidence is difficult to ascertain from this text. Agathangelos explained the initial response of Khosrov to the overthrow of the Parthians by the Sasanians and claimed that after two separate years of mounting campaigns against Sasanian Persia similar activity continued for another ten years.[172] After this period of time, Agathangelos reported that a Parthian noble named Anak was sent to Armenia by Shapur under the pretence of wishing to defect to Armenia and to assist with the resistance against the Sasanians.[173] When Anak reached Armenia he was received favourably by Khosrov, but in collusion with his brother Anak eventually killed Khosrov. A faction of Armenian princes loyal to Khosrov captured Anak and his brother and they were killed. Shapur took advantage of the death of Khosrov and made incursions into Armenia, at which time it appears that most of the Armenian royal family was killed. One of Khosrov's infant sons, Tiridates, escaped to Roman territory before Shapur attacked the Roman army and drove it 'all the way to the shores of Greece'. Moses Khorenats'i also reported the escape of one of the Armenian king's sons to the Romans, naming Caesarea in Cappadocia as his destination.[174] With chronological confusion, Moses Khorenats'i placed these events very soon after Ardashir overthrew Artabanus V, but named Philip as the Roman emperor at the time. Despite their chronological inaccuracies, the similarity of some of the details reported by both authors suggests that their accounts were based on the same events.

Shapur needed no justification for the war he conducted against Gordian III and he promoted it as a defensive one despite the fact that Gordian was responding to the Persian capture of Mesopotamia. Shapur's justification for the offensive war conducted against the Roman Empire in 252/253 was the ongoing Roman influence and destabilization of Persian activity in Armenia both prior to and after Philip's reign. Shapur's rhetoric held Rome responsible for the beginning of conflict, but *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* suggests that the Persians were responsible for the renewal of hostilities soon after Philip's return from Persia. If this was the case, the assertion that Shapur I invaded Syria in 252/253 as a result of Roman violations of specific agreements over Armenia made eight to nine years earlier is difficult to accept.

Events preceding the Syrian invasion of Shapur I

The reign of Decius

The first Syrian invasion by Shapur, or his second campaign against the Roman Empire, was directed substantially along the Euphrates and demonstrates more clearly than at any other time how the Euphrates was

an efficient transport route but was not particularly useful from a defensive perspective. The Roman inability to put a halt to Shapur's invasion, of which the object was the rich cities of Syria, demonstrated both the empire's lack of defensive preparedness for such an invasion and the overwhelming nature of the invasion itself. The magnitude of this invasion had never been experienced by the Romans before. Despite the internal difficulties that the Romans were experiencing at this time, which probably contributed to their difficulties in initially responding to the invasion, they were able to muster two large forces to meet the Sasanians within approximately seven years of each other.

The end of Philip's reign began with the rebellion of Decius in April/May 249.[175] Philip and his son were defeated by Decius in September/October 249 at Verona.[176] Relations between Rome and Persia are unknown for most of the short reign of Decius, and the event for which Decius' reign was best known to later writers was his edict issued in the latter part of 249 ordering all of his subjects to sacrifice.[177] This has obviously obscured discussion of other events during his reign, particularly in texts of the fourth century and later. The varying levels of conflict and dispute regarding Armenia and Mesopotamia, which appear to have been a feature of Philip's reign, probably continued throughout the reign of Decius and right up to the time of Shapur's first invasion of Syria.

Mariades

Towards the end of Decius' reign there is some evidence that reflects ongoing tension between Rome and Persia and its internal ramifications for Rome. This came in the form of the activity of Mariades at Antioch and his flight to the court of Shapur I in Persia. The story is recorded in the *Historia Augusta*, *Malalas, the Anonymous Continuator of Cassius Dio* and *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*. In the *Historia Augusta*, Mariades is referred to as Kyriades, which was probably a Hellenized form of Mariades.[178] While the individual referred to in *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* is not named as Mariades, his actions are similar to those reported in other sources that do name him.[179] The dating of Mariades' activity at Antioch and his subsequent flight to Persia relies mostly on the reference in *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*. It is placed between clear references to the elevation of Decius in September/October 249 and his death in battle in Moesia in late May/early June 251.[180] The oracle referred to Mariades as follows:

> Then a crafty and deceitful man will come, a brigand appearing from Syria, an obscure Roman, and he will move treacherously against the race of Cappadocian men and, insatiable of war, besiege and beset them; then for you, Tyana and Mazaka, there

will be capture and thus you will be enslaved and will place your neck under the yoke; and Syria will mourn for dead men and Selene will not save the holy city. When the swift-moving man flees from Syria through Soura, escaping the Romans across the flood of the Euphrates, no longer like to the Romans, but to the arrogant arrow-shooting Persians, then the king of the Italians will fall in battle, smitten by gleaming iron, in a state of disarray; and his sons will be destroyed with him.[181]

The lead-up to Mariades' flight to Persia was referred to by a number of later writers.[182] These texts discussed the initial upheaval associated with the actions of Mariades and claimed that the problems became intractable when, as a member of the city council (*boule*) he was accused of embezzling funds advanced to him for the organization of chariot races.[183] Mariades' expulsion from the *boule* was probably the culmination of a period in which hard factional politics had been played at Antioch, with Mariades emerging as a factional leader in this process. The accusation of embezzlement may have been trumped up in an effort to remove him. *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* indicates, however, that Mariades was involved in substantially more than the embezzlement of public funds and that he became a figure around which a rebellion developed.[184] Eventually his position became untenable and he fled to Persia.

Mariades is linked by all of the relevant texts to Shapur's later capture of Antioch.[185] Following his flight to Persia and the court of Shapur I it was claimed that Mariades offered assistance in invading Roman Syria and capturing Antioch.[186] The *HA* accused Mariades of robbing his respected father of large sums of silver and gold before fleeing to Persia.[187] According to the *HA*, Mariades actively encouraged Shapur to attack Roman territory, the ultimate goal being the capture of Antioch. In the same passage the *HA* claimed that following Shapur's successful capture of Antioch, Mariades was hailed as Augustus soon after the accession of Valerian, which clearly indicates a chronological error. Barnes states that 'much of the *Tyranni Triginta* (of the *HA*) must be disallowed as sheer fiction', but other sources confirm the general nature of the *HA*'s account regarding Mariades' flight to Persia and his return with Shapur when the latter attacked the city.[188] The *Anonymous Continuator of Cassius Dio* confirmed that Mariades was with Shapur at the time that the attack on Antioch took place.[189] According to this writer, when the citizens of Antioch received news that Shapur and Mariades were encamped at a distance of 20 stades (approximately 4 km) outside the city, a number of them fled.[190] Many remained, however, as they were supportive of Mariades.

Mariades was clearly a figure who took advantage of the disagreements between Rome and Persia at this time. The date of his flight to

Figure 5.7 The plains of Antioch from Mt Silpius with the rear wall of the citadel in the foreground.

Persia seems to have been some time in the first half of 251, based on the chronology of the reference to him in *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*. Mariades took advantage of the instability to gain Persian support and re-establish himself at Antioch in a more powerful position. His flight to the Persian court and favourable reception by Shapur is, therefore, an indication of ongoing tension between Rome and Persia at this time.

The first Persian invasion of Syria

Dating the beginning of the invasion

Estimates of the date of Shapur's first Syrian invasion are mostly based on evidence relating to the fall of Antioch. The *SKZ* lists the cities captured by Shapur in this campaign, and they run from Anatha on the middle Euphrates to Antioch on the Orontes in a generally traceable order. Those cities listed as being captured after Antioch do not appear in an order that is easy to establish and it is probable that the campaign was actually a series of attacks over a number of years. The first of these was an assault directed up the Euphrates, culminating in the capture of Antioch and continuing with a series of smaller attacks on cities and regions in the vicinity of Antioch. Some more concentrated attacks on

certain sections of Syria and Cappadocia then took place in the following three to four years.

An important source for dating the capture of Antioch and the beginning of the invasion is Zosimus. He claimed that at the same time as other events in the reign of Trebonianus Gallus, the Persians invaded Mesopotamia and Asia and advanced as far as Antioch.[191] The reign of Trebonianus Gallus began in June 251, following the death of Decius in Moesia, and continued until July/August 253. Using Zosimus alone, however, it is not possible to be more precise regarding the time-frame of the Persian invasion.

Numismatic evidence from Antioch was exploited by Alföldi to reach a more precise date for the invasion.[192] Alföldi identified a break in the coinage of Trebonianus Gallus from Antioch and concluded that no coins were minted there at all in the name of Aemilius Aemilianus (reigned c. August–October 253) or for Valerian in his first year.[193] This interruption to the coinage was interpreted by Alföldi as an indication of the Persian capture of Antioch. As the break in the coinage could be identified in the reign of Gallus, through the brief reign of Aemilianus and into the reign of Valerian, a date of 253 for the capture of Antioch and the beginning of the campaign was seen as more likely. Baldus challenges Alföldi's suggestion regarding the break in the Antiochene coinage claiming instead that it was the result of a reorganization of the Antioch mint identifiable as early as 245/246.[194] On this analysis, the numismatic evidence may not be very relevant to dating the invasion.

More recently, a date of 252 for the invasion has been preferred by a number of scholars. Potter prefers the date of 252 for the beginning of the invasion on the basis of other textual evidence that was not considered by the numismatists.[195] The *Chronicle of Se'ert* placed Shapur's invasion in his eleventh regnal year and Tabari claimed that a Sasanian siege of Nisibis took place in Shapur's eleventh year.[196] Potter claims that the eleventh regnal year of Shapur was now known to be 252, but there is still some debate as to when Shapur's reign officially began. Potter admits that there are chronological flaws in the *Chronicle of Se'ert* as it claimed that Shapur remained in Syria following the first invasion and then captured Valerian. The capture of Valerian clearly belongs to Shapur's third campaign, which took place approximately eight years later. The *Chronicle of Se'ert*, therefore, demonstrates chronological flaws making it difficult to use as evidence for the exact year of Shapur's invasion. Tabari's description of a capture of Nisibis in 252 is reflected nowhere else in the literature or in the *SKZ* and seems not to fit with Shapur's strategy.[197] Potter also cites the *Liber Caliphorum*, an eighth-century Syriac account, which specifically places Shapur's invasion in the 563rd Seleucid year (October 251 to September 252). There is also some archaeological evidence from Apamea, and possibly Dura Europos, that points to a date of

252 for the campaign.[198] The date of the beginning of the first Persian invasion of Syria is ultimately a matter for debate and without the discovery of new evidence will continue. Potter's preference for a date of 252 is perhaps the most attractive, but much of the textual evidence on which it is based is chronologically flawed meaning that a date of 253 cannot be ruled out.

The evidence of the SKZ – the capture of Anatha, Birtha Arupan and Birtha Asporakos

While ongoing Roman interference in Armenia was used to justify the invasion in the *SKZ*, the attack actually began on the lower Euphrates with the capture of Anatha. The Greek version of the inscription refers first to the defeat of a Roman army numbering 60,000 men at Barbalissos[199] on the Euphrates before listing the individual cities captured as a part of the campaign in Syria and Cappadocia:

> (10) The nation of Syria and whatever nations and plains that were above it, we set on fire and devastated and laid waste. And in that campaign <we took> (the following) fortresses and cities from the nation of the Romans: (11) the city of Anatha with its surrounding territory,[200] Birtha Asporakos, Sura, Barbalissos, Hierapolis, (12) Beroea, Chalcis, Apamea, Rephanea, Zeugma, Ourima, (13) Gindaros, Larmenaza, Seleucia, Antioch, Cyrrhus, (14) another Seleucia, Alexandria (Alexandretta), Nikopolis, Sinzara (Larissa), Chamath (Epiphania), (15) Aristia (Arethusa), Dichor, Doliche, Doura, Circesium, Germanicia, (16) Batna, Chanar and in Cappadocia, Satala, Domana, (17) Artangil, Souisa, Suid, Phreata, a total of thirty-seven cities with their surrounding territories.

The movement of the Persian forces up the Euphrates to Antioch following the capture of Anatha has been described and debated ever since the discovery of the *SKZ* in the 1930s. Emphasis has been placed on the order in which the cities appear in the inscription and how this indicates the route taken by the Persian army as it marched through Syria. Considerable work has been done on reconstructing the invasion route and identifying the sites captured.[201]

Anatha was an island fortress belonging to the Persians at the time of Julian's invasion in 363 but little is known of its significance as a Roman fortification in the mid-third century. It may have been controlled by Palmyra from as early as the first century AD before becoming part of the complex system of fortifications on the Euphrates under Septimius Severus. The Greek version of the inscription lists Birtha Asporakos as the next city

Figure 5.8 The Euphrates and east wall of the fortress of Birtha Asporakos/ Zenobia.

captured, but in the Parthian version of the *SKZ* there are two fortifications known as Birtha (BYRT) listed after Anatha. These are BYRT 'RWPN (Birtha Arupan) and BYRT 'SPWRKN (Birtha Asporakos), the latter clearly the same location as that listed in the Greek version. Birtha derives from the Aramaic BYRT' meaning 'fortress'.[202] The various attempts made to identify the modern locations of these fortifications are discussed in Chapter 3.

The capture of Sura, followed by Barbalissos and the defeat of the Roman army there, opened up northern and southern Syria to the Persians and they succeeded in capturing many important Roman cities. The Persian army appears to have split into at least two divisions on the basis of the order in which cities were listed in the *SKZ* after Barbalissos. One ventured north while the other went south. The northern army captured Hierapolis and moved on to capture Zeugma, Ourima, Gindaros and Larmenaz while the unit that moved south captured Beroea, Chalcis, Apamea and Rephanea.[203] In this section of the inscription the order in which the Roman cities were listed does not follow precisely the order in which it might be expected that the cities were captured.[204] With one force heading north and the other south it might be expected that the cities from Hierapolis to Larmenaz would be listed in order, but Hierapolis appears on its own before the capture of the four southern cities from Beroea to

Figure 5.9 The *cardo maximus* at Apamea in Syria, one of the many cities captured by the Persians in the first Syrian campaign.

Rephanea. The four southern cities do appear in an order we would expect, but the order of the appearance of Cyrrhus on the inscription also falls outside an expected order as it is listed after Antioch on the Orontes.[205] We might expect that the northern division of the Persian army that captured Hierapolis, Zeugma, Ourima, Gindaros and Larmenaz would have taken Cyrrhus before advancing to Antioch as Cyrrhus lay close to the road from Zeugma to Antioch. Potter suggests that Cyrrhus' isolation in the *SKZ* could be explained by a column being detailed to besiege the city while the rest of the force made its way to Antioch.[206] It is important to bear in mind that the order in which the cities fell to the Persians need not have been strictly adhered to in every minute detail when the inscription was set up over a decade later. The *SKZ* was primarily a document for public consumption in Iran, and publishing the precise order in which the cities of the Roman East were captured was not necessarily Shapur's highest priority. Some cities would have fallen quickly while others probably held out for longer, possibly enduring sieges for some time. This probably had implications for the order in which cities were listed.[207]

Figure 5.10 A third century AD bridge on the road to Cyrrhus (above), and the partially reconstructed theatre at Cyrrhus (below), close to the modern border between Syria and Turkey.

Figure 5.11 The Ataturk dam near the ancient bridge crossing at Zeugma. Zeugma now lies largely underwater due to flooding of the dam. Photo: Ross Burns.

The Persian capture of Antioch

Following the division of the Persian army after Barbalissos and the subsequent capture of cities to the north and south, the attack on Antioch took place and its submission appears to have been one of Shapur's main aims. Older scholarship held that Antioch fell twice to the Persians – once in the first Syrian campaign and again in the campaign in which Valerian was captured.[208] It is now thought that the Antioch listed in the 'third contest' was a different Antioch.[209] For a successful siege of Antioch both the southern and northern divisions of the army would have been required.[210] The Persian capture of cities after Barbalissos eliminated their ability to support Antioch, and the defeat of the Roman army at Barbalissos must have had significant implications for the defence of Antioch. It is proposed that the columns that had captured cities to the north and south after Barbalissos met at the intersection of the roads from Apamea, Chalcis and Zeugma to the north-east of Antioch.[211] The knowledge of Mariades and the support he still appears to have enjoyed at Antioch would also have been useful to Shapur at this point.[212]
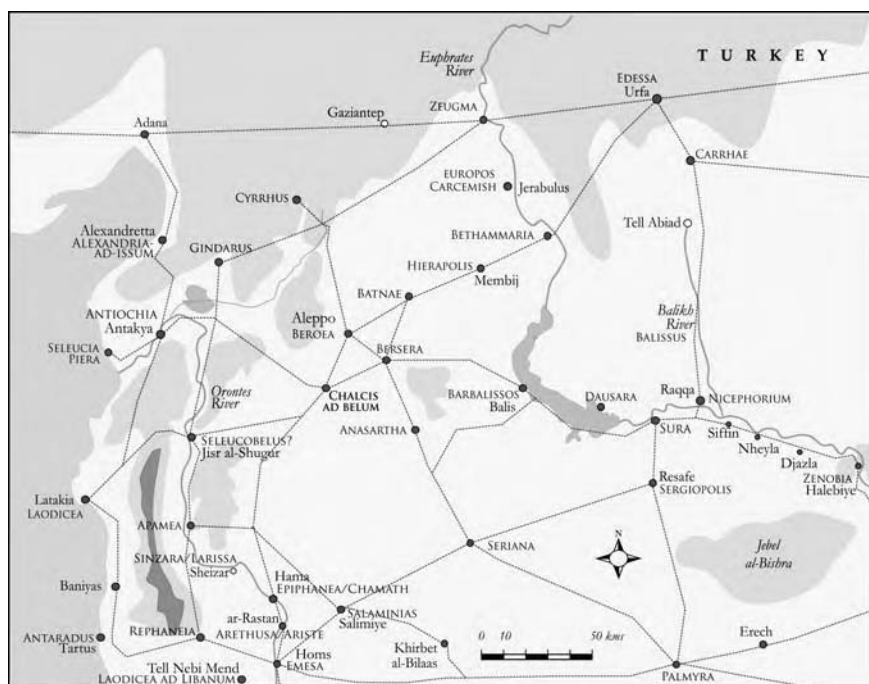
Map 5.1 Western Syria in the third century AD showing, among other things, sites captured by Shapur I in the first Syrian campaign (Ross Burns).

The Persian capture of Antioch in 252/253 is the most significant event to have survived in the Graeco-Roman literary tradition on the Persian attacks of the 250s, apart from the capture of Valerian. The details are patchy, and it requires some imagination to reconstruct the events in chronological order, but it is possible to hypothesize on the basis of the scraps of remaining evidence. The aspects of the attack of which we know most are preserved in the writings of later residents of Antioch who had an intimate knowledge of the city and its history.

In the best-known story to emerge from the capture of Antioch, Ammianus Marcellinus, Libanius and Eunapius of Sardis referred to the surprise of theatregoers when Persian archers appeared on the hilltops and began firing arrows into the crowd.[213] This evidence is dismissed by Potter as 'useless' and 'inconceivable' as the citizens of Antioch would have had ample warning of the Persian approach.[214] The dismissal of such evidence as useless assumes much in the context of the complex sequence of events leading up to the siege of Antioch. It is true that the extent of the attacks on nearby cities and fortifications, together with Persian preparations for the attack on Antioch, including the encampment of the army only 20 stades away, would have provided the citizens of Antioch with ample

Figure 5.12 The imposing cliffs behind Antioch which rise to Mt Silpius.

warning.[215] The *Anonymous Continuator of Cassius Dio* stated, however, that a sizeable proportion of the population of Antioch was well disposed to Mariades and that they had not fled the city in the face of the Persian attack as they welcomed the overthrow of the Antiochene *boule*.[216] It is conceivable that many of the citizens who stayed believed in vain that they would be spared due to their support for Mariades prior to his flight to Persia. It is also worth noting that Malalas claimed that Antioch was captured in the evening, which may explain how the citizens were caught by a surprise attack while attending the theatre.[217] The heights around Antioch are extensive and the ancient city was located directly beneath them. One of the theatres at ancient Antioch was located directly below Mount Silpius and could have been attacked easily by archers shooting from the steep cliffs above.[218]

Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire and the most important city in the Roman Near East. It was naturally a very well defended city as it was surrounded by steep mountains that could only be crossed by way of narrow passes. The defences of Antioch were significant in the third century as the Persian army used a large battering ram in the process of capturing it.[219] For the residents of the city, leaving Antioch at this time was potentially more dangerous than staying. It has long been thought that Seleucia Pieria, the sea port of Antioch, was listed in the *SKZ* before Antioch, indicating that it was captured first so as to cut off the

Figure 5.13 Remains of what were the harbour-front walls at Seleucia-Pieria in antiquity. The modern shoreline now lies approximately 500 metres further west.

escape route to the sea from Antioch.[220] The identification of Seleucia is now challenged by Potter who prefers the identification of Seleucia with Seleucobelos on the road from Apamea to Antioch.[221] He believes that the Seleucia listed after Antioch and Cyrrhus was Seleucia Pieria so on this interpretation it is possible that some sought to escape by sea through Seleucia. While the Antiochenes had undoubtedly received warning of the approaching Persian army some probably believed that Mariades would protect them, with others perhaps taking comfort in the inaccessible nature of the city and its strong defences.[222] Prior to Antioch's capture by the Persians it was virtually inconceivable that the city could fall as no serious threat to its security appears to have emerged at any stage in more than 300 years of Roman control.

Other surviving traces of the events surrounding Antioch's capture allow further analysis of this important event. According to the *Anonymous Continuator of Cassius Dio*, Shapur and Mariades camped approximately 4 km from the city.[223] Some citizens fled, but others who were supporters of Mariades stayed and stirred up rebellion and thus assisted Shapur in his capture of the city.[224] Antioch was attacked initially in the evening by Persian archers and the next day by troops who had advanced along the road from Chalcis where the two army divisions had reunited, as discussed above.[225] It was in this assault that the walls were probably

Figure 5.14 Mt Casius' summit from the south-east. Mt Casius is the dominant geographical feature in the vicinity of Seleucia-Pieria.

attacked using the battering ram referred to by Ammianus. *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* predicted that Antioch would be completely devastated and that it would be the prize of war.[226] Malalas and Libanius stated that the city was set on fire, but Libanius noted that the Temple of Apollo at Daphne was spared.[227] In another oration, Libanius declared that Antioch was so devastated by the attack of Shapur I that in the fourth century the city no longer had any noble buildings.[228] This claim, and that of the oracle, were clearly rhetorical; however, the damage to the city must have been significant. Mariades had been useful to the Persians to this point.[229] His knowledge of the region, particularly the environs of Antioch, would have been of assistance. Whatever remained of his support base at Antioch probably assisted in reducing resistance, but with the capture of Antioch the usefulness of Mariades to the Persians was at an end. Shapur seems not to have conceived that he owed Mariades anything and he was killed soon after.[230]

Persian military activity following the capture of Antioch

Following the capture of Antioch it is proposed that the Persian army split up again and made a series of raids directed at a number of cities.[231] The

Figure 5.15 The modern city and harbour of Alexandretta (Alexandria ad-Issum).

cities as they appear in the *SKZ* following the capture of Antioch are as follows:

> Cyrrhus, Seleucia, Alexandretta, Nicopolis, Sinzara, Chamath, Ariste, Dikhor, Doliche, Doura, Circesium, Germanicia, Batna, Chanar and in Cappadocia, Satala, Domana, Artangil, Souisa and Phreata.[232]

The listing of Cyrrhus after Antioch and the identification of Seleucia as Seleucia Pieria have already been discussed. It appears that one division took the cities of Alexandria ad Issum (Alexandretta) and Nicopolis in Cilicia, while another marched south along the Orontes and captured Sinzara (Larissa), Chamath (Epiphania) and Ariste (Arethusa).[233] Dichor, Doliche and Germanicia to the north-east of Antioch were attacked by another division.

The order of these cities in the *SKZ* is the most problematic section with regard to the reconstruction of the course of Shapur's first Syrian campaign. Following its capture, Antioch seems to have been used as a base from which to launch attacks on the cities not captured before and also from which to organize the Persian withdrawal.[234] The order in which the

Figure 5.16 The port city of Seleucia-Pieria with Mt Casius in the background.

nine cities were listed after Antioch and up to Doliche is somewhat jumbled. Rather than retreat as one large force, the Persian army probably broke up into smaller divisions, some heading north and others heading south before returning to Persia. The cities listed from Cyrrhus to Doliche were probably captured during the withdrawal. They appear in a loose order as they were taken by a divided, retreating army that no longer had the strategic aim of capturing Antioch. Three groups of cities can be identified as being taken in this manner. Alexandretta and Nicopolis are listed in one group. Sinzara, Chamath and Ariste are listed in another, while Dikhor and Doliche appear in another separate group.

Some details of the Persian withdrawal were recorded in the ancient texts and they appear to confirm the suggestion of cities being captured after the withdrawal from Antioch. Zosimus reported that the Persians captured Antioch and returned home without meeting any opposition.[235] Malalas quoted Philostratus as saying that after Shapur had captured Antioch and other cities he launched a separate attack on Cilicia, capturing Alexandretta and Nicopolis as the *SKZ* indicates.[236] Malalas also stated that Rhosus, Anazarbus and Aigai were captured, but these cities are not listed in the *SKZ*. According to Malalas, the Persians returned home via Cappadocia, which was when the cities of Satala, Domana, Artangil, Souisa and Phreata – all listed at the end of the *SKZ*'s list of

cities captured in the first Syrian campaign – were probably captured. The passage of Philostratus quoted by Malalas is important as it is the only confirmation in the Roman sources of the capture of individual cities that were also listed in the *SKZ*. It also indicates that not all of the cities captured by the Persians were necessarily listed in the *SKZ* and that the SKZ need not be interpreted as literally as it sometimes has been.

The order of the list is also problematic with regard to the appearance of Dura and Circesium. As discussed earlier, it is now thought that Dura fell twice – once during the first part of Shapur's campaign up the Euphrates and the second time in 256/257. The later listing of both Dura and Circesium may indicate that there was a separate attack on this section of the middle Euphrates, which the Romans seem to have recaptured after the initial phase of Shapur's invasion. The capture of Germanicia, Batna and Chanar in northern Syria was possibly also the result of a later and separate attack.

It is argued on the basis of *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* that a new and separate Persian invasion following the capture of Antioch and surrounding cities was undertaken and that this saw the defeat of Persian forces at Emesa.[237] The Persian invasion of Syria that saw the capture of Antioch was predicted in lines 119–36 of the oracle. Events in Gaul and Pannonia and the rise and fall of Aemilius Aemilianus, who died in August 253 were covered in lines 137–46.[238] Lines 147–54 then predict:

> Again the world will be no world with men destroyed in plague and war. The Persians will again rush to the moil of Ares raging against the Ausonians. Then there will be a rout of the Romans; but immediately thereafter a priest will come, the last of all, sent from the sun, appearing from Syria, and he will do everything by craft; the city of the sun will arise, and around her the Persians will endure the terrible threats of Phoenicians.[239]

Line 155 makes a clear reference to the joint rule of Valerian and Gallienus, which commenced late in 253. The oracle, therefore, makes a distinction between the Persian campaign, which saw the capture of Antioch under Trebonianus Gallus, and a later campaign, which came after the brief reign of Aemilius Aemilianus and shortly before the beginning of the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus. This would date such a campaign to the last half of 253. The nature of this campaign and its separation from the campaign in which Antioch fell depends on the dating of the fall of Antioch to 252 or 253. If it was the latter, such a campaign would have taken place within a few months of Antioch's capture, but if it was the former it suggests that Antioch was held by the Persians for some time or that they returned in the following year.

Earlier scholarship regarding this reference suggested that the resistance came from Odenathus of Palmyra, but it is now thought that it came from the city of Emesa.[240] Uranius Antoninus has been identified as a usurper based at Emesa at this time on the strength of coins minted in his name at the city in 253/254.[241] A passage of Malalas claims a Persian loss at Emesa following the capture of Antioch and that this was inflicted under the leadership of a priest of Aphrodite named Sampsigeramus.[242] The Sampsigeramids were the old Emesene royal family and it seems that Uranius Antoninus styled himself as a new Sampsigeramid king of Emesa.[243] He took advantage of the weakness of Valerian and Gallienus' position at this point by usurping imperial authority. The Roman emperors Caracalla, Geta, Elagabalus and Severus Alexander, from earlier in the third century, had strong links with Emesa. Caracalla and Geta were the maternal grandsons of Julius Bassianus, the high priest of Elagabal and reputedly a direct descendant of Sampsigeramus, the last king of independent Emesa who died *c.*66 BC.[244] Elagabalus and Severus Alexander were the great-grandsons of Bassianus. The king of Emesa had also been the high priest of the cult of Elagabal at the city. Considerable research has been conducted on the figure of Uranius Antoninus and his leadership of an Emesene resistance to this new Persian invasion.[245] It appears that Uranius Antoninus drew on Emesa's past religious importance and its close links with the Severan dynasty of the early third century in an attempt to establish some form of legitimacy.

A victory over Persian forces by Uranius Antoninus at this time would have afforded him great prestige. *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* predicted that the Persian defeat at Emesa would be preceded by Roman losses and that this would cause some to flee. This campaign may reflect the series of smaller campaigns apparent in the *SKZ*, directed against cities in the vicinity of Antioch following its capture. Sinzara, Chamath and Ariste could have been the cities taken in the lead-up to the failed attack on Emesa.[246] The capture and deportation of populations from the important nearby legionary bases at Apamea and Rephanea during the first phase of the invasions would have made this task more achievable. The leadership that individuals such as Uranius Antoninus and Odenathus of Palmyra provided in challenging the Persian invaders attracted greater hope and confidence from locals than the emperors were able to achieve.[247]

Conclusion

The escalation in conflict on Rome's eastern frontier, which the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians heralded, took some time to be reflected in Graeco-Roman literature as a serious problem for the empire. Roman responses to Sasanian attacks on Mesopotamia took place in the same manner as responses to Parthian challenges in the preceding centuries. Along similar lines to the second-century invasions of Trajan, Lucius Verus

and Septimius Severus, an invasion into the Persian Empire followed a campaign begun to deal with an immediate territorial threat in the East. Gordian III responded to Persian activity in Mesopotamia in the same way that Severus Alexander had, although his defeat at Meshike and his death ended any prospect of an advance further into Persian territory. In the *SKZ* we have the Persian version of the invasion of Gordian III, which provides a different account. According to the *SKZ* the invasion of Gordian III was the beginning of Shapur I's series of glorious victories over the Romans. It is significant that *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*, the only contemporary Graeco-Roman text, which was a provincial Syrian one, did not contradict the *SKZ* on this point. Both *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* and the *SKZ* were written soon after the Persian invasions of the 250s by which time Shapur had much to boast about and local Syrians understood the devastating nature of Sasanian attacks. The *SKZ* was constructed to demonstrate Persian success and *Oracula Sibyllina XIII* was designed to predict the deliverance of Syria from the Persians. At a distance from this, however, fear of the Persians is less of a feature in the Roman source tradition of the fourth century and later where the emphasis remains on internal weakness as the reason for the defeats in the third century.

The agreement between Philip and Shapur I following the death of Gordian III represented the first concession made by the Romans to the Sasanian Persians. Possible territorial concessions in the agreement are the subject of ongoing debate, but it is difficult to use the *SKZ* as evidence for this. It is also difficult to use the archaeological evidence to assist in arguments regarding territorial concessions as it is unable to confirm the intricacies of an agreement as proposed in modern scholarship. Ongoing Roman intervention in Armenia was the pretext Shapur promoted as his justification for a war against the Romans, and this saw serious defeats of Roman armies and the capture of dozens of important cities. These were unprecedented events and the first significant attempt to challenge Roman expansion both along and across the Euphrates since Pompey's establishment of the province of Syria in the middle of the first century BC.

On a close reading of the *SKZ* and other texts it seems that there were a series of campaigns of differing magnitudes, which together comprised the first Syrian campaign beginning in 252/253. The features of the campaign that Shapur was eager to publicize were the victory over the Romans at Barbalissos and the capture of Antioch. The inscription provides no details other than the capture of cities and their surrounding territories, from which we are able to reconstruct the movements of the invading Persian army in some way. The surviving Graeco-Roman literature provides very little detail of the events of this devastating invasion, but there are some valuable references and allusions.

The impact of the Sasanian invasions on the middle Euphrates and lower Khabur rivers can be surmised due to our knowledge of the Roman

garrison at Dura Europos in the first half of the third century. The importance of this city to military and administrative organization on the Euphrates and the Khabur rivers provides a more detailed picture of the likely impact of the invasions of Shapur I than the textual evidence allows. The area over which Dura had an impact militarily was enormous, but the numbers of soldiers at various locations were small. Dura's garrison probably numbered little more than 3,000 men at any stage in the first half of the third century.[248] The files of a component of its garrison, Cohors XX Palmyrenorum, show that many smaller fortifications along the Euphrates in both directions, as well as those on the Khabur, were reliant on soldiers being stationed there from the Dura garrison. Various small fortifications, together with at least two other cohorts on the lower Khabur, demonstrate that there was an obvious Roman military presence on the middle Euphrates and Khabur but that it was too small to provide effective defence in the face of a major invasion. Roman soldiers obviously performed many other duties in the long intervals between conflicts with Persia and were stationed there primarily to perform those duties. There are many examples from the papyri that indicate the importance of the Euphrates and Khabur to agricultural production from the Seleucid to the Roman periods. The regular presence of soldiers for the purposes of law and order and tax collection, together with the presence of the fortifications themselves in this productive area, stamped visible Roman authority on it. The civil documents from Dura indicate the importance of the city as an administrative centre from the Parthian period and the early decades of Roman rule, and this clearly continued in the third century. As an official registry for all types of legal, financial and personal documents it was an important component in the administrative organization of a large area. The invasions, which included Dura's capture and abandonment in 256/257, clearly had a major impact on those living in the Euphrates and Khabur valleys, and in the longer term the middle Euphrates below the Khabur was abandoned by Rome permanently.

CONCLUSION

From the first century BC to the early third century AD, Rome's military presence in the Near East resulted in the formal organization of territory that had previously been under Roman influence. It was not until the middle of the first century AD that a permanent Roman military presence was established on the banks of the Euphrates, by which time the river's role as a symbolic boundary had given way to a more practical one. It is reasonable to conclude that a section of the river acted as a boundary between Roman and Parthian interests up to this time and that it continued to do so until the middle of the second century AD. The Euphrates as a boundary was not a line at which Rome considered that its power stopped, but it represented a boundary negotiated with Parthia following conflict or in times when the two empires wished to negotiate. Before formal organization into provincial territory, Roman influence was often exercised in economic terms. This is demonstrated at Dura Europos even when the city was under some form of Parthian control, and it is also shown at Palmyra where Rome exercised power initially by controlling tariffs. When the Palmyrenes and the territory of Palmyra itself emerged as militarily important, the nature of Rome's power at Palmyra began to change and eventually became more formalized early in the third century AD.

The immediate purpose in establishing fortifications on the Euphrates under Vespasian was directly associated with the tensions between Rome and Parthia over Armenia. These fortifications were clearly useful for offensive purposes in Armenia, and they became increasingly useful in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia, but there were times that they came to play an important defensive role. This was expressed in some sources of the latter half of the first century AD. In the middle of the second century AD the war between Rome and Parthia showed that the presence of a large number of Roman troops in fortifications on the upper and middle Euphrates allowed their fast deployment to the section of the Euphrates that flowed closest to Antioch. With a concentration of troops on the Euphrates close to Armenia, difficulties with the Parthians could be dealt with more effectively and any

problems further down the Euphrates could also be addressed quickly. The successes under Lucius Verus were eventually built on in a significant way by Septimius Severus. In his reign, Syria was reorganized and territory over which Rome had less formal power and influence since 165 became organized provincial territory.

It is tempting to see Rome's extension of control to the Euphrates and beyond as steady, deliberate and organized from the first century BC to the early third century AD. It is also inviting to connect this approach with the requirements of the defence of Syria. An important question, however, hinges on the extent to which this approach was organized and deliberate over the long term. The immediacy of the problems in Armenia and the success of the Jewish War gave Vespasian the opportunity to establish a strong military presence on the upper and middle Euphrates. The more immediate motives in this case appear to have been offensive, but in the longer term these garrisons played both offensive and defensive roles. The three Parthian campaigns of the second century AD were immediate responses to Parthian activity in Armenia. Trajan, Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus took the opportunity to gain glory from a Parthian campaign in the process of responding to attacks on their power in Armenia. The ramifications of these actions had long-term territorial implications, but there is no evidence that this was the main aim at the time of the prosecution of these wars. Victory over the Parthians in each case allowed the extension of informal and, in some cases, more formal power, which in turn became beneficial from both an offensive and defensive perspective. Septimius Severus recognized this when he established the province of Mesopotamia, which took formal Roman power to the banks of the Tigris. The extension of formal power along the Euphrates and to the Tigris strengthened what had become the traditional routes by which Parthia was invaded, and at the same time fortifications on the Tigris were meant to act as a shield of the empire.

The situation at Palmyra needs to be analysed in this context. The Palmyrenes developed the ability to protect and expand important trading links further east and their ability to supply products highly demanded by the Romans saw them prosper. At the same time, Rome exercised its power over Palmyra by controlling the tariff structure, primarily to limit the effects of tariffs on prices. The initial aim of Rome's exercise of power over Palmyra might have been economic, but over time this involvement, and developments in the region more broadly, had the effect of drawing Palmyra and the Palmyrenes more into Rome's military orbit. The success that the Palmyrene archers came to enjoy in their protection of the caravans was a crucial component in Palmyra's trading success. This organization and professionalism clearly impressed the Romans, and in the second century Rome's power at Palmyra extended to the recruitment of the archers for use in other parts of their empire. The initial motive for this

recruitment seems not to have been associated with the territory of Palmyra itself, and there were clear benefits in Palmyra retaining some autonomy. Over the longer term, however, the recruitment of auxiliaries drew Palmyra and the Palmyrenes into the Roman military structure. After the extension of power and control along the Euphrates and into Mesopotamia, the territory of Palmyra and the Palmyrene auxiliaries became important to the consolidation of this extension of power. In the reign of Septimius Severus or perhaps before it, Roman power at Palmyra became formally established with the inclusion of Palmyra in Roman provincial territory. What appears as a deliberate approach, which developed in intensity and had a clear outcome, was actually the result of a series of more immediate decisions that served to build on each other over time.

When the Sasanian Persians overthrew the Parthians and took control of Iran, Mesopotamia had been an organized Roman province for 30 years and it had experienced less formal Roman power and influence for decades beforehand. The middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers contained numerous Roman fortifications so that the Roman military and administrative presence was experienced by everybody who lived in the vicinity of them. The Palmyrenes served as Roman auxiliaries for over a century before and had come to play an important role in the establishment of Roman authority on the banks of the Euphrates. Roman Mesopotamia was assuredly a defensive asset and this would be demonstrated particularly in the fourth century. Defence was important and undoubtedly one of the motives for the extension of power, but over the longer term Mesopotamia and the middle Euphrates became important as Roman territory, not just as acquisitions for defensive purposes. This is demonstrated most clearly by the evidence for the Roman military and administrative organization on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers in the third century AD.

The organization of the garrison at Dura Europos in the third century indicates that it was highly versatile. The establishment of the camp at the city early in the third century demonstrates the military role that the city was designed to play. While Dura and Parapotamia came under Roman control *c.*165, it was not until the organization and annexation of territory under Septimius Severus that the city's military role emerged more clearly. Until *c.*211 the garrison at Dura was comprised mostly of Palmyrene auxiliaries, which were organized at some stage into a cohort from a nucleus of archers present at the city in the very early years of Roman control. When Dura came under Roman control many of the institutions present in the Seleucid and Parthian periods continued. The city had grown prosperous in the Parthian period mostly due to the stimulation of trade as a result of the Roman presence in the Near East. Dura was one of the beneficiaries of Palmyra's growing trading strength. Dura Europos is an interesting case as it illustrates how Roman power was exercised and experienced at a number of different levels from the first century BC up to

*c.*165 when the city was clearly not under any form of Roman control. The Roman presence had a significant indirect impact on Dura through most of the city's duration under Parthian control. In the first 50 years of Roman control, the Roman military presence took the form of Palmyrene auxiliaries and the government of the city remained mostly with its traditional institutions. When a major territorial reorganization took place under Septimius Severus the military presence, which was designed to bolster the recent organization of territory, became much stronger at Dura.

When the Sasanian Persians attempted to challenge Roman power in Mesopotamia, the Roman response was in the same terms as it had been when the Parthians had challenged the Romans in Armenia. There is no indication that the Romans recognized that the Persians were prepared to be vigorous in mounting this challenge. Nor do the Romans appear to have been prepared for the display of Persian military skill and determination that was required of them when they successfully overthrew the Parthians. There was never any question that Rome would seek to defend Mesopotamia and act to recover it, because it was Roman territory, but a Persian territorial claim to Mesopotamia could be shown to be historically valid. The rhetoric exchanged between Severus Alexander and Ardashir on this point is certainly believable.

When the Sasanians marched up the Euphrates and quickly overran Syria in the 250s, the Romans were unprepared for the attack and it was unprecedented in its scale and outcome. The large number of small fortifications and garrisons scattered all over the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers could do little in the face of such overwhelming numbers. There were difficulties in other parts of the empire, and the economic problems that the whole of the empire appears to have faced did not help. Rome still managed to muster large forces to meet the Sasanian attacks, just as it had done in the preceding decades when undertaking its own offensive operations against Persia. The fortifications and their garrisons on the middle Euphrates and Khabur rivers were not suited or designed for defence against such invasions. The stark and grim evidence of the siege at Dura Europos is a vivid reminder.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 F.G.B. Millar, *The Roman Near East*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.
2 K. Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London: British Museum Press, 2003.
3 W. Ball, *Rome in the East*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 6; see also M. Sartre, *L'Orient Romain*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1991, esp. pp. 309–55, which deals with Syria and Arabia with a focus on urbanization and life in rural areas.
4 N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000.
5 M. Sommer, *Roms Orientalische Steppengrenze*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2005.
6 V. Chapot, *La Frontière de l'Euphrate*, Paris: Geuthner, 1907.
7 F. Sarre and E.H. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat und Tigris-Gebiet*, 4 vols, Berlin: Reimer, 1911–1920, especially vol. 1.
8 A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le Désert de Syrie*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1934.
9 D.L. Kennedy and D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990.
10 For the work of Stein see particularly S. Gregory and D.L. Kennedy, *Sir Aurel Stein's* Limes *Report*, BAR-IS 272, Oxford: Oxbow, 1985. For Crawford's work see O.G.S. Crawford, 'Air Photographs of the Middle East', *GJ* 73, 1929, 497–512 and O.G.S. Crawford, *Said and Done: The Autobiography of an Archaeologist*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1955.
11 Kennedy and Riley, *Desert Frontier*, pp. 11–12.
12 Ibid., pp. 15–18.
13 A. Musil, *The Middle Euphrates*, New York: American Geographical Society, 1927; R. Dussaud, *Topographie Historique de la Syrie Antique et Médiévale*, Paris: Geuthner, 1927, pp. 413–501.
14 K. Kohlmeyer, 'Euphrat Survey: Die mit Mitteln der Gerda Henkel Stiftung durchgeführte archäologische Geländebegehung im Syrischen Euphrattal', *MDOG*, no. 116, 1984, pp. 95–118; K. Kohlmeyer, 'Euphrat Survey – 1984: Die mit Mitteln der Gerda Henkel Stiftung durchgeführte archäologische Geländebegehung im Syrischen Euphrattal', *MDOG*, no. 118, 1986, pp. 51–65; B. Geyer and J.-Y., Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée de L'Euphrate Syrien du Néolithique à l'avènement de l'islam*, 2 vols, Beyrouth: IFAPO, 2003.
15 S. Gregory, *Roman Military Architecture on the Eastern Frontier*, 3 vols, Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1995–1997.

16 E. Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. nach der Inschrift Sāhpuhrs I. an der Ka' be-ye Zartošt (SKZ)*, Wiesbaden: TAVO, 1982; P. Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Ka'ba-i Zardûšt (ŠKZ)*, 2 vols, London: SOAS, 1999.

1 ROME ON THE EUPHRATES AND IN MESOPOTAMIA, c.65 BC–c. AD 200

1 It is often asserted that the Euphrates became the basic eastern frontier of Rome from the time of Pompey's establishment of the province of Syria, as the following examples demonstrate: K. Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London: British Museum Press, 2003, p. 32; H. Elton, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996, p. 4; R.E. Wheeler, 'The Roman Frontier in Mesopotamia', in E. Birley, ed., *The Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1952, p. 114. Plutarch claims in the *Life of Lucullus* 36.5–6 that had Lucullus been able to gain the affection of his soldiers he would have been so successful that the Roman Empire would not have been bound by the Euphrates. N. Biffi, *Il Medio Oriente di Strabone: Libro XVI della Geografia*, Bari: Edipuglia, 2002, pp. 170–1, suggests that the Euphrates should be accepted as the boundary between Rome and Parthia from the time of Lucullus. A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East: 168BC to AD1*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984, p. 222, notes the tendency of historians to assert that the Euphrates as a boundary was a specific term of Lucullus' treaty with Phraates of Parthia in 68 BC and also in the agreement between Pompey and Phraates in 66 BC, despite no express evidence for this. Sherwin-White notes further that some even suggest that this was one of the outcomes of a meeting between Sulla and Mithridates of Pontus in 92 BC. Sherwin-White points out that in the reports of Dio 37.5.5ff. and Plutarch, *Pomp.*, 33.8, Pompey actually refused to be bound by the Euphrates when requested to do so by Phraates.

2 It has become popular to speak of the 'Euphrates Frontier' as a form of shorthand for the Roman eastern frontier. This is demonstrated in M. Gawlikowski, 'The Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', *Mesopotamia* 22, 1987, 77; E. Frézouls, 'Les Fonctions du Moyen-Euphrate à l'époque Romaine', in J.C. Margueron, ed., *Le Moyen Euphrate*, Leiden: Brill, 1980, p. 356, and in earlier works such as those of V. Chapot, *Le Frontière de l'Euphrate*, Paris: Geuthner, 1907. C.R. Whittaker, 'Frontiers', in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and D. Rathbone, eds, *Cambridge Ancient History Volume XI: The High Empire AD 70–192*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 306–7, sounds a note of caution by pointing out that the eastern frontier included the Arabian frontier to the south and that this is sometimes overlooked.

3 Herodian VI.2.1 referred to Ardashir, *c.* AD 230, refusing to be contained by the Tigris river, which was the boundary (ὅρος) of the Roman Empire.

4 The Euphrates as an unsatisfactory frontier has been highlighted for some time; see, for example, Wheeler, 'Frontier in Mesopotamia', p. 112.

5 Frézouls, 'Fonctions du Moyen-Euphrate', p. 356, note 7, suggests that the Euphrates was the north-eastern boundary of the province of Syria and that it represented a 200-km-long boundary between Commagene and the desert on the banks opposite.

6 Plutarch, *Pomp.*, 33.6.

7 Vergil, *Georgics*, 1.509, 4.561.

8 J.J. Clauss, 'Vergil and the Euphrates revisited', *AJP* 109 (3), 1988, 309–10.

9 Vergil, *Aeneid*, 8.726.

10 Velleius Paterculus II.101.1–3.

11 Frézouls, 'Fonctions du Moyen-Euphrate', p. 359.

12 Josephus, *A.J.*, 14.15.8–9.

13 Frontinus, *Strat.*, 1.1.6; Dio 49.19.3–20.3; D.L. Kennedy, *The Twin Towns of Zeugma on the Euphrates: Rescue Work and Historical Studies*, *JRA* Supplement 27, Portsmouth, R.I.: JRA, 1998, p. 238, suggests that Zeugma returned to the Roman province of Syria in the 30s BC and that this was probably a part of Octavian's reorganization of the province.

14 Strabo, *Geog.*, 11.14.2.

15 Ibid., 12.1.2.

16 Ibid., 12.2.1. The kingdom of Sophene was a Roman client-kingdom in the early reign of Nero according to Tacitus, *Ann.*, XIII.7

17 Suetonius, 'Vita Aug.', XXI.3 in *De Vita Caesarum*, and Dio 54.8.1–3 both report the treaty but only in terms of the return of the standards lost by Crassus, Saxa and Antonius.

18 Pliny, *N.H.*, V.85: 'Arabiam inde laeva, Orroeon dictam regionem, trischoena mensura dextraque Commagenen disterminat …' Three schoeni is the equivalent of approximately 15 km.

19 Ibid., V.86; M. Sartre, 'The Arabs and the Desert Peoples', in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A.M. Cameron, eds, *Cambridge Ancient History Volume XII: The Crisis of Empire, AD193–337*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 498–500, emphasizes Aramaic influences on Edessa and Osrhoene but points to the Arab influences there also.

20 J. Wagner, 'Provincia Osrhoenae: New Archaeological Finds Illustrating the Military Organization Under the Severan Dynasty', in S. Mitchell, ed., *Armies and Frontiers in Roman and Byzantine Anatolia*, BAR-IS 156, Oxford, 1983, pp. 103–4, describes the way in which Osrhoene's client-kingdom status switched from the Parthians *c.*132 BC to Armenia and then to the Romans under Pompey. One of the results of Crassus' defeat in 53 BC was that Osrhoene once again came under the sway of the Parthians and remained so firmly for at least the next century when it managed to regain a level of independence. S.K. Ross, *Roman Edessa*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 9–11, points out that the Romans recognized the potential importance of the Kings of Osrhoene as allies but the Roman sources reported a number of cases of 'Abgarian treachery' from the time of Crassus' defeat and in the century following. This took place because the kingdom was ostensibly aligned with the Parthians. Edessa was, however, able to maintain a degree of flexibility between Rome and Parthia in the way that Armenia did. Ross concludes on p. 20 that the whole of northern Mesopotamia, including Osrhoene, stayed within the Parthian sphere until the middle of the second century AD.

21 Ross, *Roman Edessa*, p. 20.

22 Ross, in ibid., describes the Euphrates as 'the *de facto* border between the two empires'. It is unclear as to whether this was a broad observation about the Euphrates or if it was specific to Pliny's claim. This section of Pliny's *Natural History* has been criticized as anachronistic and reflective of an unknown Augustan source that he used. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.

23 Tacitus, *Ann.*, 12.12–14; Ross, *Roman Edessa*, p. 24.

24 W.H. Schoff, *Parthian Stations by Isidore of Charax*, Chicago: Ares, 1914, p. 17, on the basis of references to other datable events, thought the work should be dated to 'a time very near the Christian era'.

25 F.G.B. Millar, 'Caravan Cities: The Roman Near East and Long Distance Caravan Trade by Land', in M. Austin, J. Harries and C. Smith, eds, *Modus Operandi*, London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998, pp. 120–1.

26 Strabo, Geog., XVI.1.27; Amm. Marc., XVI.3.3, XXIII.2.3–3.1. See Millar, 'Caravan Cities', pp. 126–8, for further discussion of these references and that of Isidore.

27 Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, 1. The text and translation in Schoff, p. 4, is as follows:

> Παράκειται δὲ τῇ Φάλιγα κωμόπολις Ναβαγὰθ, καὶ παραῤῥεῖ αὐτῆν ποταμὸς ᾿Αβούρας, ὅς ἐμβάλλει εἰς τὸν Εὐφράτην ἐκεῖθεν διαβαίνει τὰ στρατόπεδα εἰς τὴν κατὰ Ρωμαίους πέραν.

> Nearby Phaliga is the walled village of Nabagath, and by it flows the river Aburas (Khabur), which empties into the Euphrates; there the legions cross the boundary and into the Roman empire.

The translation given in Millar, 'Caravan Cities', p. 121, is used in preference here.

28 Millar, 'Caravan Cities', p. 121.

29 When Gertrude Bell crossed the Balikh in 1910 it was little more than a series of puddles: G.L. Bell, 'The East Bank of the Euphrates from Tel Ahmar to Hit', *GJ* 36 (5), 1910, 525.

30 J. Napoli, 'Les remparts de la forteresse de Djazla sur le Moyen-Euphrate', *Syria* 77, 2000, 117 and 128–9.

31 Ibid., pp. 117–20.

32 Ibid., p. 129.

33 Ibid., p. 117 and pp. 131–2.

34 Ibid., p. 129; F.G.B. Millar, *The Roman Near East*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993, pp. 437–8, suggests that 'Roman control may have extended in the later first century to the confluence with the Balikh …' This was the location of Callinicum/Nicephorium. See also J. Wilkes, 'Provinces and Frontiers', in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A. Cameron, eds, *Cambridge Ancient History Volume XII: The Crisis of Empire – AD193–337*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 255, who sees Sura as the limit of formal control on the Euphrates at this point.

35 M.I. Rostovtzeff, A.R. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, pp. 60–1.

36 C. Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura Europos*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979, p. 257, claimed that 'Roman victories in the western states of Asia eventually brought the two powers face to face. A treaty of 20/19 BC fixed the frontiers of the countries on the Euphrates, at the Khabur river, forty miles upstream from Dura'.

37 P. Leriche, 'Chronologie du Rempart de Brique Crue de Doura-Europos', in P. Leriche, ed., *Doura-Europos, études 1986*, Paris: Geuthner, 1986 = *Syria* 63, 1986, p. 70. For an architectural analysis of the walls and some geological consideration of the stone employed, see J.-C. Bessac, 'L'analyse des Procédés de Construction des Remparts de Pierre de Doura-Europos: Questions de Méthodologie', in P. Leriche and A. Al-Mahmoud, eds, *Doura-Europos, études 1988*, Paris: Geuthner, 1988 = *Syria* 65, 1988, 297–313. This idea is

expanded and discussed further in a number of later publications: P. Leriche and A. Al-Mahmoud, 'Bilan des campagnes 1988–1990 à Doura-Europos', in P. Leriche and A. Al-Mahmoud, eds, *Doura-Europos*, *études 1990*, Paris: Geuthner, 1990 = *Syria* 69, 1992, 12–16; M. Gelin, P. Leriche and J. Abdul Massih, 'La Porte de Palmyre à Doura-Europos', in P. Leriche and M. Gelin, eds, *Doura-Europos, études IV*, Beyrouth: IFAPO, 1997, pp. 44–5; P. Leriche, 'Techniques de guerre sassanides et romaines à Doura-Europos', in F. Vallet and M. Kazanski, eds, *L'Armée Romaine et les Barbares du IIIe au VIIe siècle*, Paris: AFAM, 1993, p. 84.

38 Gawlikowski, 'Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', 77, referring to events in the latter half of the first century AD, claims that the river bank never belonged to the territory of Palmyra. Ross, *Roman Edessa*, p. 28, concludes that the Edessan kings' authority extended no further than approximately 25 miles (40 km) to the south of Edessa. Ross suggests that Osrhoene's territory may have extended to the left bank of the Euphrates opposite Zeugma and some way along its banks in the middle of the first century AD – but Zeugma lay approximately 300 km to the north-west of the Khabur.

39 See Chapter 5.

40 P. Leriche, 'Dura Europos', in E. Yarshater, ed., *Encyclopedia Iranica, Vol. VII*, New York: Persica Press, 2001, p. 591, argues that the Parthians neglected the ramparts.

41 F.G.B. Millar, 'Dura-Europos under Parthian Rule', in J. Wiesehöfer, ed., *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse/The Arsacid Empire: Sources and Documentation, Historia Einzelschriften*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998, pp. 475–6.

42 Strabo, *Geog.*, XVI.1.28 (C749).

43 Josephus, *B.J.*, XVIII.101; Suetonius, 'Vita Vit.', 2, in *De Vita Caesarum*.

44 Josephus, *B.J.*, VII.105.

45 Tacitus, *Ann.*, XII.12.3.

46 Wagner, 'Provincia Osrhoenae', pp. 104–5; Ross, *Roman Edessa*, p. 10.

47 As noted earlier, it is possible, however, that the Euphrates base from which Legio X Fretensis was transferred in AD 66 was Zeugma.

48 Tacitus, *Ann.*, XV.29.3–5.

49 G.W. Bowersock, 'Syria under Vespasian', *JRS* 63, 1973, pp. 134 and 140, emphasizes the recent difficulties with the Parthians and that Cappadocia's transformation into a two-legion province took place due to its proximity to Armenia.

50 Tacitus, *Ann.*, XV.6.17.

51 Whittaker, 'Frontiers', p. 308.

52 Tacitus, *Ann.*, XV.9–11.

53 Ibid., XV.9:

> Interim Corbulo numquam neglectam Euphratis ripam crebrioribus praesidiis insedit.

> In the meantime, Corbulo occupied the bank of the Euphrates, which he had never neglected, with a still closer line of posts.
>
> (*LCL*, trans. Jackson)

54 Ibid., XV.12:

> Ille interritus et parte copiarum apud Suriam relicta, ut munimenta Euphrati inposita retinerentur …

He (Corbulo), undismayed, left part of his forces in Syria to hold the forts erected on the Euphrates.

(*LCL*, trans. Jackson)

55 M. Sartre, 'Syria and Arabia', in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and D. Rathbone, eds, *Cambridge Ancient History Volume XI: The High Empire AD 70–192*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 635.
56 Bowersock, 'Syria under Vespasian', p. 133, notes the superior knowledge Vespasian had of the eastern provinces compared with that of his Julio-Claudian predecessors due to his experience in the Jewish war and his service as governor of Syria.
57 Whittaker, 'Frontiers', p. 308, speculates that Claudius was the first to construct a fort on the Euphrates; however, there is no evidence for this.
58 F.G.B. Millar, 'Dura-Europos under Parthian Rule', in J. Wiesehöfer, ed., *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse/The Arsacid Empire: Sources and Documentation, Historia Einzelschriften*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998, pp. 75–6; Millar, *Roman Near East*, pp. 52–3; D.C. Braund, *Rome and the Friendly King*, London and New York: St Martin's Press, 1984, pp. 42–3, discusses Claudius' grant of Roman citizenship to Antiochus IV of Commagene in AD 47.
59 Tacitus, *Ann.*, XIII.7.
60 Suetonius, 'Vita Vesp.', VIII.4–5, in *De Vita Caesarum*. Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 89, notes that the development of Cappadocia as a two-legion province was not complete until the mid-AD 70s and suggests that Josephus' reference to XII Fulminata being sent to Melitene was a more isolated action early in Vespasian's reign and not necessarily related to provincial reorganization.
61 Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 81.
62 Bowersock, 'Syria under Vespasian', pp. 133–4. It is possible that Traianus had been responsible for supervising the transformation of Cappadocia into a province before becoming governor of Syria.
63 T.B. Mitford, 'Some inscriptions from the Cappadocian *Limes*', *JRS* 64, 1974, pp. 166–7, places XII Fulminata at Melitene and XVI Flavia Firma at Satala from early AD 71. Josephus, *B.J.*, 7.1.3, claimed that XII Fulminata, formerly garrisoned at Rephanea in Syria, was transferred to Melitene in Cappadocia by Titus following the capture of Judaea as punishment for the legion's poor performance during the siege of Jerusalem. Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 81, suggests that the establishment of the legions in Cappadocia was not necessarily indicative of any overall plan at this early stage of Vespasian's rule. Legio XVI Flavia Firma was transferred from Satala to Samosata after Trajan's Parthian War, probably replacing detachments of Legio VI Ferrata and Legio III Gallica, which were moved further south; Mitford, 'Cappadocian *Limes*', pp. 166–7; N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000, p. 266. According to Mitford, 'Cappadocian *Limes*', p. 167, Satala was then garrisoned by Legio XV Apollinaris. Dio, LV.23.5–6, still located Legio XII Fulminata and Legio XV Apollinaris in Cappadocia in the early 230s, suggesting that XII Fulminata remained at Melitene from Vespasian's reign onward and that XV Apollinaris remained as the legionary garrison at Satala for at least a century after its transfer.
64 Kennedy, *Twin Towns of Zeugma*, pp. 139–62, provides a comprehensive collection of ancient textual references to Zeugma. Zeugma was the legionary

base of Legio IV Scythica by the third century AD and perhaps from as early as AD 66, although this date is the subject of considerable speculation; Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, pp. 257–61, provides an analysis of Wagner's work on the legion's presence at Zeugma which shows that much of the evidence for the legion's presence at the site dates to the late second and early third centuries AD. J. Wagner, *Seleukia am Euphrat Zeugma*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1976, p. 143; M.P. Speidel, 'Legio IIII Scythica, its movements and men', in Kennedy, *Twin Towns of Zeugma*, pp. 165–6, claims that Legio IV Scythica was in Syria by AD 56/57 having been transferred from Pannonia. Kennedy discusses possible evidence for the legion's earlier history in Syria and suggests that Legio IV Scythica replaced Legio X Fretensis at Zeugma in AD 66 when that legion moved from a base on the Euphrates according to Josephus, *B.J.*, 7.1.3; Wagner, *Seleukia am Euphrat*, pp. 143–6. Speidel, *Legio IIII Scythica*, pp. 166–7, agrees with Wagner's interpretation of Josephus. At pp. 176–9 he also holds that Legio IV Scythica remained at Zeugma until as late as 252. Writing in the early 230s, Dio, LV.23.3, still located the legion in Syria and *P.Dura 32* of 254 refers to a soldier from a vexillation of Legio IV Scythica indicating that the legion was still in Coele Syria at this date and probably at Zeugma. Millar, *Roman Near East*, pp. 82–3 and p. 89, refers to a road system constructed in the interior of Commagene under Vespasian and suggests that Legio III Gallica was at Samosata in the early AD 70s. Josephus *B.J.* 7.225 claimed that a detachment of Legio VI Ferrata was stationed at Samosata after Commagene's annexation under Vespasian. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 266, thought that this detachment remained there until its transfer to Judaea in the 130s. It seems that Legio XVI Flavia Firma became the garrison of Samosata in the first half of the second century AD after the transfer of Legio VI Ferrata to Judaea while Legio III Gallica was transferred at this time to Rephanea; Ptolemy, *Geog.*, 5.14.8; cf. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 267. Epigraphic evidence suggests that Legio XVI Flavia Firma was still at Satala in the early second century AD; see Mitford, 'Cappadocian Limes', pp. 164–5. Legio XVI Flavia Firma, like Legio IV Scythica, was still described as being located in Syria by Dio, LV.24.3, in the early 230s.

65 H. Seyrig, 'L'incorporation de Palmyre à l'Empire romain', *Syria* 13, 1932, 266–277. Seyrig saw the milestone as proof of Palmyra belonging to the empire in AD 75 and concluded that the route the road would have taken was from Palmyra to Sura. Seyrig's suggestion has had an impact on the scholarship ever since. Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 81, proposes that the road may even have gone in the direction of the confluence of the Khabur and the Euphrates to what would become Circesium. This milestone and the evidence for the road is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

66 D.L. Kennedy and D.N. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990, p. 116, claim that Sura was garrisoned in the Flavian period. Gawlikowski, 'Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', p. 77, says that the road from Palmyra was a military road that joined 'the fortified shore at Sura'.

67 See Chapter 2 for more discussion of this issue.

68 Josephus, *B.J.*, VII.7. 1–3, described the Roman capture of Commagene and how Caesennius Paetus, the *legatus* of Syria, identified Samosata as a potentially strategic city to the Parthians. Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 90, concludes that with the inclusion of Commagene in the province of Syria the province now reached a natural frontier in the mountains of the Kurdish Taurus, around which the Euphrates flows through gorges between Melitene

and Samosata. This was part of what E. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 87, suggests was 'a new strategy of preclusive frontier defence' under the Flavians.

69 C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, pp. 55–6: These sites 'did not so much form a military front as provide a base for invasion routes into Armenia or Mesopotamia … many are now inclined to revise earlier claims of a Flavian master strategy and to regard as a myth the idea of a fortified frontier along the Euphrates'. See also Whittaker, 'Frontiers', p. 309; J. Crow, 'A Review of the Physical Remains of the Frontier of Cappadocia', in P. Freeman and D.L. Kennedy, eds, *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, 2 vols, BAR-IS 297 (1&2), Oxford: BAR, 1986, p. 80.

70 According to Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 80, the Roman presence in the Near East under Vespasian turned from being a bridgehead 'to resemble an integrated provincial and military system'.

71 Ibid., pp. 81–90. Chapter 2 addresses the issue of Palmyra in detail.

72 Tacitus, *Hist.*, II.80–1.

73 Josephus, *B.J.*, VII.219–23.

74 Ibid., VII. 224.

75 Statius, *Silv.*, 5.3.187, 3.2.138.

76 Gawlikowski, 'Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', pp. 78–80.

77 The occupation of Dura Europos by the forces of Trajan is indicated by the presence of a victory arch dedicated to Trajan constructed to the north-west of the city by Legio III Cyrenaica in AD 116; see P.V.C. Baur, M.I. Rostovtzeff and A.R. Bellinger, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fourth Season, 1930–31*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933, pp. 56–65. The presence of the Roman forces at Dura may also be reflected in the chance coin finds at the city, with a clear increase in the presence of silver coins from Trajan's reign; see A.R. Bellinger, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Final Report Volume VI – The Coins*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949, p. 204. Bellinger's analysis of the numismatic evidence is particularly problematic as it was based on the combined totals of coins from hoards and chance finds. However, the ratio of Trajanic denarii recorded as chance finds was markedly higher than that of emperors preceding Trajan or of his successors Hadrian and Antoninus Pius.

78 Dio LXVIII.28.4. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.

79 Dio LXVIII.17.1; Fronto, *Princ. Hist.*, 16. See Chapter 2 for further detail on the Roman motive of controlling prices by controlling the rates of tariffs and customs dues.

80 M. Sommer, *Roms Orientalische Steppengrenze*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005, p. 311.

81 Fronto, *Princ. Hist.*, 4, 'Imperium populi Romani a Traiano imperatore trans flumina hostilia porrectum …'

82 The invasions of Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus are two examples later in the second century. Severus Alexander and Gordian III both attempted similar invasions in the third century, and Carus succeeded in sacking Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 283 after marching down the Euphrates; Victor, *Caes.*, 38.2–4; Eutropius, *Brev.*, IX.18.1; Amm. Marc. XXIV.5.3. According to Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.17, in 363 Julian used the examples of Trajan, Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus and their invasions along the Euphrates as a means of encouraging his troops. See also C.S. Lightfoot, 'Trajan's Parthian War and the Fourth Century Perspective', *JRS* 80, 1990, 115–26.

83 Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, p. 57.
84 Fronto, *Princ. Hist.*, 16.
85 Dio LXVIII.20.3.
86 Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 81.
87 One of the objectives of Germanicus' visit to the eastern provinces was to deal with problems in Armenia; Tacitus, *Ann.*, II. 56. During the reign of Nero there was considerable fighting between the Romans and Parthians over Armenia; Tacitus, *Ann.*, XV.I–XXVIII; Dio LXII.19.1–26.4 following Nero's crowning of Tigranes in Rome as King of Armenia; Tacitus, *Ann.*, XIV.XXVI.
88 Mitford, 'Cappadocian *Limes*', p. 160.
89 See note 64 above.
90 Mitford, 'Cappadocian *Limes*', pp. 171–2.
91 Ibid., p. 160.
92 Ibid.
93 Whittaker, 'Frontiers', p. 310. J. Wilkes, 'Provinces and Frontiers', *CAH Vol. XII*, 2nd edn, p. 216, claims that this was part of a road that ran a distance of approximately 870 miles from the Black Sea to the Red Sea.
94 Mitford, 'Cappadocian *Limes*', p. 160.
95 Dio LXVIII.20.3–4.
96 Millar, *Roman Near East*, pp. 111–14, relies considerably on A. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*, revised edn, London: Batsford, 1987, for a summary of the Parthian War of Lucius Verus (noted by Millar in note 1, p. 111). Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 121–33 and 144–7, provides a detailed account of Lucius Verus' Parthian war. Birley relies on the *HA* biographies of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus for a large amount of the detail as Dio's account of the war survives only in the form of an epitome. Some important information is also provided by the surviving letters of one of Verus' generals, M. Cornelius Fronto, while Lucian of Samosata made some important references to the events. T.D. Barnes, *The Sources of the* Historia Augusta, Bruxelles: Latomus, 1978, p. 25, suggests that the *HA* biography of Marcus Aurelius contained 'a large amount of reliable information', concluding that the biography of Verus 'is basically well-informed and accurate'.
97 Dio LXXI.2.1. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 120–2. At p. 287, note 19, Birley suggests that the legion that was destroyed was Legio IX Hispana, transferred to the East from Britain some years before.
98 Sartre, 'Arabs and Desert Peoples', in *CAH Vol. XII*, 2nd edn, p. 507, claims an alliance between Manu VIII of Osrhoene and Rome from 165.
99 Millar, *Roman Near East*, pp. 113–14; Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 58; D.L. Kennedy, 'The Garrisoning of Mesopotamia in the Late Antonine and Early Severan Period', *Antichthon* 21, 1987, p. 5, claims that '[f]orces must certainly have been located east of the Euphrates from the end of L. Verus' campaigns in Mesopotamia'. L. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie Orientale et Pays Adjacents*, Paris: Geuthner, 1962, p. 197, suggested that from the reign of Verus, Rome established a 'protectorate' in the western part of Mesopotamia but did not formally annex it. Dillemann proposed that Rome placed garrisons in western Mesopotamia in the same way that it had done previously in Armenia.
100 Fronto, *Ad. Verum. Imp.*, 1.2, for the capture of Nicephorium and Dausara. For indications of the Roman capture of Dura in the archaeological evidence see M.I. Rostovtzeff, A.R. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press,

1936, pp. 4–61; J. 'Abdul Massih, 'La porte secondaire à Doura-Europos', in Leriche and Gelin, *Doura-Europos, études IV*, p. 50; Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, pp. 224 and 257. The basis of the dating of Dura's fall to the Romans is made on the assumption that it was captured as a result of the campaigns of Lucius Verus. The report on the fortifications in Rostovtzeff *et al.*, *Dura Prelim. Report, Seventh and Eighth Seasons*, takes this as its inherent assumption. Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 224, 'could only imagine' that the city was held by Roman troops and concluded that the general, Avidius Cassius, marched to Seleucia-Ctesiphon before returning to Dura to make it a permanent frontier post. While the date of Dura's capture from the Parthians was probably at the time of Verus' invasion of Parthia, the earliest datable evidence from the Roman period at Dura comes in the form of a Palmyrene inscription found in the Mithraeum dating to AD 168; see Rostovtzeff *et al.*, *Dura Prelim. Report, Seventh and Eighth Seasons*, p. 83. 'Abdul Massih, 'La porte secondaire', pp. 47–54, reports evidence of mining activity under the secondary gate, which was interpreted as coming from the Roman capture of the city *c.* AD 165. There are also honorific inscriptions dating to the reign of Verus. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

101 Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 294, notes that there is little evidence for the subsequent history of Nicephorium/Callinicum and does not mention its capture in the Parthian wars of Verus. A.H.M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 217–22, discussed Nicephorium as a foundation of Alexander or Seleucus I Nicator and then moved to a consideration of the site in the fourth century AD, by which time it was known as Callinicum. We have even less information on Dausara; Fronto's reference to it is the earliest to survive. The modern location of Dausara is thought to be Qalaat Jaber, according to A. Musil, *The Middle Euphrates*, New York: American Geographical Society, 1927, p. 95, approximately 25 km upstream from Sura.

102 Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 295. Sura was only mentioned prior to the middle of the second century AD by Pliny the Elder, *N.H.* V.87, and Ptolemy, *Geog.* V.15.25, who both referred to it with reference to Palmyra. They did not refer to Sura as fortified – but neither writer generally referred to the fortified status of sites.

103 For a more detailed discussion of the evidence for this road, and the conclusions reached by modern scholars, see Chapter 2.

104 Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, XXIX–XXX, referred to a battle near Sura and a large battle at Europos. He reported that some claimed the Parthians lost over 70,000 men in the battle at Europos, but held this to be an exaggeration. The significance of the battle at Europos was indicated by two further references to it by Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, XXIV and XXVIII. Europos was not Dura Europos but a fortress on the Euphrates in the vicinity of ancient Carchemish. See Chapter 4 for further discussion of the location of Europos and erroneous references to it in modern scholarship as Dura Europos.

105 Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, XXIV.

106 See Ross, *Roman Edessa*, pp. 36–9, for Edessa's capture by the forces of M. Claudius Fronto with the assistance of a pro-Roman faction within the city. Ross, in ibid., p. 46, claims that, while subservient to Rome, the Edessan kings continued to pursue a policy of independence for much of the period between the reign of Lucius Verus and Septimius Severus.

107 *HA, Sept. Sev.* III.6, refers to Severus being placed in command of Legio IV Scythica. A. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor*, rev. edn, New

Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 115, suggests that this command was the most prestigious of the three Syrian legionary commands. Birley claims that the location of Legio IV Scythica was unknown at this time but that it must have been in the vicinity of Antioch as the commander of the legion sometimes deputized for the Syrian governor. Legio IV Scythica was probably at Zeugma at this stage, as it had been from as early as the middle of the first century AD. Birley also referred to a kinsman of Severus who had commanded Legio XVI Flavia Firma at Samosata. For the war between Severus and Niger, see Dio LXXV.6.1ff.

108 Sartre, 'Arabs and Desert Peoples', in *CAH Vol. XII*, 2nd edn, pp. 507–8.
109 Dio LXXV.6.1.1–3.3.
110 Ross, *Roman Edessa*, p. 48.
111 D.L. Kennedy, 'Ti. Claudius Subatianus Aquila, "First Prefect of Mesopotamia"', *ZPE* 36, 1979, 255, noted that 'we have no single piece of evidence to even hint at a 'province' of Mesopotamia or of any other province in Northern Mesopotamia' before Septimius Severus. Kennedy appears to have changed his mind on this point a few years later: Kennedy, 'Garrisoning of Mesopotamia', pp. 5–6, suggests that the Parthian attack on Nisibis early in the reign of Septimius Severus was 'clear evidence for forts and garrisons before Severus – there, presumably, since the end of Verus' Parthian War in 165 …'
112 Ross, *Roman Edessa*, p. 50.
113 Dio LXXV. 9.1.
114 Dio LXXV. 9.3–5.
115 Dio LXXVI.9.4; 11.1–12.5 described two attacks on Hatra, the first of which was unsuccessful and appears to have taken place at the end of 198. The second probably took place in the following year or early in 200. This attack was also unsuccessful, but not before the Roman soldiers had succeeded in breaching the walls. See pp. 153–4 for more discussion of the Severan attacks on Hatra.
116 Wagner, 'Provincia Osrhoenae', pp. 111–16, discusses a series of inscriptions which indicate that Osrhoene was established as a new province in 195 under the procurator C. Julius Pacatianus. The city of Edessa was excluded from the province and remained under the limited rule of Abgar the Great. Two later inscriptions indicating the building of forts and roads are thought to be evidence for the organization of the province under Severus. H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, p. 37, refer to two boundary stones of the kingdom of Edessa found 40 km to the west of the city and dating to between 195 and 205.
117 Millar, *Roman Near East*, pp. 121–2, describes the division of Syria with the northern half known as Coele Syria and the southern half as Syria Phoenice. Coele Syria had two legions while Syria Phoenice had one. Millar points out that the term 'Coele Syria' had previously been used to describe some regions in the south of Syria (p. 122, note 43). Millar plausibly suggests that Syria was divided into two provinces by Severus in an attempt to limit the potential for future rebellions following the success which Pescennius Niger initially enjoyed when he proclaimed himself emperor at Antioch, quickly gaining the support of a large and rich province (pp. 123–4).
118 Ulpian, *De Cens.*, 50.1.15, located Palmyra in Syria Phoenice *c.* AD 211/212.
119 Sartre, 'Arabs and Desert Peoples', in *CAH Vol. XII*, 2nd edn, p. 509.
120 Kennedy, 'Garrisoning of Mesopotamia', p. 58; Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 125.

121 *P.Euphr. 1*, in D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle après J-C)', *CRAI*, 1989, 546–8.

122 Kennedy, 'Garrisoning of Mesopotamia', pp. 59–60, presents the evidence for Legio I Parthica's establishment at Singara. See also Kennedy, 'Ti. Claudius Subatianus', pp. 255–6. Dio LV.24.4 detailed the legions in Mesopotamia as part of listing the legions created since the reign of Augustus (LV.23.1–24.4). Legiones I and III Parthicae were in Mesopotamia at the time he wrote, *c.*230. Severus raised these legions together with II Parthica which was in Italy according to Dio. Kennedy, 'Garrisoning of Mesopotamia', p. 59, claims that legions were usually 'formed in anticipation of the need to garrison new territory'. He refers to an inscription of 195 that names the prefect of an unnumbered Parthian legion (*praefectus legionis Parthicae*). This is thought to indicate that a Parthian legion was in existence by 195, which was soon after Severus' first Parthian war. The suggestion, then, is that all three legions were created between the first and second Parthian wars of Septimius Severus, that two of them were kept in Mesopotamia to garrison the new province, and that this was the original intention of forming them. Kennedy fails to acknowledge that Dio was reporting the two-legion garrison of Mesopotamia as it was *c.*230. Dio's well-known description of the legions, which had survived from Augustus' reign, and those raised since, placed the legions in their current provinces, not the provinces for which they had originally been raised. If the province of Mesopotamia was not formed until after the second Parthian war *c.*198, the legions raised for its garrison were raised well in advance of its organization. It is more likely that the three Parthian legions were raised by Septimius Severus in preparation for his wars with the Parthians. Perhaps one legion was raised for the first war and two more for the second. Two of the three legions were then left to garrison the new province of Mesopotamia.

123 F.G.B. Millar, 'The Roman *Coloniae* of the Near East: a Study of Cultural Relations', in H. Solin and M. Kajava, eds, *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History*, Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1990, pp. 38–9.

124 Dio LXXV.3.2.

125 Dio LXXV.3.2–3:

> ἔλεγέ τε μεγάλην τέ τινα χώραν προσκεκτῆσθαι καὶ πρόβολον αὐτὴν τῆς Συρίας πεποιῆσθαι.

> He used to declare that he had added a vast territory to the empire and had made it a bulwark for Syria.
>
> (*LCL*, trans. Cary)

126 Dio LXXV.3.3.

127 Pliny, *N.H.* V.21.

128 Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 100, suggests that Mesopotamia was defined under Trajan in similar terms to its definition under Severus. 'The Year 115 seems to have seen the creation of the province of "Mesopotamia", a term which now (as later under Severus) meant the north-Mesopotamian shelf as far as Nisibis and Singara; the frontier may perhaps have been envisaged as running down the river Chabur from near Singara to its confluence with the Euphrates'.

129 Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, XXIV.
130 Ross, *Roman Edessa*, pp. 57–63, provides a detailed account of Edessa's establishment as a *colonia*. See also Millar, 'Roman *Coloniae*', pp. 46–50.
131 The details are described in Xiphilinus' epitome of Dio LXXIX.1.1–3.5.
132 Dio LXXIX.5.4.
133 Dio LXXIX.26.2–27.3.
134 The parchments and papyri discovered at Dura Europos contain many references to agricultural activity on the Euphrates and lower Khabur rivers. Obviously irrigation had been practised on the banks of these rivers centuries before the Greeks and the Romans arrived, and the parchments and papyri indicate the importance of agriculture from the Seleucid to the Roman periods. Following is a brief list of documents published in C.B. Welles, R.O. Fink and J.F. Gilliam, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report Volume V, Part 1: The Parchments and Papyri*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, which indicate the productive nature of the river banks.

- *P.Dura 15* (Deed of Sale – second century BC) Citizen of Europos selling land with fruit trees and gardens.
- *P.Dura 25* (Deed of Sale – *c.* AD 180) Sale of half-share in a vineyard on the Khabur with fruit trees.
- *P.Dura 26* (Deed of Sale – AD 227) Sale of land with fruit trees and 600 vinestumps adjacent to a vineyard and irrigation canal.
- *P.Dura 64A* (Letter to Tribune of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum – AD 221) Order for the procurement of barley for the vexillation at Appadana on either the Khabur or Euphrates.
- *P.Dura 129* (Acknowledgement of receipt of money by Cohors XX Palmyrenorum – AD 225) Receipt of money for the purchase of barley for the cohort.
- *P.Dura 151* (Lease of land (?)– third century AD) Thought to be a lease of land for the sowing of barley.

2 PALMYRA AND ROME FROM THE MID-FIRST CENTURY BC TO THE THIRD CENTURY AD

1 J.B. Yon, *Les Notables de Palmyre*, Beyrouth: IFAPO, 2002, pp. 263–4, provides a table detailing a number of inscriptions from Palmyra honouring prominent escorts of caravans, particularly from the kingdom of Characene in the Persian Gulf. For an informative discussion of the protection of the caravans in the Near East, Arabia and the Persian Gulf from the second millennium BC to the late Roman period, see M. Maraqten, 'Dangerous Trade Routes: On the Plundering of Caravans in the pre-Islamic Near East', in *Trade Routes in the Near East and Cultural Interchange in the Arabian Peninsula, Aram Periodical* 8, Oxford: ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, 1996, pp. 213–26. M. Sommer, *Roms Orientalische Steppengrenz*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005, p. 155, discusses probable arrangements between the Palmyrenes and semi-nomads of the desert, and that some were recruited into the Palmyrene militias. He also claims that attacks on caravans are likely to have been rare because the Palmyrenes had themselves established good relations throughout the desert.
2 Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, p. 155.
3 Dio LIV.8.1–4; Suetonius, 'Vita Aug.', XXI.3, in *De Vita Caesarum*.
4 Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, p. 154, points out the importance of Palmyra's position in terms of regional conflict and instability.

5 The Temple of Bel at Dura was discovered in an area that would later become the necropolis located outside the city walls; the Temple of the Gadde, dating to the middle of the first century AD, was constructed inside the walls – both temples were very small. See further discussion in Chapter 4 and M.I. Rostovtzeff, A.R. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, pp. 218–21, 310–15.

6 The *cella* of the Temple of Bel was dedicated in AD 32 (*PAT 1347*). The foundations for the Temple of Baal-Shamin were laid out by AD 23, according to M.A.R. Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1976, p. 27; this dating was based on *PAT 0167*, a dedicatory inscription found on a column drum later re-employed in the temple and dating to AD 23. Three dedicatory inscriptions of AD 67 (*PAT 0158*, *PAT 0170*, *PAT 0329*) suggest that the construction of a significant part of the temple, as it survives, had been undertaken by this date. The precincts of the Temple of Nabu and the agora were probably laid out during the first century AD; Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, p. 88. D.G.K. Taylor, 'An Annotated Index of Dated Palmyrene Texts', *JSS* 46, 2001, 205–6, groups the datable Palmyrene texts into a table, which shows that their number peaks from *c.* 129 to 211/212. The table shows that datable inscriptions from Palmyra are comparatively scarce and only begin to increase in number in the middle of the first century AD. This analysis was crude on Taylor's own admission, but he concludes on p. 205 that '[t]heir distribution seems to reflect quite accurately the steadily growing prosperity of Palmyra throughout the period'. The period he refers to is from the earliest datable inscription of 44 BC to the last of AD 272/273.

7 D.L. Kennedy, 'Syria', in A.K. Bowman, E. Champlin and A. Lintott, *Cambridge Ancient History Volume X: The Augustan Empire, 43BC–AD69*, 2nd edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 713.

8 J.F. Matthews, 'The Tax Law of Palmyra: Evidence for Economic History in a City of the Roman East', *JRS* 74, 1984, 161–2, saw Palmyra as being drawn into the Roman sphere of influence by the latter part of the first century AD. B.H. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*, rev. edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 141–4, concludes that 'it was quite possible for Rome to forego [*sic*] the exercise of sovereignty while still claiming that a state was part of the empire. We must distinguish between the inclusion of Palmyra in the empire and its incorporation into the province of Syria'. C.R. Whittaker, *Frontiers of the Roman Empire*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994, pp. 54–5, states that the Romans could claim to have some authority over the city by AD 18 on the basis of the tariff law inscription. This led Whittaker to conclude: 'Theoretically, therefore, that extended Roman military rule, through Palmyrene militia, along the desert routes and watering points as far as the lower Euphrates and perhaps beyond'. Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenz*, p. 152, sees Palmyra as being under the political and military influence of the Roman Empire from the reign of Tiberius and perhaps formally affiliated with the province of Syria by the middle of the first century AD.

9 H. Seyrig, 'Le Statut de Palmyre', *Syria* 22, 1941, 170–1.

10 See, for example, G.W. Bowersock, 'Syria under Vespasian', *JRS* 63, 1973, 135–6, who saw Palmyra as being incorporated into the province of Syria at the time of Germanicus' visit to the East in the early reign of Tiberius. N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000, p. 16, expresses some reservations but favours Bowersock's

conclusion. In an archaeological analysis of the walls at Palmyra, D.P. Crouch, 'The Ramparts of Palmyra', *Studia Palmyrénskie VI et VII*, Warsaw: University of Jagellane, 1975, pp. 34–5, thought that a section of the city wall to the south of the camp of Diocletian dated to the early first century AD and that a part of the Roman legion that visited the city with Germanicus in AD 18 was probably responsible for building it. It was suggested that this proved the annexation of Palmyra during the reign of Tiberius. M. Sartre, 'The Arabs and the Desert Peoples', in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A. Cameron, eds, *The Cambridge Ancient History, vol. XII, The Crisis of Empire: AD193–337*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 511, also sees Palmyra as being part of the Roman Empire since the first century AD.

11 T. Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, 4 vols, Berlin, 1888–94, vol. 4, p. 423; G.A. Cooke, *A Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903, p. 263.

12 J. Starcky and M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1985, p. 37, 'Aujourd'hui, on est revenu à l'opinion de Mommsen et de Cooke, pour qui Palmyre perdit sa liberté au début de l'Empire: nous possédons toute une série de documents qui rendent certaine leur hypothèse …' See also M. Gawlikowski, 'Palmyra as a Trading Centre', *Iraq* 56, 1994, 28. G.K. Young, *Rome's Eastern Trade*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 136–7, suggests that the Palmyrenes were still 'semi-nomads' in the middle of the first century BC, but on the basis of the tax law of Germanicus from AD 18, and the boundary-markers of Creticus Silanus from AD 11–17, 'the city should accordingly be understood as a tributary city' of the Romans 'relatively early'.

13 Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, p. 16, concluded: 'It was not long, however, before independent Palmyra was brought under Roman control, and included in the Roman province of Syria set up by Pompey in 64–63 BC'. M.A.R. Colledge, 'Le Temple de Bêl. Qui l'a fait, et pourquoi?', in E. Frézouls, ed., *Palmyre bilan et perspectives: Colloque de Strasbourg*, Strasbourg: AECR, 1976, pp. 51–2, also made this suggestion and claimed further that the Temple of Bel was dedicated in AD 32 to celebrate Palmyra's incorporation into the Roman Empire. In a later article, M.A.R. Colledge, 'Roman influence in the Art of Palmyra', *Palmyra and the Silk Road*, AAAS 42, 1996, 363, was more doubtful on Pompey's inclusion of Palmyra in the province of Syria, stating that the Romans were only able to control the Mediterranean coastal part of Syria in the decades after Pompey's arrival. He suggested instead that on the basis of epigraphic evidence it was under Augustus that the Romans began to control all of Syria, including Palmyra. He goes on to suggest at p. 364 that Tiberius provided workmen to assist in building the Temple of Bel in AD 32. I. Browning, *Palmyra*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1979, p. 24, presumably following Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, also concludes that Palmyra was within the province of Syria from the time of Pompey.

14 F.G.B. Millar, *The Roman Near East*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993, pp. 34–5, suggests that by the reign of Tiberius 'Palmyra itself was also firmly within the Roman sphere of influence', and at p. 84 claims that evidence from the early reign of Vespasian shows 'the firm integration of Palmyra within the provincial system of Syria'.

15 Appian, *B.C.*, 1.9:

> When Cleopatra returned home Antony sent a cavalry force to Palmyra, situated not far from the Euphrates, to plunder it, bringing the trifling accusation against its inhabitants, that being on the

frontier between the Romans and the Parthians, they had avoided taking sides between them; for, being merchants, they bring the products of India and Arabia from Persia and dispose of them in the Roman territory; but in fact, Antony's intention was to enrich his horsemen.

16 Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 321, and F.G.B. Millar, 'Caravan Cities: The Roman Near East and Long Distance Caravan Trade by Land', in M. Austin, J. Harries and C. Smith, eds, *Modus Operandi*, London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998, p. 133, claims that as Appian wrote of Palmyra's mercantile success in the present tense his reference cannot be used as evidence of Palmyra's development of long-distance trade in the first century BC. Appian's reference to Palmyra's trading success when Antonius attacked it has been used in a circular way to establish the 'fact' of Palmyra's early trading success. L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria*, 1999, Leiden: Brill, p. 19, says 'Appian's suggestion that Tadmor was a thriving settlement before the Common Era is certainly correct'. She admits that there is no evidence at the site for Palmyra being a significantly wealthy city in the middle of the first century BC, but her assumption about Appian's claim not referring to the situation in the early second century AD eventually becomes a fact: 'The fact that Palmyra was a thriving settlement in the first century BCE suggests that long-distance trade had already begun at this time …' The lack of archaeological evidence does not necessarily disprove the claim as significant sections of Palmyra have not been excavated, and later building could also account for a lack of earlier evidence; however, with the very minimal evidence available from Palmyra prior to the first century AD it is difficult at this stage to conclude that Palmyra was thriving and it is questionable as to whether Appian thought so.

17 Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, p. 19.

18 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 36.

19 Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, pp. 58–9.

20 D.R. Hillers and E. Cussini, eds, *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 (*PAT*). *PAT 1524* is the earliest datable Palmyrene inscription and was put up by priests of the cult of Bel; see also Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, p. 16. *PAT 0457* is a foundation inscription for a tower tomb dedicated to 'TNTN (Atenaten) in 9 BC. A. Schmidt-Colinet, 'Aspects of "Romanization": The Tomb Architecture of Palmyra and its Decoration', in S.E. Alcock, ed., *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, Oxford: Oxbow, 1997, p. 157, discusses the tower tomb of Atenaten dating to 9 BC. *PAT 2766* is an honorific inscription on a statue base dating to 6 BC. There are another two inscriptions that may bear an early date, but in both cases the dating is disputed. *PAT 0315* is inscribed on an honorific statue base and may date to 17 BC, and *PAT 0460*, on a foundation stone for a tower tomb, may date to 4 BC.

21 The second oldest Palmyrene inscription, *PAT 1067*, was found at Dura Europos and celebrated the dedication of the Temple of Bel in the necropolis in 33/32 BC by two Palmyrenes.

22 *PAT 2754* – a fragmentary, undated inscription in Palmyrene referring to a mission of Alexandros ('LKSNDRWS) to the King of Mesene ([M]LK' MYŠNY) at the behest of Germanicus (GRMNQS). *Inv. IX.2* – a dedicatory inscription found in the Temple of Bel (in Latin only) to Drusus, Tiberius and Germanicus made by the legatus of Legio X Fretensis, Minucius Rufus. *PAT 0259* – the tariff law

of Palmyra in Greek and Palmyrene dated to AD 137 referring to a ruling of Germanicus at lines 181–2 of the Greek and lines 102–7 of the Palmyrene.

23 H. Seyrig, R. Amy and E. Will, *Le Temple de Bel a Palmyre*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1975, vol. 1, p. 149.

24 Isaac, *Limits of Empire*, p. 142.

25 *PAT 2754*.

26 D.T. Potts, 'The Roman Relationship with the *Persicus Sinus* from the Rise of Spasinou Charax (127 BC) to the Reign of Shapur II (AD 309–379)', in S.E. Alcock, ed., *The Early Roman Empire in the East*, Oxford: Oxbow, 1997, p. 94; D.T. Potts, 'Arabia and the Kingdom of Characene', in D.T. Potts, ed., *Araby the Blest: Studies in Arabian Archaeology*, Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 1988, p. 138. For a summary and discussion of ancient references to Characene and its foundations, see H.M. Bin Seray, 'Spasinou Charax and its Commercial Relations with the East through the Arabian Gulf', in *Trade Routes in the Near East and Cultural Interchange in the Arabian Peninsula, Aram Periodical* 8, Oxford: ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, 1996, pp. 15–23.

27 Potts, 'Roman relationship with the *Persicus*', p. 94.

28 Ibid., p. 97.

29 J.F. Healey, 'Palmyra and the Arabian Gulf Trade', in *Trade Routes in the Near East and Cultural Interchange in the Arabian Peninsula, Aram Periodical* 8, Oxford: ARAM Society for Syro-Mesopotamian Studies, 1996, pp. 33–4, suggests that Germanicus used Alexandros as an envoy as the Palmyrenes knew the area of the Persian Gulf well. Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 37, suggest that Germanicus was attempting to counterbalance Parthian influence in the kingdom of Characene.

30 Dio LXVIII.28.4. Potts, 'Roman relationship with the *Persicus*', p. 96, provides a table of inscriptions from Palmyra referring to caravans travelling from Spasinou Charax dating from the middle of the first century AD to the end of the second century. One of these is a dedication made by merchants from Spasinou Charax.

31 *PAT 0259*, lines 181–2 (Greek):

> Τὸ τοῦ σφάκτρου τέλος εἰς δενάριον ὀφείλει λο[γεύεσθαι] καὶ Γερμανικοῦ Καίσαρος διὰ τῆς πρὸς Στατείλι[ον ἐπισ] τολῆς διασαφήσαντος ὅτι δεῖ πρὸς *ἀσσάριον* Ἰτα[λικόν].

> The tax on animals for slaughter should be collected in denarii, as Germanicus Caesar also made clear in a letter to Statilius, to the effect that taxes should be collected in Italian asses.

32 Matthews, 'Tax Law of Palmyra', p. 179.

33 The ruling of Mucianus begins at line 150 in the Greek and line 74 in the Palmyrene version of the text. Other references were made in the text to rulings of Cn. Domitius Corbulo when he was governor of Syria *c*. 60–63 (Greek line 196, Palmyrene line 121) and to the ruling of an Imperial freedman (Greek line 93, Palmyrene line 62) in the reign of either Claudius or Nero. A tomb inscription dedicated to Lucius Spedius Chrysanthus in AD 58, *Inv VIII.57*, may indicate Roman involvement with tariff collection at Palmyra. The inscription is in Latin, Greek and Palmyrene, and Chrysanthus was referred to as MKS' (tax collector) in the Palmyrene version of the inscription. F.G.B. Millar, 'Latin in the Epigraphy of the Roman Near East',

in H. Solin, O. Salomies and U.-M. Liertz, eds, *Acta Colloquii Epigraphici Latini*, Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1995, pp. 410 and 412–13, suggests that Chrysanthus was either a native Palmyrene with an attachment to Graeco-Roman culture or an immigrant Greek with Roman citizenship collecting tariffs on behalf of the city. Millar thought that Chrysanthus was unlikely to have been a *publicanus*, and that he was collecting tariffs for Palmyra, rather than for the Roman administration in Syria, as he was only named as a tax collector in the Palmyrene version of the inscription.

34 Potts, 'Arabia and Characene', p. 143.
35 Tacitus, *Ann.*, 2.59; Suetonius, 'Vita Tib.', 52, in *De Vita Caesarum*.
36 Tacitus, *Ann.*, 2.56.
37 Ibid.
38 Suetonius, 'Vita Tib.', 57, in *De Vita Caesarum*.
39 Ibid., 52.
40 Tacitus is not entirely clear as to where the banquet was given, but it has been presumed that it was given in the Nabataean kingdom. Matthews, 'Tax Law of Palmyra', p. 164, suggests Bostra.
41 Ibid.
42 See Chapter 2.
43 D. Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières de la Palmyrène', *Syria* 20, 1939, 61–3. Only the relevant section of the inscription is cited here:

> p.p., fines regionis Palmyrenae,
> constitutos a Cretico Silano
> 10   leg. Aug. pr. pr. ex sententia Di-
> vi Hadriani patris sui, restitu(i)t

44 Matthews, 'Tax Law of Palmyra', p. 162, discusses the inscription and the possibility of it indicating the boundary between Emesa and Palmyra or Apamea and Palmyra. For the date of the inscription see Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières', p. 63. Two other inscriptions from Khirbet el-Bilaas were published by Schlumberger, indicating the ongoing significance of this location as a defined boundary or possibly as a tax collection point. One was very fragmentary, but appears to be from the early reign of Trajan and may be a boundary marker (Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières', pp. 52–61 and 66); the other dates to the reign of Nero, but it is so fragmentary that its purpose is unclear (Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières', pp. 64–6). R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le Limes de Chalcis*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1945, vol. 1, pp. 48 and 51, claimed to have identified a road running north-west from Palmyra designed for camels and dating to the second century AD. Khirbet el-Bilaas was on this road. See also vol. 2, plates XXIII and XXIV, which are aerial photographs of the area around Khirbet Bilaas.
45 Tacitus, *Ann.*, II.IV. R. Syme, *The Augustan Aristocracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 101.
46 Schlumberger, 'Bornes frontières', pp. 63–4.
47 The inscription reads 'Fin[es] inter Hadriano[s] Palmyrenos et [He]mesenos'.
48 *PAT 2754* is referred to on pp. 37–9 in the context of Alexandros and Germanicus and is claimed by Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 34, to have also made a reference to Sampsigeramus, king of Emesa, at line 6 of the inscription. Line 6 is very fragmentary and the only word that can be made out is 'King' (MLK). The name Sampsigeramus has been entirely restored.

49 The last member of the dynasty of Emesa appears to have been Sohaemus who Tacitus, *Ann.*, XIII.7, claimed Nero appointed as king of Sophene. The last reference to him as king of Emesa was made by Josephus, *B.J.* VII.7.1, who noted his assistance to Roman forces in bringing the dynasty of Commagene to an end in the reign of Vespasian. S.J. Carlos-Chad, *Les Dynastes d'Émèse*, Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1972, pp. 109–12, claims that Emesa retained a level of autonomy until it was annexed to Roman provincial territory some time between the reign of Trajan and that of Antoninus Pius. His evidence is slight, suggesting that it was probably annexed as part of Trajan's extension of the *limes* and that the earliest coins from the city were from the reign of Hadrian.

50 Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 34.

51 Matthews, 'Tax Law of Palmyra', p. 179.

52 Mouterde and Poidebard, *Limes de Chalcis*, vol. 1, p. 134.

53 H. Seyrig, 'L'incorporation de Palmyre à l'empire romain', *Syria* 13, 1932, 270–4 and 276–7, for publication of the milestone. Seyrig saw the milestone as proof of Palmyra belonging to the empire in AD 75 and suggested that the road ran from Palmyra to Sura. M. Gawlikowski, 'Palmyre et l'Euphrate', *Syria* 60, 1983, 60; Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 40, use the milestone as an indicator of the construction of a Roman road leading from Palmyra to the Euphrates, probably at Sura. Bowersock, 'Syria under Vespasian', pp. 133–6, accepts Seyrig's interpretation and links the road with the development of the agora at Palmyra in the Flavian period. J. Wilkes, 'Provinces and Frontiers', in *CAH vol. XII*, 2nd edn, p. 255, concludes: 'From there (Sùra) a desert road, first garrisoned under the Flavians, led south via Resafa to Palmyra and served to define the limit of Roman territory'. Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 81, proposes that the road may even have gone in the direction of the confluence of the Khabur and the Euphrates to what would become Circesium.

54 Seyrig, 'L'incorporation', p. 276: 'La restitution suivante est naturellement conjecturale dans ses détails, et notamment pour ce qui est de la longueur des abréviations'.

55   [IMPPVESPASIA]
          [NVSCAESARV]G
          [PONTIFMAX]
          [TRIBVNPOT]ESTVI
     5 [IMPERAT..]COSVI
          [DE]SIGVII
          [ETT]CAESARAVGF
          [VE]SPASIAN[P]ON
          [TRPIVIMP..CO]SIIII
    10 [SVB]
          [MVL]PIO[TR]AIANO
          LEGAVGPRO
          PR
          XVI

56 D. Kennedy and D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air*, Austin: University of Texas, 1990, p. 116, claim that Sura was garrisoned in the Flavian period on this basis. M. Gawlikowski, 'The Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', *Mesopotamia* 22, 1987, 77, also concludes that the road from Palmyra was a military road that joined 'the fortified shore at Sura'.

57 Pliny, *N.H.* V.88.

58 Bowersock, 'Syria under Vespasian', pp. 135–6: 'Pliny cannot be assumed to be speaking of his own time; he is reproducing without personal comment an earlier source, presumably Augustan'. Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, p. 20; Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 37.

59 Pliny, *N.H.* V.83.

60 Tacitus, *Ann.*, 12–15, Dio LX–LXIII.

61 Josephus, *A.J.*, VIII.154: 'And so, when he had built this city and surrounded it with very strong walls, he named it Thadamora, as it is still called by the Syrians, while the Greeks call it Palmyra'.

62 *PAT 0305* is an inscription dedicating a statue to Males who was *grammateus* when Hadrian visited the city.

63 *PAT 1374* is a dedication of a statue that refers to an individual named Iaraios who was a citizen of Hadriana Palmyra ([Ἀδ]ριανὸν Παλμυρηνὸν).

64 Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 106, points out that the date of the inscription, 130/131, does not necessarily mean that this was the date of the visit as the inscription in which the visit was mentioned was the dedication for a statue to a prominent Palmyrene rather than a commemoration of the visit. According to Millar, Hadrian is known to have been in Gaza in 130 and to have wintered in Egypt in 130/131. Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, p. 21, suggests a date of 129 for this visit.

65 H. Seyrig, 'Le Statut de Palmyre', *Syria* 22, 1941, 164 and 171–2, outlined his case for Palmyra becoming a free city at this time based on his interpretation of the tariff inscription. Seyrig's argument hinged on the *boule* at Palmyra having autonomy, particularly in fiscal matters, and the suggestion that Hadrian had appointed a *curator* for the collection of taxation, which was a common feature in the free cities of the provinces. M. Gawlikowski, *Le temple palmyrénien*, Warsaw: University of Jagellane, 1973, p. 47; Matthews, 'Tax Law of Palmyra', p. 162, are in agreement that Palmyra became a *civitas libera*.

66 The source for this claim is Stephen of Byzantium, *Ethnika*. Stephen of Byzantium wrote approximately 500 years later and his geographical knowledge has been described as poor and etymologies confused; see A. Kazhdan, 'Stephen of Byzantium', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, vol. 3, pp. 1953–4.

67 J.-P. Rey-Coqais, 'Syrie Romaine, de Pompée à Dioclétien', *JRS* 68, 1978, 50, discusses a number of cities such as Antioch, Laodicea and Seleucia, which had been free cities since the reign of Augustus, and the benefits which they enjoyed.

68 Millar, *Roman Near East*, pp. 324–5, claims that 'there is no basis for the modern notion that Palmyra now became a free city'. Repeated in Millar, 'Latin Epigraphy', p. 408. Evidence from the tariff law inscription was held by Millar to show that the city had undergone a significant transformation under Hadrian, but he rejects the idea that it had become a *civitas libera*.

69 Matthews, 'Tax Law of Palmyra', p. 174, note 5, points out that *dekraprotoi* were found 'very widely in eastern cities and were concerned with the exaction of local taxation and the supervision of certain financial transactions of the city'.

70 See further discussion on p. 49.

71 Yon, *Les Notables*, pp. 249–50, provides a summary of all 'Décrets du Conseil et du Peuple'.

72 *PAT 0269*.

73 J. Teixidor, *Un port romain du désert, Palmyre et son commerce d'Auguste à*

Caracalla, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1984, pp. 11 and 61. Potts, 'Roman relationship with the *Persicus*', p. 94.

74 Teixidor, *Un port romain*, pp. 61–2.

75 Yon, *Les Notables*, pp. 251–2, lists numerous epigraphic references to the tribes, the last of which dates to 279.

76 Gawlikowski, *Le Temple Palmyrénien*, pp. 47–8.

77 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 44, refer to the 'Senate' and 'People' when discussing the tariff law inscription. Their publication refers regularly to the Senate and People and to Senators of Palmyra.

78 J. Cantineau, 'Tadmorea', *Syria* 14, 1933, 174ff. See also Millar, 'Latin Epigraphy', pp. 410 and 413. This inscription was not published in *PAT*.

79 Matthews, 'Tax Law of Palmyra'.

80 Pliny, *N.H.*, 6.101, 12.84.

81 Ibid., 12.32.64–5.

82 This was probably the source of Stephen of Byzantium's claims, to which he added some personal interpretation.

83 The boundary marker discussed on pp. 41–2 confirmed the boundaries of Palmyra as laid out by Creticus Silanus dated to 153, and referred to Hadrian's reconfirmation of the boundary, but it did not refer to Palmyra as Hadriana Palmyra.

84 Yon, *Les Notables*, pp. 265–7, provides a table of Roman soldiers and officials named in the inscriptions of Palmyra, which shows that before 167 there are two datable dedicatory inscriptions from Palmyra that name individual centurions and one that makes a reference to Legio IV Scythica. These inscriptions were dated 115, 135 and 140/141 respectively. Another five undated inscriptions, which can be dated with reasonable certainty from the end of the first century AD to *c*.150, refer to legionary centurions and prefects of *alae* and *cohortes*. All of these inscriptions refer to Palmyrenes who were auxiliaries in the Roman army. These are discussed in greater detail on pp. 54–7.

85 Maraqten, 'Dangerous Trade Routes', p. 231. Millar, 'Caravan Cities', pp. 129 and 133, discusses papyrological evidence (*P.Euphr. 16*) for Saracens attacking caravans between Aleppo and Zeugma in the third century and epigraphic evidence dating to 144 that names a desert bandit leader who seems to have caused the Palmyrenes particular problems.

86 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 46. *PAT 1422* is a Greek and Palmyrene inscription that honoured Tiberius Claudius, who was probably a Palmyrene and had enjoyed a career in the Roman military with the typical cursus of an auxiliary officer drawn from allied or dependent kingdoms. The inscription is thought to date to the 150s.

87 It should be noted that Ulpia has been partially restored ([Οὐλπί]ας) in the inscription.

88 Gawlikowski, 'Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', pp. 78–80; *PAT 0319* is a dedicatory altar inscription of 132 to a cavalryman who was in camp at Hirta and Ana (prš [b]hyrt' wbmšryt' dy 'n'). See also Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, pp. 156–7.

89 Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, p. 157.

90 *PAT 0308* is an undated dedication naming Celesticus (QLSTQS), a centurion. *Inv. X 1*, another undated inscription, refers to a centurion of Legio III Gallica. *Inv. X 125*, also undated, refers to a prefect of Ala Thracum Herculiania. *PAT 1548* is a dedicatory inscription of 115 to Julius Maximus, a centurion of an unnamed legion. *PAT 1397* of 135 is a dedicatory inscription

also to an individual named Julius Maximus, a centurion of an unnamed legion. It is possible that they were the same person.

91 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, pp. 46–7.
92 Ibid., p. 46.
93 *PAT 1422*. Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 47, suggest that it was the same person. Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, p. 90, points out that Marcus Ulpius Iarhai is known to have received ten statues on the basis of present evidence.
94 G. Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army*, 3rd edn, London: A&C Black, 1985, p. 146: 'The commander of the *ala* was a *praefectus*. At first he would have been a chief of his tribe taking his rightful place at the head of his troops … The military steps in the *cursus* were normally: *praefectus cohortis*, *tribunus legionis* and *praefectus alae*'. This was noted earlier by G.L. Cheesman, *The Auxilia of the Roman Imperial Army*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914, p. 90. Tiberius Claudius had followed this cursus exactly finally to become prefect of a wing of Palmyrene camel riders. On this analysis, the inscription suggests that his last named position was the current one held by him. Having been raised under Trajan, the unit had continued to exist for approximately 50 years.
95 Marcus Ulpius Iarhai received an honorific inscription in the Agora in 156 (*PAT 1411*), four in 157 (*PAT 0306*, *PAT 1395*, *PAT 1396*, *PAT 1399*), and another in AD 159 (*PAT 1409*).
96 *Inv. X 108* and *109*.
97 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, pp. 47–8.
98 *Inv. IX 24*.
99 Webster, *Roman Army*, p. 143.
100 Ibid., p. 146.
101 A. Hyland, *Training the Roman Cavalry*, Dover: Alan Sutton, 1993, p. 78; Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 45.
102 *ILS* 2487 and 9134.
103 Hyland, *Roman Cavalry*, p. 78.
104 Cheesman, *Auxilia*, pp. 89–90.
105 Ibid., pp. 92–3.
106 Ibid., p. 94.
107 *Inv. IX 22*.
108 *Inv. IX 23*: Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 44, suggest that Julius Julianus may have gone on to be Praetorian Prefect under Commodus and that Vibius Celer was procurator of Arabia under Septimius Severus.
109 H. Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes 12: Textes relatifs à la garnison romaine de Palmyre', *Syria* 14, 1933, 153, claimed that there was not a permanent garrison at Palmyra until the early years of Commodus' reign, on the basis of evidence discussed on pp. 54–5, and that the Julius Julianus inscription was an early indication of the garrison's process of formation.
110 J. Carcopino, 'Le *Limes* de Numidie et sa garde syrienne', *Syria* 6, 1925, 119–20.
111 Carcopino, '*Limes* de Numidie', p. 120; Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 46.
112 Rostovtzeff *et al.*, *Dura Prelim. Report, Seventh and Eighth Seasons*, p. 83, inscription no. 845.
113 Ibid., p. 84, inscription no. 846.
114 Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes', p. 164, for the original publication of the inscription. M. Speidel, 'Numerus or Ala Vocontiorum at Palmyra?', in M. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies 1*, Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1984, pp. 167–9, challenges Seyrig's reading of *numerus* in this inscription in preference for *ala*

on paleographical grounds. The reading of *numerus* or *ala* is based on the interpretation of a single letter before the name of the unit. The inscription was carved in such an elaborate style that Speidel suggests that 'N' for *numerus* should be read as 'A' for *ala*.

115 Cheesman, *Auxilia*, p. 89; Speidel, 'Numerus Vocontiorum', pp. 167–9.
116 Seyrig, 'Antiquités syrienńes', p. 164.
117 Ibid., pp. 154 and 160.
118 Sartre, 'Arabs and Desert Peoples' in *CAH vol. XII*, 2nd edn, p. 511, points to decisive changes at Palmyra in the Severan period.
119 *Inv. X 64.*
120 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, p. 44.
121 M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre VIII: Les principia de Dioclétien*, Warsaw: University of Jagellane, 1984, pp. 125–6, inscription no. 40.
122 Ibid., p. 126, inscription no. 41.
123 Ulpian, *De Cens.*, 50.15.1.5. The same rights were bestowed on Palmyra as were granted to Emesa by Caracalla.
124 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, pp. 49–52.
125 *PAT 0278.*
126 *PAT 0285* (AD 262 naming Septimius Vorodes as strategos of the Colony, lines 4–5 Gk., line 4 Pal.), *PAT 0288* (AD 267 naming the same Septimius Vorodes as strategos of the Metrocolonia), *PAT 1415* (undated, naming Julius Aurelius Malicho as strategos of the colony).
127 F.G.B. Millar, 'The Roman *Coloniae* of the Near East: A Study of Cultural Relations', in H. Solin and M. Kajava, eds, *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies in Roman History*, Helsinki: Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters, 1990, pp. 42–5, discusses Palmyra as a Roman colony.
128 Seyrig, 'Antiquités syriennes', pp. 166–7.
129 Webster, *Roman Army*, p. 148.
130 See Chapter 6.
131 Starcky and Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, pp. 46 and 52.
132 Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, pp. 158–9.

3 ROMAN MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES IN THE THIRD CENTURY AD

1 N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000.
2 Ibid., p. 85.
3 Ibid., pp. 87–8.
4 Ibid., pp. 88–9.
5 Ibid., pp. 91–3.
6 The parchments and papyri discovered at Dura were not published in a final report until 1959. Some of the more important documents were published in the preliminary reports, but many documents were previously unpublished at the time of the publication of the final report. The recently discovered Euphrates papyri were published in an initial summary in 1989: D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle après J-C)', *CRAI*, 1989, 535–61. *P.Euphr. 1–5* were fully published, with commentary, in D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate', *JSav*, 1995, 65–119. *P.Euphr. 6–10* were also fully published in D. Feissel, J. Gascou and J. Teixidor, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate', *JSav*, 1997, 3–57. See also

H.M. Cotton, W.E.H. Cockle and F.G.B. Millar, 'The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey', *JRS* 85, 1995, 214–35, especially 219–20 and 222–3, for brief summaries of the Euphrates documents. These documents date from late in the reign of Severus Alexander to *c.* 250 and mostly originate in villages on the Khabur. They provide important information on the Roman administrative structure on the Khabur just before the Sasanian invasions. The documents are not military in nature and provide little information regarding military locations on the Khabur, but they refer to some sites that appear in the military papyri from Dura and they may also indicate aspects of the changing nature of administrative organization on the middle Euphrates and the Khabur in the first half of the third century AD.

7 M. Sommer, *Roms Orientalische Steppengrenze*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005, p. 308, holds the contrary position and sees the activity under the Severans on the middle Euphrates directed primarily at establishing a strongly fortified military border.

8 There are numerous examples of such activity in the fourth century. See Amm. Marc. XVIII.6.8ff. and 9.1 for Nisibis and Amida as locations to where thousands of residents in the surrounding countryside fled during the Persian invasion of Mesopotamia in 359.

9 There have been many modern attempts to locate sites on the basis of Isidore's measurement of distances between locations using the *schoenus*. V. Chapot, *La Frontière de l'Euphrate*, Paris: Geuthner, 1907 and G.L. Bell, 'The East Bank of the Euphrates from Tel Ahmar to Hit', *GJ* 36 (5), 1910, 513–37 are among many who have attempted to do so while travelling along the Euphrates. A. Musil, *The Middle Euphrates: A Topographical Itinerary*, New York: American Geographical Society, 1927, pp. 227–8, dealt with the issue of some inaccuracies in Isidore's measurements of distances in *schoeni* between some locations. The *schoenus* of Isidore was 4.7 km in Musil's estimate, based on the distances from Dura to the Khabur confluence and from Dura to Giddan and Giddan to Anatha. This depends on Musil's identification of Giddan as the ruins at modern aš-Šejh Ǧâber, and this has been rejected recently in favour of A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le Désert de Syrie*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1934, vol. 1, p. 90, who located it at Anqa. B. Geyer and J.-Y. Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée de l'Euphrate syrien du Néolithique à l'avènement de l'Islam*, 2 vols, Beyrouth: IFAPO, 2003, vol. 1, pp. 151–2, table 7, suggest a distance of 5–5.5 km for the *schoenus*, which is partly based on their acceptance of the identification of Merrhan at Tell Hariri/Mari and Giddan at Anqa both being further along the Euphrates than the locations suggested by Musil. J. Lauffray, *Halabiyya-Zenobia Place Forte du Limes Oriental et la Haute-Mésopotamie au VIe siècle*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1983, vol. 1, p. 78, notes inaccuracies in Isidore's measurements between locations on the Euphrates in the vicinity of Zenobia. The ancient measurement of the *schoenus* and the accuracy of Isidore's measurements between sites will remain controversial.

10 *P.Dura 20*, line 5, refers to an individual called Phraates who was strategos of Parapotamia and Mesopotamia. The editors of the papyri, following Rostovtzeff, thought that Parapotamia was the district on the right bank of the Euphrates and that Mesopotamia was on the left.

11 Polybius V.48.16.

12 *P.Dura 18* (AD 87), *P.Dura 19* (AD 88/89), *P.Dura 20* (AD 121) are all loan documents.

13 See also E. Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege des 3. Jahrhunderts n.*

Chr. nach der Inschrift Sāhpuhrs I. an der Ka' be-ye Zartošt (SKZ), Wiesbaden: Ludwig Verlag, 1982, p. 51.

14 The use of the term *numeri* is an interesting one as we know that Dura was garrisoned by a cohort. The use of this term may have been a general way of addressing the different types of auxiliary garrisons.

15 C.B. Welles, R.O. Fink and J.F. Gilliam, eds, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report Volume V, Part 1: The Parchments and Papyri*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, p. 223 (henceforth *Dura Final Report V.1*).

16 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, pp. 150–1, identify Gazica with Asicha. Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 229, located Asicha at what were then the ruins of al-Msâjeh, on the left bank of the Euphrates 18 km (four *schoeni* in Isidore) along the river from the Khabur confluence in the direction of Dura. At the time he made this observation, the Dura papyri were yet to be discovered. Geyer and Monchambert noted that Asicha was typically identified with the site of El 'Ashāra, but as this site is 10 km further along the Euphrates than the four *schoeni* of Isidore and is yet to return archaeological evidence beyond the Parthian period, they preferred Jebel Masāikh (Musil's al-Msâjeh).

17 Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.7; Zosimus, *Nov. Hist.*, III.14.2. Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, pp. 156–60, discuss the possible location of the tomb of Gordian III at length. They conclude that Zaitha could have been one of three locations, but prefer Jebel Masāikh.

18 Ptolemy, *Geog.*, V. 18.6.1; *Not. Dignit.*, *Or.* XXXVI, 24.

19 F. Sarre and E.H. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat und Tigris-Gebiet*, 4 vols, Berlin: Reimer, 1911–20, vol. 1, pp. 176–7; Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 82, note 46; Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, p. 134.

20 Chapot, *La Frontiere*, p. 466; *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 40.

21 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, pp. 150–1.

22 Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1989', p. 542.

23 P.V.C. Baur, M.I. Rostovtzeff and A. Bellinger, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fourth Season, 1930–31*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933, pp. 96–7 and 100–1.

24 Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1989', pp. 545–57, published this papyrus in full as part of their initial survey of the whole collection. Cotton *et al.*, 'Papyrology of the Roman Near East', p. 220, incorrectly assert that *P.Euphr. 8* refers to Beth Phouraia as being in the district of Appadana though it actually located Beth Phouraia in the territory of Theganaba. See Feissel *et al.*, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1997', pp. 34–5.

25 Feissel *et al.*, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1997', pp. 34–7, discuss this issue in detail.

26 Ibid., p. 37.

27 R. Dussaud, *Topographie Historique de la Syrie Antique et Médiévale*, Paris: Geuthner, 1927, p. 482, noted the importance of Hasseke as a 'node' for the roads that were important to the Khabur district.

28 Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1989', p. 558.

29 Isidore, p. 1.

30 F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura Europos (1922–23)*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1926, vol. 1, p. xiv, followed by Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, p. 151.

31 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 230. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, p. 90, did not attempt to identify the site.

32 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, pp. 140 and 151.

33 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 14 (note 12) and p. 230.

34 Steph. Byz., Meineke, p. 260, referred to Eddana as a Phoenician settlement named after the Dux Eddanon: Ἔδδανα, πόλις πρὸς τῷ Εὐφράτῃ, χατοιχία Φοινίχων, ἀπὸ Ἐδδανοῦ ἡγεμόνος. It is possible that Stephen was referring here to Odenathus of Palmyra. It is not inconceivable that Eddana was one of a number of Palmyrene trading posts along the Euphrates under its military control in the second and third centuries AD. According to Ulpian *De Cens*. 50.15.1.5, Palmyra was in the province of Syria Phoenice. D.S. Potter, *Prophecy and History: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 324, argues that lines 150–4 of *Oracula Sibyllina XIII*, which refer to Phoenicians, were actually referring to Emesenes and not Palmyrenes. Potter reasons that the oracle referred to Emesenes as Phoenicians because Emesa was in Syria Phoenice, which must equally hold for Palmyra. Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 14, note 12, briefly mentioned the claims of an Arabic writer, Jakut, who referred to two towns on opposite banks of the Euphrates called Azzan and Addan. Azzan belonged to Queen Zabba' and Addan belonged to her sister. It is possible that Queen Zabba' was Zenobia of Palmyra and that another connection with the Palmyrenes can be shown here (*PAT 0293* of AD 271 records Zenobia's name in Palmyrene as Septimia Bet Zabbai (sptmy' btzby)).

35 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, pp. 17, 170–1 and 230.

36 Ibid., p. 17.

37 Dussaud, *Topographie Historique*, p. 458.

38 M.I. Rostovtzeff, '*Res Gestae Divi Saporis* and Dura', *Berytus* 8, 1943, 25, note 25.

39 F. Cumont, 'Note 3: Stations on the Euphrates', in S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock and M.P. Charlesworth, eds, *Cambridge Ancient History*, *Vol. 11*, *The Imperial Peace – AD 70–192*, 1st edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939, p. 860; M. Gawlikowski, 'Bijan in the Euphrates', *Sumer* 42, 1985, 16.

40 Amm. Marc. 24.1.4–10 described Anatha as a fortress surrounded by the waters of the Euphrates while marching with Julian in 363. See Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, pp. 19–20 (general description) and pp. 345–9 (summary of historical references from the ninth century BC to the early nineteenth century AD); Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 50–1; D.L. Kennedy, 'Āna on the Euphrates in the Roman Period', *Iraq* 48, 1986, 103–4; D.L. Kennedy and A. Northedge, 'Āna in the Classical Sources', in A. Northedge, A. Bamber and M. Roaf, *Excavations at Ana*, London: BSA Iraq, 1989, pp. 1–5; D.L. Kennedy and D.N. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air*, London: Batsford, 1990, pp. 114–15. Some of the earliest references to the site come from inscriptions dating from the early second millennium BC and numerous references to the city have been found in the Assyrian records of the ninth century BC – see Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 345. There are no references to Ana in the Hellenistic period, while the only reference in the Parthian period is that of Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations* 1.

41 E. Valtz, 'Kifrin, the "*limes*" fortress', in E. Quarantelli, ed., *The Land Between Two Rivers: Twenty Years of Italian Archaeology in the Middle East*, Turin: Quadrante, 1985, p. 111, locates Kifrin 70 km downstream from Anqa/Eddana, and in E. Valtz, 'Kifrin: A Fortress of *Limes* on the Euphrates', *Mesopotamia* 12, 1982, p. 81, Kifrin is located 20 km downstream from Anatha, thus a calculation of 50 km from Eddana to Anatha. The distance from Dura to Eddana is estimated at 51 km by Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, p. 152.

42 *PAT 0319* is a dedicatory altar inscription of AD 132 to a cavalryman who was in camp at Hirta and Ana, suggesting that Ana was fortified at this time (prš [b]hyrt' wbmšryt' dy 'n'). See M. Gawlikowski, 'Palmyre et l'Euphrate', *Syria* 60, 1983, 60–1, for discussion of Ana as part of a section of the Euphrates garrisoned by Palmyrene troops even before 132. See also M. Gawlikowski, 'The Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', *Mesopotamia* 22, 1987, 78. *PAT 2757* is an inscription dating to 225 naming a strategos of Ana and Gamla. An undated Palmyrene inscription, *PAT 0196*, honours zb' on behalf of 'the riders in the *ala* of Ana and Gamla' (dy 'qymlh pršy' b'br ['] gml' w'n').

43 M.I. Rostovtzeff, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934, pp. 112–13, inscription no. 416 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report V*).

44 Ibid., pp. 133–4, raised the possibility of Azzanathkona as a deity from Anatha.

45 Ibid., p. 133.

46 Kennedy and Northedge, 'Āna in the Classical Sources', p. 7. Rostovtzeff, '*Res Gestae* and Dura', p. 25, note 25, also suggested the campaign of Severus Alexander as a possibility.

47 See Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 20, for the location of Gmeylah.

48 For the identification of Becchufrayn with Kifrin, see A. Invernizzi, 'Kifrin-Βηχχουφρείν', *Mesopotamia* 21, 1986, 53–84. References to soldiers of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum stationed at Becchufrayn include *P.Dura 100* (AD 219), *P.Dura 101* (AD 222), *P.Dura 82* (AD 233). *P.Dura 100* lists 91 soldiers and *P.Dura 101* lists 38 soldiers at Becchufrayn.

49 Valtz, 'Kifrin, 1982', p. 81.

50 Invernizzi, 'Kifrin-Βηχχουφρείν', 357.

51 Ibid.

52 Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, p. 309.

53 Gawlikowski, 'Bijan', p. 16.

54 For its location, including a photograph, see Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 167.

55 Gawlikowski, 'Bijan', p. 16.

56 Ibid., p. 15.

57 Ibid., p. 17.

58 Ibid., p. 16; cf. Gawlikowski, 'Roman Frontier on the Euphrates', p. 78.

59 Gawlikowski, 'Bijan', p. 16.

60 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, p. 152, table 7, gives the distance from Dura to the Khabur confluence. The distance from the confluence to Zenobia has been determined from Poidebard's measurement of the distance from Circesium to Qreiye as 45 km and from Qreiye to Zenobia as 44 km. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, pp. 85–6.

61 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, p. 147; Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 229, suggested that Phaliga was located on part of Buseire. Procop., *Bell. Pers.*, II.5.2–3, described Circesium as occupying the exact angle of the Euphrates and Khabur rivers in the mid-sixth century AD.

62 Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, p. 90; the editors of the parchments and papyri thought also that Phaliga was to the north of the confluence.

63 Arrian, *Fragmenta X* (*FHG*, p. 588).

64 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 111.

65 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, app. 3, pp. 334–7.

66 Ibid., p. 337, discussed an Arabic source which claimed that Circesium once belonged to Queen az-Zabba. This is one of a number of Arabic references listed by Musil to a Queen called Zabba controlling locations on the Euphrates.

67 Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.1; Procop., *Bell. Pers.*, II.V.2–3.
68 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, p. 147, photograph and plan p. 149.
69 Ibid.; see also Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, p. 89. Poidebard was able to see the site from the air but could not find it on the ground.
70 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 334: 'Even the present ruins appear to be divided into two unequal halves. In the southern half, or the present al-Bsejra, I locate the fortified settlement of Nabagath; in the northern, or the present al-Mitras, the commercial centre of Carcis or Phalga.'
71 *Dura Final Report V.I*, p. 127.
72 Ibid., p. 93.
73 Ibid., pp. 96–8.
74 Ibid., p. 160, suggested that Ossa was on the lower Khabur not far from the confluence with the Euphrates.
75 Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, p. 151.
76 Chapot, *Le Frontière*, p. 303.
77 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, pp. 337 and 339.
78 Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1989', pp. 542–3.
79 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, pp. 339–40.
80 Ptolemy, *Geog.*, V.18.3.
81 Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, pp. 339–40 and pp. 142–4.
82 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, p. 199, for the beginning of the canal on the Khabur. The analysis and description of the Dawrin canal from pp. 199–217 is particularly useful. The authors suggest that the canal was constructed at the beginning of the Bronze Age and was part of the expansion of the irrigation of the plain along the Euphrates.
83 Geyer and Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée*, vol. 1, p. 216.
84 *P.Dura 30*.
85 Dussaud, *Topographie Historique*, p. 487.
86 Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, vol. 1, pp. 184–5, with plan, also fig. 88; Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, pp. 136–7. Kennedy and Riley, *Desert Frontier*, p. 156. See also F.A. Pennacchietti and L. Cracco Ruggini, 'Una Fortrezza Romana di Frontiera nella Siria Orientale: BYRT 'RWPN – Castellum Arabionis – Tell 'Arbân', *Atti della Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti Classe di scienze movali storiche e filologiche*, serie 9, vol. 8, 1997, 749–62, who attempt to identify Birtha Arupan of the *SKZ* with Castellum Arabum of the Dura papyri.
87 Dussaud, *Topographie Historique*, p. 487.
88 Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, p. 185.
89 Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 2, plate VII.2.
90 Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, p. 52, outlines some of the earlier scholarship that attempted to identify Birtha Arupan and Birtha Asporakos. See Lauffray, *Halabiyya-Zenobia*, vol. 1, p. 77 on the identification of Birtha Asporakos as Zenobia.
91 Procop., *Bell. Pers.*, II.5.4–6.
92 Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1989', pp. 543 and 558.
93 This feature of the *SKZ* can be shown in all three versions. Parthian: MN plw'ly khde; Middle Persian: om prybr hmkwsy; Greek: πόλιν σὺν τῇ περιχώρῳ.
94 J. Napoli, 'Les Remparts de la Forteresse de Djazla sur le Moyen-Euphrate', *Syria* 77, 2000, 117–36. Djazla was identified by Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, pp. 163–4, fig. 73. While focusing on Djazla, Napoli also

briefly discusses Siffin. Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 188, described Saffin (Siffin) as a medieval fortress. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, pp. 85–8, calculated that Nouhaila lay 50 km upstream from Birtha Asporakos/Zenobia, making the distance from Djazla to Zenobia 33 km. See also Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 2, plate LXXXI, for an aerial photograph of Nouhaila. Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, vol. 1, p. 163, identified Nouhaila and drew a sketch plan of its location and walls.

95 Napoli, 'Djazla', pp. 117–20.

96 K. Kohlmeyer, 'Euphrat Survey – 1984: Die mit Mitteln der Gerda Henkel Stiftung durchgeführte archäologische Geländebegehung im Syrischen Euphrattal', *MDOG*, no. 118, 1986, pp. 58–60. R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, *Le Limes de Chalcis*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1945, vol. 1, p. 129; vol. 2, plate LXXVII suggested that Nouhaila was part of a system of Roman fortifications on the Euphrates as early as the Augustan period.

97 See Chapter 1, pp. 13–14.

98 Mouterde and Poidebard, *Limes de Chalcis*, vol. 1, p. 129.

99 Ibid., pp. 117 and 132.

100 Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, pp. 85–8.

101 Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, vol. 1, pp. 168–70.

102 See A. Lemaire and H. Lozachmeur, 'Bīrāh/Birtā' en Araméen', *Syria* 64, 1987, 261–6, for the historical development of the meaning of the term BYRT' in Parthian, Hebrew, Nabataean and Middle Persian.

103 A. Maricq, 'Res Gestae Divi Saporis', Classica et Orientalia 5, *Syria* 35, 1953, 338–57. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, pp. 85–6, for a table of distances between sites, and vol. 2, plates LXXXVI, LXXXVII.

104 Lauffray, *Halabiyya-Zenobia*, vol. 1, pp. 76–7. Sarre and Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise*, vol. 1, pp. 168–9; Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, p. 183 both identified Tabous but made no mention of Qreiye.

105 M. Lönnqvist, K. Lönnqvist, M.S. Whiting, M. Törmä, M. Nunez and J. Okkonen, 'Documenting, Identifying and Protecting a Late-Roman Byzantine Fort at Tabus on the Euphrates', (http://cipa.icomos.org/fileadmin/papers/Torino2005/427.pdf?PHPSESSID=9b414897c617b0e302f9eee7309412a8), accessed 2 January 2007.

106 The website for the German Archaeological Institute in Damascus identifies Qreiye as Birtha Arupan of the *SKZ*: www.dainst.org/index_742_de.html (accessed 20 December 2006). *P.Euphr 2*, which has been dated 245–250, is a petition from an inhabitant of a place called Birtha Okbanon, which Feissel and Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains 1989', p. 542, suggest was Birtha Arupan; but the differences between the two names is perhaps too great.

107 *P.Dura 81* (*c.* 250) is a fragment of a letter that also mentions an Alexandria.

108 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 40.

109 J.F. Gilliam, 'The *Dux Ripae* at Dura', *TAPA* 72, 1941, 171–2, suggested that the *Dux Ripae* at Dura commanded the forces on the Euphrates as far south as Biblada and perhaps as far north as the lower Khabur. See Chapter 4 for discussion of the *Dux Ripae* and the many problems associated with his existence and function at Dura.

110 S. James, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Final Report VII – The Arms and Armour and other Military Equipment*, London: British Museum, 2004, p. 19 (henceforth *Dura Final Report VII*).

111 Fronto, *Princ. Hist.*, 16, referred to Trajan organizing the customs dues (*portoria*) on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers during his campaign against the Parthians.

112 The formulaic inclusion of πόλιν σὺν τῇ περιχώρῳ (the city of … with its surrounding territory) is only included in this translation on the first occasion.

113 Trans. M.H. Dodgeon and S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars: AD 226–363*, rev. edn, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 50.

114 For example, Rostovtzeff, '*Res Gestae* and Dura', pp. 23–7; A.T. Olmstead, 'The Mid-third Century of the Christian Era', *CP* 37, 1942, 403–10; M. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir*, Chicago: University of Chicago, 1953, pp. 87–97; H.R. Baldus, *Uranius Antoninus: Münzprägung und Geschichte*, Bonn: R. Habelt, 1971, pp. 229–36; especially Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 50–87; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 303–7; P. Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Kaʿba-i Zardušt (ŠKZ)*, 2 vols, London: SOAS, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 59–77.

115 Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 52–3; Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift*, vol. 2, p. 60.

116 Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome*, vol. 1, p. 84.

117 Pliny, *N.H.*, 5.87.

118 See Chapter 2, pp. 43–4, for more discussion.

119 Kennedy and Riley, *Desert Frontier*, p. 116; Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, pp. 266–7, notes evidence for Legio XVI Flavia Firma being based at Samosata *c*.180 just before the Severan period, suggesting that it was moved to Sura under Septimius Severus.

120 See Chapter 4, pp. 139–42.

121 *Orac. Sib. XIII*, line 97. The oracle makes few references to specific cities, which may indicate Sura's importance in Syria locally at this time; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 277. The recent publication of the German Archaeological Institute's excavations at Resafa includes reports on excavations at Sura and notes evidence of quay walls and bridge piers 5 km downstream from the site of Sura. A possible date for the bridge's construction is not offered and the remains as they have been observed may date to a later period. However, this could be evidence of a long-standing crossing point at this site: M Konrad, *Resafa V: Der spätrömische Limes in Syrien*, Mainz: P. von Zabern, 2001, p. 118.

122 Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.2–3.

123 *SKZ*, line 13; Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, p. 53; Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift*, vol. 2, p. 60.

124 Ptolemy, *Geog.*, V.15.17; Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, pp. 314–18, provides a complete list of all references to Barbalissos mentioned in the source material from the reference in Ptolemy to the Turkish period. The martyrdom of Bacchus was described in the same martyrdom story as that of Sergius at Resafa. See E.K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, for an investigation of the cult of St Sergius.

125 *SKZ*, line 11.

126 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 294, claims:

> The gathering of the army which was defeated at Barbalissos suggests that Gallus had planned to undertake some sort of offensive operation. This conforms with the claim of the *Res Gestae* and the statement of Zonaras that earlier trouble in Armenia lay behind the Persian invasion.

127 Ibid., p. 294:

The legions on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire in the mid-third century were IV Scythica at Zeugma or Cyrrhus or Oresa, XVI Flavia Firma at Samosata or Soura, III Gallica at Danaba, XV Apollinaris at Satala, I Parthica at Singara and III Parthica at Rhesaena. The muster of a substantial force drawn from these legions would take a good deal of time, and the very existence of such a force does not suggest that the Romans were taken off guard by the Persian attack. Nor, of course, can it be proved that a force of this size did not include elements drawn from other parts of the empire.

128 Kennedy and Riley, *Desert Frontier*, p. 40.
129 Rostovtzeff, '*Res Gestae* and Dura', pp. 23–7 and 53.
130 M. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran*: *Sapor and Kartir*, Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1953, p. 88.
131 S. James, 'Dura Europos and the Chronology of Syria in the 250s AD', *Chiron* 15, 1985, 111–24 and D.J. MacDonald, 'Dating the Fall of Dura Europos', *Historia* 35, 1986, 45–68, both refuted Rostovtzeff's reasoning for a Persian capture of the city in 253 and concluded that the city only fell once. A re-reading of the Middle Persian dipinti from the synagogue by F. Grenet, 'Les Sassanides a Doura-Europos (253 ap.J.C.): réexamen du matériel épigraphique iranien du site', in *Géographie Historique au Proche-Orient*, Paris: CNRS, 1990, pp. 133–58, now concludes that the city was occupied by the Sasanians twice. Grenet also analysed Parthian documents from Dura as well as ostraka from the site to show that there was a form of Sasanian administration at Dura for a brief time after its capture. Harmatta discussed the Parthian ostraka and documents as evidence for the Sasanian occupation of Dura, but as a result of the final capture of the city rather than an earlier one which the synagogue dipinti now suggest; J. Harmatta, 'Die Parthischen Ostraka aus Dura-Europos', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae*, 5, 1957, 87–175, and see J. Harmatta, 'The Parthian Parchment from Dura-Europos', *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae* 5, 1957, 301–8. The dating of Dura's first capture and occupation has been summarized by James, *Dura Final Report VII*, pp. 23–4: 'it now seems almost certain that the Persians occupied the city for many months in 253 and probably the winter of 252/253 or that of AD 253/254, or conceivably both, before the Romans forced them to withdraw by means unknown'. A divorce document from Dura of 254, dated by the reigns of Valerian and Gallienus (*P.Dura 32*), shows that the Romans were again in control of the city at some stage in 254. The numismatic evidence for the final siege and capture of the city provides a *terminus post quem* for this event of 256/257. See Chapter 4 for more analysis of the date of the final capture of Dura Europos.
132 Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 96.
133 Ibid., p. 47.

4 DURA EUROPOS ON THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES IN THE PARTHIAN AND ROMAN PERIODS

1 N. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians in Roman Syria*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000; S. James, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Final Report VII – The Arms and Armour and other Military Equipment*, London: British Museum, 2004 (henceforth *Dura Final Report VII*).
2 C. Hopkins, *The Discovery of Dura Europos*, New Haven: Yale, 1979, pp. xxi–xxiv and 1–6. Hopkins's book provides background detail of the earlier

archaeological work performed at Dura Europos and goes on to consider each season of the Yale excavations chapter by chapter before providing a brief consideration of the history of Dura and its fall to the Persians.

3 F. Sarre and E.H. Herzfeld, *Archäologische Reise im Euphrat und Tigris-Gebiet*, 4 vols, Berlin: Reimer, 1911–20, vol. 2, pp. 386–95, provided a brief description of the site and published some plans and inscriptions on the basis of a brief visit to the site in 1912.

4 J.H. Breasted, 'Peintures d'époque Romaine dans le désert de Syrie', *Syria* 3, 1922, 177–206; J.H. Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners of Byzantine Painting: First Century Wall Paintings from the Fortress of Dura on the Middle Euphrates*, Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1924. This publication includes an account of Breasted's voyage from Baghdad and his initial observations of the site, with an analysis of the paintings and hand-coloured reproductions of them. The paintings were later almost completely destroyed due to exposure to the weather and deliberate defacement. Breasted's photographs are, therefore, the only record of the paintings in their original state.

5 For an analysis of the political context in which the Dura excavations took place in the 1920s and 1930s, see Ch. Velud, 'Histoire de recherches à Dura Europos. Contexte historique régional des fouilles de Doura-Europos entre les deux Guerres mondiales', in *Doura-Europos*, *études 1988* = *Syria* 65, 1988, 363–82; *Dura Final Report VII*, pp. xxiii–xxiv. In a recent study, Annabel Wharton analyses the studies of Dura by earlier scholars such as Breasted, Hopkins and Rostovtzeff as orientalizing and emphasizing marginalization and corruption of more virtuous Hellenistic cultural aspects; A.J. Wharton, *Refiguring the Post Classical City: Dura Europos, Jerash, Jerusalem and Ravenna*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 15–23.

6 F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos (1922–1923)*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1926; cf. Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 11.

7 S. Matheson, 'The Tenth season at Dura-Europos 1936–1937', *Syria* 69, 1992, 121–40.

8 Ibid., p. 139.

9 P. Leriche, 'Dura Europos', in E. Yarshater, ed., *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. VII, New York: Persica Press, 2002, p. 589. See P. Leriche, A. Mahmoud, B. Mouton and G. Lecuyot, 'Le Site de Doura-Europos: État Actuel et Perspectives d'Action', *Doura-Europos: études 1986* = *Syria* 63, 1986, 5–25, for a history of excavation at the site from 1920–1937 and a description of the state of the site when excavation was recommenced in 1982.

10 P. Leriche, ed., *Doura-Europos: études 1986*, Paris: Geuthner, 1986; P. Leriche and A. Al-Mahmoud, eds, *Doura-Europos: études 1988*, Paris: Geuthner, 1988; P. Leriche and A. Al-Mahmoud, eds, *Doura-Europos: études 1990*, Paris: Geuthner, 1992.

11 P. Leriche and M. Gelin, eds, *Doura-Europos: études IV 1991–1993*, Beirut: IFAPO, 1997. P. Leriche, M. Gelin and A. Dandrau, eds, *Doura-Europos: études V 1994–1997*, Paris: Geuthner, 2004. See also P. Leriche, 'Doura-Europos: Bilan de la Campagne 1998', *AAAS* 44, 2001, 107–30.

12 Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, 1. See Chapter 3 for the text and translation of the relevant sections of the *Parthian Stations*.

13 Polybius V.48.16.

14 Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.8; see also Zosimus, *Nov. Hist.*, III.14.2.

15 Pliny, *N.H.*, VI.117.

16 *P.Dura* 32, lines 4–5. There are some problems with the reading of Nicator in this papyrus.

17 M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, C. Hopkins and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Seventh and Eighth Seasons: 1933–1934 and 1934–1935*, New Haven: Yale, 1936 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*), pp. 258–60, 278.

18 *P.Dura 25*, lines 19–20, a deed of sale, refers to Danymus as priest of King Seleucus Nicator. There is a possible reference to a priest of Seleucus Nicator in *P.Dura 37*, which is also thought to date to the late second century AD.

19 For an analysis of the location of Dura that provides a geological, hydrological and geographical analysis of the site and its environs, see B. Geyer, 'Le Site de Doura-Europos et son Environnement Géographique', *Doura-Europos: études 1988 = Syria 65*, 1988, 285–95.

20 M.I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, 3 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941, p. 484.

21 The importance of grape production and wine supply in the vicinity of Dura Europos is shown in a number of documents from the Parthian and Roman periods. *P.Dura 23* of AD 134 details a loan to Aththaeus, a local of Ossa somewhere on the lower Khabur, by Lysias, a resident of Europos, of which the annual interest charge was made in vats of wine. *P.Dura 25* (AD 180), *P.Dura 26* (AD 227) and *P.Dura 27* (AD 225–240) are deeds of sale of vineyards all located within the vicinity of Dura. *P.Dura 129* of AD 225 details the purchase of local barley on behalf of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum.

22 Leriche, 'Dura 2002', p. 589.

23 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, p. 22; Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, pp. 235–6.

24 See A.W. McNicol, *Hellenistic Fortifications from the Aegean to the Euphrates*, rev. N.P. Milner, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 89–94, which provides a useful summary of the evidence for Dura's urban and defensive layout along early Hellenistic lines.

25 S.B. Downey, 'The Citadel Palace at Dura Europos', *Doura-Europos: études 1986 = Syria 63*, 1986, 27–37. Similarities in the combination of Greek and Mesopotamian architectural forms between Dura Europos and Ai Khanoum in Afghanistan are emphasized in this article.

26 Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, pp. 252–3.

27 Downey, 'Citadel Palace', pp. 27 and 34.

28 P. Leriche, 'Chronologie du Rempart de Brique Crue de Doura-Europos', *Doura-Europos: études 1986 = Syria 63*, 1986, 70. P. Leriche, 'Doura Europos Grecque, Parthe et Romaine', *Mesopotamia 22*, 1987, 62: 'C'est donc bien à l'époque grecque qu'il faut, pour moi, placer l'édification des fortifications de pierre de Doura Europos. Il est probable que le projet avait été élaboré dès la fondation de la ville, comme pour les autres cités séleucides de Syrie, Antioche, Laodicée, Apamée ou Cyrrhus.' Cf. McNicol, *Hellenistic Fortifications*, pp. 91–2. The date of the Parthian capture of the city is discussed below (see pp. 101–2). The details of Roman additions and alterations to the walls are also considered in more detail (see p. 145).

29 P. Leriche, 'La Porte de Palmyre à Doura-Europos', in M. Gawlikowski, ed., *Palmyra and the Silk Road*, Damascus: ARAM, 1996, p. 246. The earlier suggestion that the Palmyra Gate was completely remodelled in the Parthian period following Pompey's arrival in Syria has now been discounted. Cf. Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, pp. 237–8.

30 S.B. Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture: Alexander through the Parthians*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, pp. 77–8.

31 E. Will, 'La Population de Doura-Europos: Une Évaluation', *Doura-Europos: études 1988 = Syria* 65, 1988, 315–21, proposes that Dura was founded *ex nihilo* and that its early population would have numbered no more than 6,000.

32 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 78.

33 S.B. Downey, 'The Transformation of Seleucid Dura-Europos', in E. Fentress, ed., *Romanisation and the City: Creation, Transformation and Failures*, Portsmouth, R.I.: JRAS, 2000, pp. 159–60.

34 A.R. Bellinger, ed., *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Final Report Volume VI – The Coins*, New Haven: Yale, 1949, pp. 1–6. (henceforth *Dura Final Report VI*).

35 On the basis of Bellinger's classification, 953 of the Seleucid coins found at Dura were minted at Antioch.

36 C.E.V. Nixon, 'The Coins', in G.W. Clarke *et al.*, *Jebel Khalid on the Euphrates*, vol. 1, Sydney: Meditarch, 2002, pp. 299–300, notes striking similarities between the percentage of Seleucid coins minted at Antioch from both Dura and Jebel Khalid, which is situated approximately 300 km up the Euphrates from Dura. It is thought that Jebel Khalid was abandoned when Pompey organized the new province of Syria *c.* 65 BC as there is a break in numismatic finds at the site for the next 400 years. The sites are not able to be compared in this way during the period of Parthian control of Dura, but the numismatic evidence from both sites in the Seleucid period illustrates the importance of the Antioch mint. The importance of the Antioch mint as a source of coins at Dura from the Parthian period of control is even more striking, given its distance from Antioch and that the two cities were under the control of different powers.

37 *Dura Final Report VI*, pp. 200–1; C.B Welles, 'The Chronology of Dura Europos', *Eos* 48, 1956, 469; A. Perkins, *The Art of Dura Europos*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 5; Leriche, 'Dura 2002', p. 589: McNicol, *Hellenistic Fortifications*, p. 90; L. Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura Europos*, Leiden: Brill, 1999, p. 4. The list is not exhaustive, but it shows the general acceptance of the date of *c.*113 BC or, in the case of Dirven, that 'Europos was conquered *in* 113 BC' (my italics).

38 *Dura Final Report VI*, p. 201.

39 Ibid., p. 200.

40 Ibid., p. 201.

41 F.G.B. Millar, 'Dura Europos under Parthian Rule', in J. Wiesehöfer, ed., *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse/The Arsacid Empire: Sources and Documentation, Historia Einzelschriften*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1998, pp. 475–6: 'An even greater silence envelopes Dura in the first six or seven decades of Parthian control … It should therefore be stressed that the "Parthian" Dura of which we can know something, and on which some of our material, both written and iconographic, throws a lot of light, is that which was contemporary with the first two hundred years of the Roman Empire, from the 30's of the first century BC to the 160's AD'.

42 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. xxv–xxvi; Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 257. Both refer to the fluidity of the frontier in the early part of the first century BC.

43 Plutarch, *Sulla*, V.3–4; *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII* p. 23, note 1, claims that Seleucia first became Parthian in 140/139 BC and was briefly lost to Antiochus VII in 130/129 BC.

44 A.H.M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 253–4.

45 Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations*, 1.
46 A brief summary of the main Hellenistic features of Dura can be found in P. Leriche, 'Doura-Europos Hellenistique: Bilan des Recherches Actuelles', in P. Bernard and F. Grenet, eds., *Histoire et Cultes de l'Asie Centrale Préislamique*, Paris: CNRS, 1991, pp. 13–15.
47 Leriche, 'Dura 2002', p. 589.
48 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 93.
49 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 310–17, discussed the architecture of this temple and pp. 318–20 discussed the dedicatory inscription in Palmyrene, which at the time of its discovery was the earliest datable Palmyrene inscription found anywhere. See *PAT 1067*.
50 The Temple of Azzanathkona was built by AD 12/13 on the basis of the earliest inscription found in the temple (Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 99), Zeus Kyrios by AD 28/29 (*Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 285 and 307), Atargatis by AD 31/32 (Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 102), Bel (Palmyrene Gods) by AD 50/51 (Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 105) and Aphlad by AD 54 (Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 110).
51 Zeus Theos was dedicated in 120/121 but the court gateway of the temple was dedicated in 114 by the same dedicant (*Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 212–14). The Temple of the Gadde was built by 159 (*Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 256), and the first phase of the Temple of Adonis was undertaken *c.*150–160 but added to early in the Roman period (Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 118).
52 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 90.
53 Ibid.
54 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, p. 409, inscription no. 52, names a strategos of the city who is named elsewhere in an inscription of AD 61. Inscription no. 53 is a dedication to Emperor Lucius Verus, which Cumont associated with this emperor's capture of the city *c.*165. The inscription was put up by the *epistates* of Dura. Inscription no. 50 is a dedication, probably of the third century, by members of the *boule* of the city.
55 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 92, analyses female names from the *salle aux gradins* (Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 427–43, inscription nos 85–121) in this temple and found that of the 26 names attributable to this period, 22 were members of families with Greek or Macedonian names while four suggest a mixture of Greek and Semitic background. Her suggestion is that the temple appears to have continued to function in a wholly Hellenistic manner with little evidence of a change from the period of Seleucid control of the city. See Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 412–26, inscription nos. 57–84, which lists 28 inscriptions from the pavement of one of the rooms from the temple that date from as early as 7–6 BC and as late as 140–141 in which most names are also Greek.
56 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 93.
57 Ibid., p. 95.
58 Ibid.
59 The temple was dedicated in AD 120/121 (*Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 214, inscription no. 888). *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 201–2, for the suggestion of an Iranian origin for this god.
60 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 115.
61 Ibid., p. 104.
62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., p. 99. The *salle aux gradins* appears to have been reconstructed in 107/8 with the addition of two rooms in 153 and two other rooms in 161.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid., pp. 100–1.

68 Ibid., p. 110.

69 Ibid.

70 Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, p. xv, begins her study of the religious interaction of Palmyrenes at Dura Europos with these words: 'The object of this study is the religion of the Palmyrene community in Dura Europos'. The Palmyrenes are treated as a distinct group on a local level at Dura Europos. In the analysis of the temple discovered in the necropolis at Dura, which was dedicated to the Palmyrene gods Bel and Yarhibol in 33 BC by two Palmyrenes, *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 318 and 324, highlights the importance of the Palmyrenes at Dura and their distinctiveness at the city from this early time. The presence of residents of Anatha as an identifiable group within the city is demonstrated in the Temple of Aphlad located in the south-west corner of the city and dedicated to the god of Anatha in AD 54 by an association of merchants and their families who came from Anatha: Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, pp. 87–8.

71 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 310.

72 Ibid., pp. 318–20, inscription no. 916; R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Inventaire Des Inscriptions Palmyréniennes de Doura-Europos*, Paris: Geuthner, 1939 (henceforth *Inv. Doura*), inscription no. 1 = *PAT 1067*; Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, pp. 199–202.

73 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 322–3; Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, pp. 96–9.

74 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 323. The new temple and the old temple were joined by a series of doorways. An inscription of 173 probably refers to this activity. It is possible also that the worship of Arsu or Malakbel was added to the temple at this time.

75 Ibid., p. 321, inscription no. 918; Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, pp. 42 and 203–7.

76 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 98.

77 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 257.

78 Ibid., p. 244.

79 Ibid., p. 257.

80 Ibid., pp. 220–2 and 256; Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 115 points out that considerable sections identified as earlier phases of this temple strongly resemble house plans.

81 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, inscription no. 912 (no *PAT* referenced and not published in *Inv. Doura*), 913a (*PAT 1110*, *Inv. Doura* no. 44), 913b (*PAT 1111*) (pp. 281–2), *PAT 1112* (*Inv. Doura-Europos* no. 46) not published in the preliminary report. See Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, pp. 223–6 for discussion of these inscriptions.

82 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 257.

83 Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners*, p. 88, identified the individuals named in the paintings in other datable inscriptions so as to calculate a date of *c.* 75 for the paintings. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 140–2, concurred with the dates and the suggestion of the individuals as local Durenes.

84 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 105.

85 Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, p. 294.

86 *PAT 1089*; *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 308–9.

87 At Palmyra, the sanctuary of Baalshamin had a strong association with the Bene Ma'ziyan who it is thought brought the god with them to Palmyra in the late Hellenistic period from the desert region south of Palmyra. Cf. Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, pp. 78–81; T. Kaizer, *The Religious Life of Palmyra*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002, p. 79.

88 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 307.

89 Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, pp. 220–1.

90 *PAT 1067–1121* lists 55 Palmyrene inscriptions, but leaves out inscription no. 912 published in *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 282. *Inv. Doura* also included 55 inscriptions and left out inscription no. 912. Both *PAT* and du Mesnil published an inscription from the Temple of the Gadde that was not included in *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII – PAT* 1112, *Inv. Doura*, no. 45.

91 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, p. 109. The prosperity of the Palmyrene community at Dura by the first years of the Roman period is shown in the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods with graffiti lists detailing the presence of 37 golden images and numerous statues in the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods in AD 165/166.

92 L. Dirven, 'The Nature of the Caravan Trade between Palmyra and Dura Europos', in *Trade Routes in the Near East and Cultural Interchange in the Arabian Peninsula*, ARAM Periodical vol. 8, Oxford: ARAM, 1996, pp. 39–40.

93 Ibid., p. 40.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., p. 41.

97 Ibid., pp. 43–4; M. Gawlikowski, 'Palmyre et l'Euphrate', *Syria* 60, 1983, 53–68.

98 Dirven, 'Nature of the Caravan Trade', p. 44.

99 Ibid.

100 R. Mouterde and A. Poidebard, 'La voie antique des caravanes entre Palmyre et Hit au IIe siècle AP. J.-C.', *Syria* 12, 1931, 101–15.

101 Dirven, 'Nature of the Caravan Trade', p. 41.

102 Millar, 'Parthian Rule', pp. 476–7: 'it is worth asking briefly how we would in fact know, on the basis of the evidence from the site itself, that Dura actually had been under the Parthian kings. The evidence is in fact quite limited. There are no sculptures, reliefs or wall-paintings representing any of the Parthian monarchs, and there is no trace of any institutions for their cult … there are in fact no inscriptions from "Parthian" Dura which specifically name any of the Parthian kings.'

103 See R.N. Frye, ed., *The Parthian and Middle Persian Inscriptions of Dura-Europos*, *CII*, Pt III Pahlavi Inscriptions, vol. III Dura-Europos, London: SOAS, 1968. Only 103 identifiable Parthian coins were found per *Dura Final Report VI*, compared with 1,024 for the Seleucid period and over 14,000 in total.

104 Millar, 'Parthian Rule', p. 477.

105 Jones, *Cities*, p. 218, described the inefficiency of Parthian rule in Mesopotamia. P. Arnaud, 'Doura-Europos, Microcosme Grec or Rouage de l'Administration Arsacide?', *Doura-Europos, études 1986 = Syria* 63, 1986, 136, outlines the suggestion in scholarship of autonomous Greek cities in Parthian Mesopotamia.

106 Arnaud, 'Microcosme Grec', p. 146.

107 *P.Dura 18* (AD 87) and *P.Dura 19* (AD 88/89) refer to Dura as being 'ἐν τῆι Παραποταμίαι'.

108 *P.Dura 20* (AD 121) is dated by the reign of the Parthian King of Kings Arsaces (βασιλέως βασιλέων 'Αρσάκου – line 1). C.B. Welles, 'The Population of Roman Dura', in P.R. Coleman-Norton, ed., *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honour of Allen Chester Johnson*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951, p. 253, emphasized Dura's ongoing 'Greekness'; see also Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, p. 5.

109 *P.Dura 20* names Phraates as governor (strategos) of Mesopotamia and Parapotamia (line 5) and he is also described as *Arkapet*. The name Phraates was described as wholly Iranian by the editors of the papyri, p. 111, while the importance of the title *Arkapet* to describe a Parthian feudal lord in Parthian and Sasanian inscriptions was also discussed.

110 Arnaud, 'Microcosme Grec', pp. 145–9, notes that Dura was ruled by a strategos or *epistates*, or individuals who held both titles, from *c*.30 BC up to AD 200 on the basis of papyri and inscriptions, and that the titles often appear to have been hereditary. Arnaud also demonstrates at pp. 148–9 how the office of *epistates* was passed from father to son in the last 40 years of Parthian control of the city. The title appears to have continued in use at Dura until the last decades of Roman rule. See Welles, 'Population of Roman Dura', pp. 254–5.

111 *P.Dura 32*, a divorce contract of 254, refers to Dura as *Colonia Europaeorum*.

112 Welles, 'Population of Roman Dura', 270; cf. Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, p. 5.

113 Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 257; *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 133, described Phaliga on the Khabur as the last Parthian frontier post.

114 Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations* 1:

> Παράκειται δὲ τῇ Φάλιγα κωμόπολις Ναβαγὰθ, καὶ παραῤῥεῖ αὐτὴν ποταμὸς 'Αβούρας, ὅσ ἐμβάλλει εἰς τὸν Εὐφράτην ἐκεῖθεν διαβαίνει τὰ στρατόπεδα εἰς τὴν κατὰ Ῥωμαίους πέραν.

> Nearby Phaliga is the walled village of Nabagath, and by it flows the river Aburas (Khabur), which empties into the Euphrates; there the legions cross over to the Roman territory beyond the river.

115 Suetonius, 'Vita Aug.', XXI.3, in *De Vita Caesarum*; Dio 54.8.1–3.

116 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 4–61.

117 Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners*, pp. 62–7; Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 1–24.

118 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 61.

119 Suetonius, 'Vita Aug.', XXI.3, in *De Vita Caesarum*; Dio 54.8.1–3 reported the peace settlement that saw the standards lost earlier to the Parthians by Crassus, Saxa and Antony repatriated to the Romans. There is no indication of an agreement over the Khabur as a frontier. It appears that this has been inferred from the reference in Isidore.

120 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 25; Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, pp. 256–7.

121 See pp. 143–6 for further discussion of the walls.

122 See Chapter 3.

123 Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 68; P.V.C. Baur, M.I. Rostovtzeff and A. Bellinger, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fourth Season, 1930–1931*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report IV*), pp. 56–65.

124 *Dura Final Report VI*, pp. 203–4. The number of Trajan's denarii found at Dura is the largest from the reign of all emperors until the reign of Septimius

Severus; *Dura Final Report VI*, pp. 32–3. All of the denarii are excavation coins and do not form parts of hoards.

125 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, inscription 868, p. 129.

126 See Chapter 3.

127 Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, XX. The suggestion was made in the 1930s by W. Weber, 'The Antonines', in S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock and M.P. Charlesworth, eds, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 11, *The Imperial Peace – AD 70–192*, 1st edn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939, pp. 347–8. A. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius: A Biography*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, p. 140, also identifies Lucian's Europos as Dura Europos: 'Avidius Cassius advanced down the Euphrates, and a major battle took place at Dura Europos.' F.G.B. Millar, *The Roman Near East*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 111, note 1, indicates that he relied extensively on Birley's narrative for coverage of the events surrounding Verus' Parthian campaign and does not challenge Birley's suggestion that the great battle took place at Dura Europos. Arnaud, 'Microcosme Grec', p. 148, note 61, claims that the battle at Europos reported by Lucian without doubt supported observations made by Leriche suggesting a Roman siege of Dura Europos *c.*165.

128 Ironically, Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, XXIV, complained of the carelessness with which some writers located Europos, one even claiming that it was in Mesopotamia and two days' journey from the Euphrates. Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, XXVIII, indicates the importance of the battle to Lucian as he criticized an unnamed source for covering the battle of Europos in less than seven complete lines.

129 Jones, *Cities*, pp. 243 and 245.

130 Pliny, *N.H.*, V.87.

131 Jones, *Cities*, p. 267, and also pp. 514–21 for a discussion of the sixth-century sources that include Europos in lists of Syrian cities after Zeugma.

132 Lucian, *Ver. Hist.*, 29; Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.*, II.132.

133 *HA*, *Verus*, VIII.3–4, refers to Cassius' storming of Seleucia-Ctesiphon despite an agreement between the city's residents and the invading Roman army.

134 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. lii–liii; *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 40; Welles, 'Population of Roman Dura', p. 253. Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 257. Millar, *Roman Near East*, pp. 113–14, suggests that Lucian's references to the war between the Romans and the Parthians did not make it clear that Roman control had extended along the Euphrates past the Khabur at this time.

135 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 173 and 410, inscription no. 53.

136 J. 'Abdul Massih, 'La porte secondaire à Doura-Europos', in *Doura-Europos, études IV*, pp. 47–54.

137 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 83–4, inscription no. 845.

138 Ibid., p. 84, inscription no. 846.

139 Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 115.

140 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 279–80, inscription no. 909, reports a dedication in Palmyrene of a relief carving of the Palmyrene god Iarhibol by the archers of the Bene Mitai tribe. The undated inscription was located at the base of the relief found in the Temple of the Gadde. F.E. Brown, in *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 265, proposed that the relief was dedicated *c.*150.

141 Welles, 'Population of Roman Dura', p. 254; M. Sommer, *Roms Orientalische Steppengrenze*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005, p. 306.

142 *P.Dura 25*; *Dura Final Report V.I*, p. 127.

143 Arnaud, 'Microcosme Grec', p. 148; Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, pp. 306–7.

144 Arnaud, 'Microcosme Grec', p. 149.

145 This is indicated by the dedicatory inscription to Lucius Verus discussed on p. 116.

146 Downey, *Mesopotamian Religious Architecture*, pp. 90–1.

147 Ibid., pp. 95–6.

148 Ibid., pp. 98 and 118. A number of rooms were added and minor improvements made to the Temple of Adonis *c.* 175–182. An inscription of 173 records the erection of the secondary *naos*.

149 Gilliam, in *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 22, commenting on the first 30 or 40 years of the Roman occupation of Dura surmises: 'The garrison appears to have been small, and at the beginning at least part of it was still made up of Palmyrene archers as in the late Parthian period. In general, institutions and the pattern of life in Dura seem to have remained much as they had been earlier.'

150 M.I. Rostovtzeff, *Dura Europos and its Art*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932, p. 30.

151 Welles, 'Population of Roman Dura', p. 253, referring to Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, p. lvii: 'Les efforts des Romains ont toujours tendu en Asie à propager l'hellénisme parmi des populations hétérogènes.'

152 Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, p. 305.

153 On the synagogue, see *Dura Final Report VIII.1*. S. Gutman, ed., *The Dura Europos Synagogue: A Re-evaluation (1932–1992)*, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992. On the Christian house, see C.H. Kraeling, ed., *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report Volume VIII, Part II, The Christian Building*, New Haven: Yale, 1967 (henceforth *Dura Final Report VIII.2*). On the Mithraeum, see *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 62–134; F. Cumont, 'The Dura Mithraeum', in J.R. Hinnells, ed., *Mithraic Studies I*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975, pp. 151–214.

154 Downey, 'Transformation of Seleucid Dura', p. 164, declares that after *c.* 210, 'the army was everywhere'.

155 James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 16, suggests that the seizure of Dura was part of stepping up pressure on Parthia. This eventually succeeded, only to see the Parthians replaced by a more formidable foe.

156 James notes the observations by E. Dabrowa, 'La garnison romaine à Doura Europos. Influence du camp sur la vie de la ville et ses consequences', *Cahiers Scientifiques de l'Universite Jagellanne* 593, 1981, 61–75, suggesting that the Dura garrison was a relatively small auxiliary unit *c.* 210 and became much larger after this date.

157 James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 19.

158 M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, F.E. Brown and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Ninth Season, 1935–6, Part 3: The Palace of the Dux Ripae and the Dolicheneum*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*), pp. 69–70, reports the existence of a mudbrick wall designed to seal off the north-west sector for military use. R.N. Frye, J.F. Gilliam, H. Ingholt and C.B. Welles, 'Inscriptions from Dura Europos', *YClS* 14, 1955, pp. 161–2, inscription no. 59, is a heavily reconstructed inscription found in the praetorium that supposedly marks 100 paces of wall. See also Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 48.

159 M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, F. Brown and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Sixth Season, 1932–1933*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, p. 30.

160 M.I. Rostovtzeff, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fifth Season, 1931–1932*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934

(henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report V*), pp. 201–34, reports some of the important buildings in the north-west sector of the city. *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 25, and Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 224, briefly discussed the Roman army camp, while Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, pp. 48–58, discusses the general layout of the military quarter together with more specific evidence from temples, houses and places of entertainment in the military quarter.

161 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, p. 69.
162 P.V.C. Baur and M.I. Rostovtzeff, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Second Season, 1928–1929*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931, pp. 17 and 84–5.
163 Downey, 'Transformation of Seleucid Dura', pp. 156–7; N. Pollard, 'The Roman army as "total institution" in the Near East? Dura Europos as a case study', in D.L. Kennedy, ed., *The Roman Army in the East*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1996, pp. 211–27.
164 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, pp. 235–7.
165 In *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, p. 85, Rostovtzeff noted on the basis of epigraphic evidence that the term *praetorium* 'seems to belong to the commander's house alone' and that the official headquarters is best termed as the *principia*. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 49, also suggests that the *praetorium* should be identified strictly speaking as a *principia* because typically a *principia* is the military headquarters and a *praetorium* is the commander's house. Hopkins and Rowell, in *Dura Prelim. Report V*, p. 205, offer some objection to these designations, however, I will use the terms *principia* for the military headquarters and *praetorium* for the commander's house, as originally suggested by Rostovtzeff in *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*.
166 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, p. 206; M. Speidel, '"Europeans" – Syrian Elite Troops at Dura-Europos and Hatra', in *Roman Army Studies 1*, Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1984, p. 301, thought the same; Downey, 'Transformation of Seleucid Dura' p. 165.
167 Hopkins and Rowell, in *Dura Prelim. Report V*, pp. 235–6, noted that the finds were few and that by far the most important was a stone bas-relief depicting a hand grasping a thunderbolt.
168 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, pp. 218–19, inscription no. 556.
169 Ibid., p. 220.
170 Ibid., pp. 221–2.
171 Ibid., p. 223.
172 Ibid.
173 Speidel, 'Syrian Elite Troops', p. 304.
174 James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 19; 'It seems that Dura's *principia* (the so-called *praetorium*) was reserved for the legionaries (Rep. V, 216, 219). The headquarters of *XX Palmyrenorum* was apparently relegated to the requisitioned Temple of Azzanathkona (Rep. V, 216, 219)'.
175 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, inscription no. 560, names five soldiers of Legio IV Scythica and is probably datable to 222/223. Inscription no. 561 is a dedication to Jupiter by the tribune of Cohors II Ulpia Equitata, but it is not dated. Inscription no. 562 is a graffito naming LEG(IO) III GALL(ICA), while inscription no. 563 is similar and simply names LEGI(O) ANTO(NINIANA) X.
176 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, p. 69, note 2.
177 For the scabbard tips, see *Dura Prelim. Report V*, p. 151. For the inscription, ibid., pp. 226–7, inscription no. 561.

178 Ibid., p. 163, inscription no. 489.
179 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 62.
180 Ibid., pp. 62–134.
181 Cumont, 'Dura Mithraeum', pp. 151–214. E.D. Francis, 'Mithraic Graffiti from Dura Europos', in J.R. Hinnells, ed., *Mithraic Studies II*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975, pp. 424–45.
182 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 63.
183 Ibid., pp. 83–4, inscription nos. 845 and 846.
184 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 85–7, inscription no. 847.
185 Cumont, 'Dura Mithraeum', p. 162, with Francis, 'Mithraic Graffiti', p. 429, concurring.
186 Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p200.
187 Ibid., pp. 200–1. Francis, 'Mithraic Graffiti', p. 430, claimed that 'pre-Roman Dura offers no evidence of Mithraism'.
188 Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 203.
189 Francis, 'Mithraic Graffiti', pp. 430–1.
190 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 86.
191 Francis, 'Mithraic Graffiti', pp. 432–4.
192 Ibid., p. 434.
193 Ibid.
194 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, pp. 95–6.
195 Ibid., pp. 30–1, inscription no. 945.
196 Ibid., pp. 31–2, inscription no. 947; p. 31, inscription no. 946.
197 This is evident in Rostovtzeff's interpretation of the building in ibid., pp. 69–96, esp. pp. 83–93.
198 J.F. Gilliam, 'The *Dux Ripae* at Dura', *TAPA* 72, 1941, 160 and 164.
199 Ibid., p. 161.
200 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, pp. 35–6; Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 93.
201 Gilliam, '*Dux Ripae* at Dura', p. 170.
202 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, p. 95, on the basis of a reconstructed *dipinto*.
203 Ibid., p. 172.
204 Ibid., p. 35.
205 Ibid., p. 110, inscription no. 971.
206 *P.Dura 128*, frag. a ii, 4 and frag. p, 4.
207 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 298.
208 Ibid. See also J.F. Gilliam, 'The Prefects in Papyrus Inventory 3 Verso', *CP* 47, 1952, 229–30.
209 Gilliam, '*Dux Ripae* at Dura', p. 158, claimed that *Dux Ripae* was the full title of the duces mentioned in the papyri and the Dolicheneum inscription. Gilliam also claimed in *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, p. 112, that Julius Julianus of inscription no. 971 was one of the four *duces ripenses* known at Dura and that because he was described as *kratistos* was of equestrian rank. In the introduction to *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 23, Gilliam also made this claim.
210 Gilliam, '*Dux Ripae* at Dura', pp. 162–7.
211 Ibid., p. 162.
212 Ibid., p. 163, where the titles of duces such as *dux exercitus Illyrici expeditione Asiana item Parthica item Gallica* and *dux legionum cohortium alarum Britanicimiarum* (sic) *adversus Amoricanos* were discussed. Both of these examples belong to the third century, while others dated from as early as the first century.
213 Ibid., pp. 163–4. The examples discussed date to the third century.

214 Ibid., p. 164.
215 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, p. 77.
216 Ibid., p. 27, inscription no. 944.
217 Ibid., p. 29.
218 Ibid., p. 95.
219 Ibid.
220 Ibid., pp. 29 and 95.
221 Ibid., p. 95. James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 20, noting Millar's reservations.
222 *P.Dura 56* (of 208 and before the suggested date of the *Dux Ripae*'s establishment at Dura) shows correspondence from Marius Maximus, *legatus Augustorum, Pro Praetor*, addressed to Ulpius Valentinus, *Tribunis Cohortis*. *P.Dura 59* (of 241, and after Gilliam's suggested date of the *Dux Ripae*'s establishment at Dura) and also shows correspondence from the Syrian legate Attius Rufinus, *legatus Augusti, Pro Praetor* addressed to the *Praepositus Cohortis*.
223 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*., p. 1.
224 Ibid., p. 2.
225 Ibid., pp. 19 and 77–8.
226 Ibid., p. 83.
227 Ibid., p. 93.
228 Ibid., pp. 79–80.
229 Ibid., pp. 81–2. In a reappraisal of the original excavation of the building, and in reporting new excavation work, S.B. Downey, 'The Palace of the Dux Ripae at Dura-Europos', in P. Bernard and F. Grenet, eds, *Histoire et Cultes de l'Asie Centrale Preislamique*, Paris: CNRS, 1991, p. 20, agrees that the northern wing is somewhat separate in nature and 'probably results from a combination of a desire to provide the commander with a suite of rooms which were somewhat isolated from the rest of the residential quarters and to take advantage of the view over the Euphrates'.
230 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, pp. 58–66; pp. 27–57 lists and analyses 25 *dipinti*, graffiti and inscriptions.
231 James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 20; see also Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 49, who provides a summary of the *Dux Ripae*'s role as a military commander, the likely dates of the office and a brief description of the building based on *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3* and Gilliam, '*Dux Ripae* at Dura'. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 49, note 68, suggests that the building may have had other functions besides the headquarters of the *Dux Ripae* and that the name 'Palace of the *Dux Ripae*' is not necessarily justified by his activities there. On pp. 92–3, Pollard accepts that the *Dux Ripae* was a senior official from the middle Euphrates and appears to concur with Rostovtzeff's suggestion in the preliminary report that the *dux* exercised a judicial function at Dura. In her introduction, Dirven, *Palmyrenes at Dura*, p. 14, simply states: 'At the northern edge of the plateau above the river, an imposing building was erected to house the staff and offices of the *dux ripae*, the Roman district commander.' Downey, 'Palace of the Dux Ripae', pp. 17–25, states no qualifications, accepting the interpretation advanced in *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, including the very problematic dating of the building's construction. B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire*, rev. edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 151–2, refers to the *Dux Ripae* as the local commander at Dura and restates Gilliam's claim that he was subordinate to the governor of Syria. Millar, *Roman Near East*, p. 133, expresses some reservations regarding the evidence and concludes that 'too much effort should not be devoted to constructing a picture of his regional responsibilities'.

232 James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 20. See also Sommer, *Orientalische Steppengrenze*, p. 314, who claims that the Palmyrene troops were under the command of the *Dux Ripae* throughout the region.

233 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 7.

234 For example, James, *Dura Final Report VII*, pp. 19–21.

235 Ibid., p. 19.

236 *Dura Final Report V.1*, pp. 26–45.

237 Welles, 'Population of Roman Dura'; Dirven, *Palmyrenes of Dura*, pp. 12–15. Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, pp. 126–9. James, *Dura Final Report VII*, pp. 16–20.

238 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, p. 357, inscription no. 3, a dedication to Severus Alexander by the cohort found in the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods and dated 230. Brief comments on the inscription are also made by Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners*, p. 96. An inscription dedicating a statue or statues of emperors by the cohort was also found in the Temple of the Gadde; *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 277, inscription no. 906. In the commentary on this inscription it was suggested that the statues were those of Septimius Severus and his two sons, or of Caracalla and Geta themselves. *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 86, reported graffiti in the Mithraeum that mentioned the cohort, but the individual inscriptions have not been published. James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 19, states that Cohors XX Palmyrenorum is mentioned in several inscriptions from 208 onwards, but this appears not to have been the case.

239 *Dura Final Report V.1*, pp. 3–4; *Dura Prelim. Report V*, pp. 151–3 and 166; Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura* pp. 99–102.

240 *Dura Final Report V.1* lists 109 papyri, 45 parchments and one waxed tablet. The 11 parchments discovered by Cumont are included in this total.

241 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, p. 152.

242 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 3.

243 *P.Dura 100* and *P.Dura 101*.

244 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, p. liv.

245 *P.Dura 56*. A letter from the imperial legate Marius Maximus to the tribune of the cohort, Ulpius Valentinus.

246 *P.Dura 100*, a roster, provides the consular dates of recruitment for each soldier listed. The roster lists four individuals whose initial recruitment was in the seventh consulship of Commodus (AD 192). In his analysis of the papyri in terms of the Roman garrison at Dura, Gilliam in *Dura Final Report V.1*, pp. 24 and 26–7, suggested that the cohort may have been formed from the Palmyrene archers but thought that there may have been no connection at all. Gilliam saw the archers as more a part of the 'municipal militia' of Palmyra than a unit of the Roman imperial army.

247 D.L. Kennedy, 'The *Cohors XX Palmyrenorum* at Dura Europos', in E. Dabrowa, ed., *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, Krakow: Universite Jagellane, 1994, pp. 89–98. For an attempt to explain the significance of the numeral XX, see D.L. Kennedy, 'The *Cohors XX Palmyrenorum*: an Alternative Explanation of the Numeral', *ZPE* 53, 1983, 214–16.

248 Speidel, 'Syrian Elite Troops', pp. 301–9.

249 Kennedy, 'Cohors XX Palmyrenorum 1994', attempts to identify a likely date of the cohort's formation on the basis of recruitment patterns he claimed to have identified in *P.Dura 100* (AD 219) and *P.Dura 101* (AD 222). Speidel, 'Syrian Elite Troops' attempts to link Dio's reference to Europeans at Septimius Severus' second siege of Hatra as soldiers from Dura Europos. D.L. Kennedy, '"Europaean" Soldiers and the Severan Siege of Hatra', in P. Freeman and

D.L. Kennedy, eds, *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, 2 vols, Oxford: BAR-IS 297, 1986, pp. 397–409, rejects the suggestion and provides a number of arguments as to why these troops should be seen as troops from the west.

250 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 28; James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 19.

251 Hyginus, *De Mun. Cast.* 27. See P.A. Holder, *The* Auxilia *from Augustus to Trajan*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 6–8.

252 Hyginus, *De Mun. Cast.* 27.

253 *Dura Final Report V.1*, pp. 31 and 308–39.

254 Ibid., pp. 31 and pp. 339–64.

255 Ibid., p. 33.

256 *P.Dura 82* and *P.Dura 89*.

257 *Dura Final Report V.1*, pp. 28–30. G. Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army*, 3rd edn, London: A&C Black, 1985.

258 Hyginus *De Mun. Cast* 3.4; Vegetius II.8; cf. Webster, *Roman Army*, pp. 110 and 148.

259 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 28, gives a table of known tribunes of the cohort serving from 208 to *c.*250.

260 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 363–4, vol. 2, plate L; Breasted, *Oriental Forerunners*, pp. 94–102, plate XXI. *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 365–7, discussed the difficulties in securely identifying each of the three Palmyrene gods.

261 The other is a fragmentary inscription found on a potsherd near tower 25 indicating that the *praenomen* of Julius Terentius was Caius. R. Dumesnil du Buisson, 'Inscriptions sur jarres de Doura-Europos.', *MUSJ* 36, 1959, 37, inscription no. 125, reported the sherd as carrying the name C[–-] TERENTI I [and suggested that it was associated with Julius Terentius as he was the only individual with the cognomen Terentius attested at Dura.

262 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.1*, pp. 108 and 176–85, inscription no. 939.

263 *Dura Prelim. Report IV*, pp. 112–14, inscription no. 233; C.B. Welles, 'The Epitaph of Julius Terentius', *Harv. Theol. Rev.* 34, 1941, 79–102.

264 *P.Dura 89*, col i, line 11; *P.Dura 107*, *c.* AD 240, also gives the title of *praepositus* of the cohort. Cf. *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 32.

265 Welles, 'Epitaph', p. 97.

266 *P.Dura 59*, verso, line 1.

267 Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 25; James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 19, suggests that legionary vexillations became more common in the third century as the frontiers extended further east.

268 P.V.C. Baur and M.I. Rostovtzeff, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the First Season, Spring 1928*, New Haven: Yale, 1929 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report I*), pp. 32–4, found at the main gate; *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 22; Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 25.

269 *Dura Prelim. Report I*, p. 42; *Dura Prelim. Report V*, pp. 226–9; P.V.C. Baur and M.I. Rostovtzeff, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Second Season, 1928–1929*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report II*), pp. 83–6.

270 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 87, note 3, according to an unpublished inscription from the Dolicheneum mentioned by Rostovtzeff and Torrey.

271 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 25, note 6, cites *CIL XVI*, 106, a military diploma of 156/157 that names the cohort and locates it in Syria at this time. The editors concluded: 'it is certain that there was at least one other unit in the garrison at this time'.

272 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 85, inscription no. 847.

273 As *ve Leg* was expanded to read *ve[x(illationum) Leg(ionum)*, the editors suggested that they were two separate vexillations of the respective legions. In an inscription reported in M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, F.E. Brown and C.B. Welles, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Sixth Season, 1932–1933*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report VI*), p. 78, inscription no. 629, which dedicated the amphitheatre in 216 on behalf of soldiers from Legio IV Scythica and Legio III Cyrenaica, Brown allowed in his transcription for *Vexill* to be expanded to *Vexillationes* or *Vexillarii*, claiming that it 'depends upon whether there was a *vexillatio* from each of the two legions or a single *vexillatio* drawn from both'.

274 *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, p. 86.

275 One such inscription was reported in ibid., p. 121, inscription no. 860, which names a soldier of Legio IV Scythica.

276 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, pp. 107–10, inscription no. 970.

277 *Dura Prelim. Report VI*, pp. 77–8, for the dedicatory inscription and pp. 79–80 for a discussion of it.

278 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, pp. 224–6, inscription no. 560.

279 *P.Dura 100*, col xxvi, line 21. The name of the soldier is so fragmentary as to be unidentifiable, but the name of the legion is clear.

280 *P.Dura 95* is a strength report of 250, or soon after, that refers to Legio IV Scythica in a fragment. *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 25, was uncertain as to whether the incidence of the legion's name here was a reference to the vexillation of Legio IV Scythica mentioned in the inscriptions and in *P.Dura 32*. This papyrus is a divorce contract of the Seleucid year 565 (AD 254), which details the dissolution of the marriage of 'Julius Antiochus, soldier of the local vexillation of the Legio Quarta Scythica Valeriana Galliena'. ['Ιούλιος 'Αντίοχος στρ]α[τι]ώτης τῆς ἐνθά[δ]ε οὐεξ[ι]λλατί[ωνος λεγ(εῶνος) δʹ] Σκυ[θικῆ]ς [Οὐαλεριανῆς Γαλ]λιηνης.

281 *P.Dura 64A*, col. iii, lines 8–9, dated 221, refers to a *librarius* of Legio XVI Flavia Firma presumably stationed at Dura at this time. *Dura Prelim. Report VI*, p. 495, inscription no. 843, refers to an individual as 'MILES LEG XVI f.f. SEVERIANAE', suggesting a date somewhere in Severus Alexander's reign (222–235). *P.Dura 43*, described as a 'tantalising papyrus' by the editors, was identified as a contract dating to the reign of Gordian III (238–244) and mentions Legio XVI Flavia Firma in the first surviving line. The editors claim that this is the latest appearance of Legio XVI Flavia Firma as a vexillation; the papyrus, however, does not refer to a vexillation.

282 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, pp. 115–17, inscription no. 974.

283 Ibid., p. 117, noted that this could apply to the reigns of either Caracalla (211–217) or Elagabalus (218–222), but preferred the former.

284 *Dura Final Report V.1*, p. 25.

285 *Dura Prelim. Report IV*, inscription 294, pp. 151–2.

286 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, p. 221.

287 *Dura Prelim. Report VI*, inscription 630, pp. 77–80. The numeral 'III' is clear, but only one letter of the legion's name survives, this being 'r'. Brown indicated that even the letter 'r' was not complete, but thought that it was not an 'l', which ruled out the possibility of III Gallica.

288 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, p. 220, inscription no. 556.

289 Speidel, 'Syrian Elite Troops', pp. 302–5.

290 *Dura Prelim. Report V*, p. 230, inscription no. 563.

291 Pollard, *Soldiers, Cities and Civilians*, p. 258.

292 James, *Dura Final Report VII*, pp. 18–19.

293 Ibid., p. 19.

294 *Dura Prelim. Report IX.3*, pp. 110–12, inscription no. 971, which is an altar inscription of the cohort. Ibid., pp. 120–2, inscription no. 978, which may be a dedication to Iarhibol.

295 Welles, 'Population of Roman Dura', pp. 257–8.

296 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 1–24; *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 4–61.

297 Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura*, vol. 1, pp. 22–4.

298 This brief summary is taken from *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 60–1.

299 P. Leriche, 'Chronologie du Rempart de Brique Crue de Doura-Europos', *Doura-Europos, études 1986 = Syria* 63, 1986, 70. For an architectural analysis of the walls and some geological consideration of the stone employed, see J.-C. Bessac, 'L'analyse des Procédés de Construction des Remparts de Pierre de Doura-Europos: Questions de Méthodologie', *Doura-Europos: études 1988 = Syria* 65, 1988, 297–313.

300 P. Leriche and A. Al-Mahmoud, 'Bilan des campagnes 1988–1990 à Doura-Europos', *Doura-Europos, études 1990 = Syria* 69, 1992, 12–16; M. Gelin, P. Leriche and J. Abdul Massih, 'La Porte de Palmyre à Doura-Europos', in *Doura-Europos études IV*, pp. 44–5.

301 P. Leriche, 'Techniques de guerre sassanides et romaines à Doura-Europos', in F. Vallet and M. Kazanski, eds, *L'Armée Romaine et les Barbares*, Paris: AFAM, 1993, p. 84.

302 J. Abdul Massih, 'La Porte Secondaire à Doura-Europos', in *Doura-Europos études IV*, pp. 47–54.

303 Leriche, 'Techniques de guerre', p. 84.

304 Leriche, 'Chronologie du Rempart', pp. 78–9.

305 James, *Dura Final Report VII*, pp. 22–5 and 30–46.

306 Breasted (*Oriental Forerunners*, pp. 62–7) and Cumont (*Fouilles de Doura*, pp. 1–24) both described their observations of the fortress, including some aspects of the embankments. Hopkins (in *Dura Prelim. Report V*, pp. 1–30) and Von Gerkan (in *Dura Prelim. Report VII/VIII*, pp. 40–60) also cover aspects of the Roman embankments. Hopkins, in *Dura Prelim. Report VI*, pp. 188–205, was the first report of the investigation of the Persian mines under towers 14 and 19; R. du Mesnil du Buisson, 'Une guerre de mines en 256 après J.-C.-Le siege de Doura Europos d'après les fouilles récentes', *RGM* 76, 1937, 5–27, provided a detailed and profusely illustrated publication of the war in the mines. C. Hopkins, 'The Siege of Dura', *CJ* 42, 1947, 251–9, provided a more general account of the siege, including the Persian assault ramp and mines. S. James, 'Dura-Europos and the Chronology of Syria in the 250s AD', *Chiron* 15, 1985, 111–24 and D. MacDonald, 'Dating the fall of Dura-Europos', *Historia* 35, 1986, 45–68, both discuss the evidence for the siege in the context of dating the final siege and addressing the question of whether two sieges of Dura took place in the 250s. As discussed on p. 91, they both conclude that only one siege took place, but this suggestion has now been overturned in favour of two sieges due to updated readings of the middle Persian *dipinti* from the synagogue; see F. Grenet, 'Les Sassanides à Doura-Europos (253 après J.C.): réexamen du matériel épigraphique iranien du site', in P.-L. Gatier, B. Helly and J.-P. Rey-Coquais, eds, *Geographie Historique au Proche-Orient*, Paris: CNRS, 1988, pp. 133–58. An updated summary of the siege and capture of the city is made in Leriche, 'Techniques de guerre'. More recent archaeological investigation of the Palmyra Gate revealed evidence for the final siege in the form of a Sasanian mine directed at undermining the

gate, together with a large collection of bronze weapons and evidence of burning; Leriche, 'La Porte de Palmyre', p. 247, and Gelin, Leriche and Massih, 'La Porte de Palmyre', p. 46.

307 Harmatta thought there was evidence for a Sasanian occupation of Dura in publications of Parthian ostraca and a Parthian parchment found at Dura: J. Harmatta, 'Die Parthischen Ostraka aus Dura-Europos', in *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae 5*, Budapest, 1957, pp. 87–175, and J. Harmatta, 'The Parthian Parchment from Dura-Europos', in *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientarum Hungaricae 5*, Budapest, 1957, pp. 301–8. See also James, *Dura Final Report VII*, p. 39.

308 Hopkins, *Discovery of Dura*, p. 249.

5 CONFLICT BETWEEN ROME AND SASANIAN PERSIA INVOLVING THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES, MESOPOTAMIA AND PALMYRA, AD 224–257

1 H.W. Bailey, 'Armenia and Iran', in E. Yarshater, ed., *Encyclopedia Iranica, Vol. II*, New York: Persica Press, 2000, pp. 417–83, provides a very useful analysis of Armenia's control under the Achaemenid Persians and its later ability to establish a level of independence during the Seleucid period. This carried over into the Parthian/Sasanian periods. Late in the first century BC, Strabo, *Geog.*, 11.4.16, referred to the ongoing cultural links between Armenia and Iran, noting that the Armenians worshipped the same gods as the Persians. Agathangelos, *Hist. Arm.*, I.18, writing in the fifth century AD, emphasized the close political links between Armenia and Parthia, stating that 'whoever was king of Armenia had second rank in the Persian kingdom'.

2 Referring to the first Sasanian attacks on Mesopotamia in AD 230, Herodian, VI.2.1, claimed that Ardashir refused to be contained by the Tigris, which was described as ὅρος (boundary). Herodian, VI.2.5, indicated that fortifications had been erected on the Tigris to defend Mesopotamia:

> καὶ τὰ ἐπικείμενα στρατόπεδα ταῖς ὄχθαις τῶν ποταμῶν προασπίζοντά τε τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς ἐπολιόρκει.

> The encampments having been raised on the river banks, shielding the Roman Empire, were put under siege.

3 Agathias, IV.24.1; Zonaras, XII.15 (*CSHB*, p. 572, 7–17); Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke pp. 1–23 = M.H. Dodgeon and S.N.C. Lieu, eds, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars*, rev. edn, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, pp. 275–80; A. Christensen, 'Sassanid Persia', in S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock, M.P. Charlesworth and N.H. Baynes, eds, *CAH Vol. XII*: *The Imperial Crisis and Recovery – AD193–324*, 1st edn, 1939, pp. 109ff.; R.N. Frye, 'The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians', in E. Yarshater, ed. *CHI: The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, vol. 3 (1), 1983, pp. 116–24; A. Christensen, *L' Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd edn, Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1944, pp. 84–96. J. Wolski, *L'Empire Des Arsacides*, Acta Iranica 32, Troisième Série, Textes et Mémoires Vol. XVIII, Leuven: Peeters, 1993, pp. 191–200. R.N. Frye, 'The Sassanians', in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey and A. Cameron, eds, *CAH, Vol. XII: The Crisis of Empire: AD193–337*, 2nd edn, 2005, p. 465, now thinks that the beginning of Ardashir's reign is clear and undisputed for 224 and for Shapur I, 240.

4 On the division, see N.H. Baynes, 'Rome and Armenia in the Fourth Century', *EHR* 25, 1910, 625–43, reprinted in N.H. Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and other Essays*, London: Athlone, 1955, pp. 186–208.

5 D.S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, p. 217, describes the relationship between Rome and Iran before the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians as 'a watchful peace interrupted by periodic outbursts of hostility'.

6 Dio LXXII.36.4.

7 G. Alföldy, 'The Crisis of the Third Century as Seen by Contemporaries', *GRBS* 15, 1974, 89–111 = G. Alföldy, *Die Krise des Römischen Reiches*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1989, pp. 319–41.

8 Dio, LXXX.4.1–2, complained of the mutinous nature of the legions in Mesopotamia at this time and Herodian, VI.4.7, claimed that several mutinies broke out in Syria prior to Severus Alexander's invasion of Persia in 231.

9 Fronto, *Princ. Hist.*, 12, described the Syrian army at the time Lucius Verus arrived in 163 as mutinous and disobedient. In a letter to Verus of the same year (Fronto, *Ad Verum Imp.* II.1.12) he referred to the idleness and indulgences of the soldiers at Antioch. *P.Dura 55*, written during the reign of Elagabalus (218–22) by the *legatus* of Syria, expressed concerns over discipline in the Dura garrison. Dio, LXXX.7.1–3, referred to charges brought against the legates of III Gallica and IV Scythica early in the reign of Elagabalus. See also E.L. Wheeler, 'The Laxity of the Syrian Legions', in D. Kennedy, ed., *The Roman Army in the East*, JRA Supplement 18, Ann Arbor: JRA, 1996, pp. 229–76.

10 Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 222.

11 Dio LXXX.3.2.

12 Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, p. 40 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 285, asserted that the city was deserted after its capture. Amm. Marc., XXV.8.5, referred to Hatra as 'an old city lying in the midst of a desert and long since abandoned' when he passed it on the way back from Julian's Persian campaign in 363.

13 D. Oates, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 74, suggested that Ardashir formed alliances with the rulers of Kirkuk and Adiabene before his victory over Artabanus V in 227. On forming this alliance an attack was then directed at Armenia. G. Widengren, 'The Establishment of the Sasanian Dynasty in the Light of New Evidence', in *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema: La Persia nel Medioevo*, Rome: Academia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1971, p. 757, suggests that Ardashir mounted the attack on Hatra from Media Atropatene.

14 Dio, LXXV.9.31–4, described the poor water and food supplies in the desert surrounding Hatra during Trajan's attempt to capture the city and how this aided the city's defence considerably. H.B. Al-Aswad, 'Water Sources at Hatra', *Mesopotamia* 26, 1991, 195–211, shows, however, that the Wadi Tharthar was capable of supplying some of Hatra's water requirements. A bridge, which appears to date to the Abbasid period, crossed the wadi approximately 3 km north-east of the city at a point where the wadi is 300 metres wide and its banks 12–15 metres high. The wadi's water supply was confined to the brief winter rainy season and was perhaps too intermittent to have been of use to an attacking force. There were many wells found in the city that collected rainwater and may have been connected to underground canals running from outside the city. A large number of these wells were found in houses, streets and squares, which indicates a perennial subterranean

supply. Some wells were found in the area of Hatra's temples and were nine to ten metres deep. Al-Aswad also discusses a walled dam in the south-west of the city that was approximately 3,600 square metres.

15 For Trajan's attack on Hatra, see Dio LXXV.9.31–4; D.B. Campbell, 'What Happened at Hatra? The Problem of the Severan Siege Operations', in P. Freeman and D. Kennedy, eds, *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, BAR-IS 297(i), Oxford, 1986, pp. 51–8, suggests that the two sieges of Hatra by Septimius Severus took place after 28 January 198 and before 199.

16 M. Gawlikowski, 'Fortress Hatra, New Evidence on Ramparts and their History', *Mesopotamia* 29, 1994, 147 and 155; W.I. Al-Salihi, 'Military Considerations in the Defences of Hatra', *Mesopotamia* 26, 1991, 188–90, notes the circular nature of the layout of the city and its defences. The outer earth wall had a diameter of approximately 3 km. Al-Salihi also notes that the main inner wall was supported by at least 163 towers.

17 Gawlikowski, 'Fortress Hatra', p. 149.

18 According to Al-Salihi, 'Military Considerations', 188 excavations of the main wall in the area of the northern gate also showed the razing of a tower and adjacent curtains, and this is probably associated with the final siege. D. Baatz, 'Recent Finds of Ancient Artillery', *Britannia* 9, 1978, 1–17, discussed the remains of a ballista found under the debris from a collapsed tower near the north gate at Hatra. He observed that the ballista must have been set on top of the tower, from which it probably fell during the final Sasanian siege.

19 Dio LXXV.9.4; 11.1.

20 Ibid., 11.1.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 12.4–5. M. Speidel, ' "Europeans" – Syrian Elite Troops at Dura-Europos and Hatra', in *Roman Army Studies 1*, Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1984, pp. 301–9, argues that the Europeans referred to by Dio as part of Septimius Severus' army at Hatra were troops from Dura Europos. D.L. Kennedy, ' "Europaean" Soldiers and the Severan Siege of Hatra', in Freeman and Kennedy, *Defence of Roman and Byzantine East*, vol. 2, p. 403, rejects this idea, arguing that troops from Moesia were probably the troops to which Dio had referred as they had recently conducted a successful siege of Byzantium.

23 Dio LXVIII.31.1–2; Herodian III.9.6.

24 In the lead up to the siege, which ended in the capture of the city in 239/240, Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, p. 36 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, pp. 283–4, claimed that the Hatrenes had made raids into Persia while Shapur was occupied in Chorosan on the eastern borders of the empire.

25 Three Latin inscriptions from Hatra originally published by D. Oates, 'A Note on Three Latin Inscriptions from Hatra', *Sumer* 11, 1955, 39–43, and as part of an inventory of inscriptions from Hatra in B. Aggoula, *Inventaire des inscriptions Hatréennes*, Paris: Geuthner, 1991, p. 183, show evidence of Roman auxiliaries from North Africa present at the city. Two of the inscriptions were dedications of statues by Quintus Petronius Quintianus who had been *tribunus militum* of Legio I Parthica and was *tribunus* of Cohors IX Maurorum Gordiana. The cohort may have been attached in some way to Legio I Parthica, which was based, according to Dio LV.24.4, somewhere in Mesopotamia in the early 230s, probably at Nisibis. Legio III Parthica was based at Singara, and both had been based in Mesopotamia since the reign of Septimius Severus.

26 M. Sartre, 'The Arabs and the Desert Peoples', in *CAH Vol. XII*, 2nd edn, 2005, pp. 509–10. Differences in opinion in the scholarship on the status of Hatra before the Parthian overthrow are demonstrated by Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 218, who concludes that 'with the overthrow of the Arsacids, Hatra passed from Parthian ally to Roman fortress'.

27 Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, p. 35 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 283.

28 Sartre, 'Arabs and Desert Peoples', p. 510: 'in exchange for his alliance with the Romans, he (Sanatruk) found himself at the head of all the Roman Arabs of the upper Euphrates and upper Mesopotamia'.

29 Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, p. 36 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, pp. 283–4. Tabari claimed that Shapur I killed large numbers of the surrounding tribesmen.

30 Dio LXXX.3.3. Widengren, 'Sasanian Dynasty', p. 757, suggested that Ardashir retreated to Media Atropatene.

31 Amm. Marc. XX.6.9.

32 Dio LXXX.3.3–4. Ardashir acquired large parts of Media and Parthia itself following his unsuccessful attempt on Hatra.

33 Dio LXXX.3.4; Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist.Arm.*, II.71–3.

34 Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 396, note 5, suggest that the work is a fifth century AD compilation.

35 Agathangelos, *Hist. Arm.*, I.19 – the year would be 228.

36 Dio LXXX.4.1–2; Herodian VI.2.1–2; Ardashir wished to recover all the regions of Asia Minor as he believed these to be his rightful inheritance. Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, p. 3 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 275, claimed that Ardashir 'arose, as he maintained, to avenge the blood of his cousin Dara (i.e. Darius) ... who made war against Alexander and who was murdered by his two servants'.

37 D.S. Potter, *Prophecy and History: A Historical Commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 370, points out that Dio's original account was probably more detailed regarding Persian claims but that it has not survived in the epitome of Xiphilinus.

38 E. Yarshater, 'Were the Sasanians Heirs to the Achaemenids?', in *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema: La Persia Nel Medioevo*, Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1971, pp. 517–31; Z. Rubin, 'The Roman Empire in the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*', in E. Dabrowa, ed., *Ancient Iran and the Mediterranean World*, Krakow: Universite Jagellanne, 1998, pp. 179–80. Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 376: 'He (Shapur) does not, in fact, seem to have been aware that these lands belonged by right to anyone but the Romans'.

39 Yarshater, 'Heirs to Achaemenids', p. 525; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 371–2: 'Dio and Herodian wrote in an age when men were apt to interpret the present danger in terms of the great events of the classical past.' The extent to which Roman writers drew on knowledge of the Classical Greek past in an attempt to establish the significance of current events may also be demonstrated by claims that Gordian III sought the protection of Athena Promachos, who had supported the Athenians in their success over the Persians at Marathon in 490 BC. See also Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 223.

40 Yarshater, 'Heirs to Achaemenids', pp. 520–5, suggested that the Islamic historians took their information from Jewish sources.

41 Ibid., pp. 530–1.

42 Ibid., p. 519.

43 Rubin, *'Res Gestae'*, p. 179, notes the following: 'The modern name of the site, which celebrates Rustām, not even a Kayanid in the strictest sense of the

term, and certainly having nothing to do with the Achaemenians, shows with greatest clarity how the meaning of such monuments can be misinterpreted in folk memory'. Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 224, claims that Naqsh-i Rustam is more about Zoroastrianism than the Achaemenids.

44 Yarshater, 'Heirs to Achaemenids', pp. 518–19; Rubin, *'Res Gestae'*, pp. 179–80.

45 G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 28–36.

46 Ibid., p. 29. See Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 373, for the opposite view: 'Kartir and Sapor were more interested in the Ka'bah than the cliffs opposite'.

47 Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, p. 29.

48 Ibid. Accepting the claims of Dio and Herodian as genuine, G. Gnoli, 'L'in-scription de Šābuhr à la Ka'be-ye Zardošt et la propagande sassanide', in P. Bernard and F. Grenet, eds, *Histoire et Cultes de l'Asie Centrale Préislamique*, Paris: CNRS, 1991, p. 59, rightly rejects this suggestion as an argument out of silence.

49 *KKZ*, lines 35–45. See also M. Boyce and F. Grenet, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. III, Leiden: Brill, 1991, pp. 254–5, and also M. Back, *Die sassanidischen staatsinchriften*, Acta Iranica III/8, 18, Tehran and Liège: Brill, 1978, pp. 294ff.

50 Boyce and Grenet, *Zoroastrianism*, p. 252.

51 Herodian VI.2.1.

52 Dio LXXX.4.2.

53 Herodian VI.2.1, VI.2.5; Zonaras XII.15 (*CSHB*, p. 572, 20.2).

54 Zonaras XII.15 (*CSHB*, pp. 572,22–573,2).

55 Herodian VI.2.3–4.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 3.1–4.3.

58 Ibid., 3.3.

59 Dio LV.23.

60 Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist. Arm.*, II.72.

61 Herodian, VI.4.7, refers to a rebellion of Egyptian troops just before the campaign. They are identified by Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 21, as the troops of Legio II Traiana.

62 Herodian VI.3.7.

63 Ibid., 4.4.

64 Ibid., 5.1.

65 Ibid., 4.4.

66 Ibid., 4.6; Zonaras XII. 15 (*CSHB*, p. 573, 2–14) says that Alexander scattered the Persian envoys among a large number of villages, but is not specific as to where they were sent.

67 Herodian VI.4.7.

68 Dio LXXX.4.2.

69 Herodian VI.5.1–2.

70 Ibid., 'κατὰ μέσην τὴν πορείαν'.

71 Ibid., 5.5.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 5.6.

74 Ibid: 'τοις εωοις μερεσι Παρθαιων'.

75 Ibid.

76 Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 352, note 15.

77 Ibid., note 16 suggest that the second and third divisions of Severus Alexander's army marched under the emperor to Palmyra from where both forces marched to the Euphrates and split into two. The force led by the emperor making its way up the Euphrates and crossing to Singara while the other made its way down the Euphrates to the areas south of Ctesiphon.

78 *PAT 0278*.

79 *P.Dura 30*, lines 2–4. J. Wilkes, 'Provinces and Frontiers', in *CAH Vol. XII*, 2nd edn, p. 255, claims that a milestone of Severus Alexander near Singara is the only evidence for the Roman presence in the area at this time. This appears not to take into account the papyrological evidence or the evidence from Hatra.

80 See Chapter 3, p. 79, for the likely location of Qatna on the Khabur.

81 C.B. Welles, R.O. Fink and J.F. Gilliam, *The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report Volume V, Part 1: The Parchments and Papyri*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959 (henceforth *Dura Final Report V.1*), p. 154.

82 Herodian VI.6.2.

83 Ibid., VI.6.3.

84 Ibid., VI.4–6.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid., VI.7.5.

88 Ibid., VI.7.2–3. See also Wilkes, 'Provinces and Frontiers', p. 265.

89 Herodian VI.4–6.

90 Ibid., VI.7.5.

91 Victor, *Caes.*, 24.2; Festus, *Brev.*, 22, pp. 63, 17–64, 2; Eutropius, *Brev.* VIII, 23; Jerome, *Chron.*, s.a. 223; *HA*, *Sev. Alex.*, 55.1–3; Orosius, *Adv. Pag.*, VII.18.7; Syncellus, p. 437, 15–25.

92 T.D. Barnes, *The Sources of the* Historia Augusta, Bruxelles: Latomus, 1978, pp. 90–4. See also R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 221–36.

93 Barnes, *Sources of Historia Augusta*, p. 96.

94 *HA*, *Sev. Alex.*, 55.1.

95 Ibid., 55.2.

96 Ibid., 57.3.

97 Zonaras XII.15 (*CSHB*, p. 573, 14–22). It was also reported by Cedrenus, I. (*CSHB*, p. 450, 3–7).

98 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 356–63, on Zonaras.

99 P.V.C. Baur, M.I. Rostovtzeff and A. Bellinger, eds, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Fourth Season, 1930–31*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933, (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report IV*), pp. 112–14, inscription no. 233. It is also possible that Julius Terentius, tribune of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum based at Dura Europos, died in this attack. For the epitaph of Julius Terentius discovered in a house near the agora, see M.I. Rostovtzeff, A. Bellinger, F. Brown and C.B. Welles, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Preliminary Report of the Ninth Season, 1935–6, Part 1: The Agora and Bazaar*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944 (henceforth *Dura Prelim. Report IX.1)*, pp. 105 and 176–85, inscription no. 939; C.B. Welles, 'The Epitaph of Julius Terentius', *Harv. Theol. Rev.* 34, 1941, 79–102.

100 *HA*, *Max et Balb.*, 13.5.

101 Syncellus, p. 443, 3–9.

102 X. Loriot, 'Les premières années de la grande crise de IIIe siècle: de l'avènement de Maximin le Thrace (235) à la mort de Gordien III (244)', *ANRW*

ii/2, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975, p. 763; E. Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. nach der Inschrift Sāhpuhrs I. an der Ka' be-ye Zartošt (SKZ)*, Wiesbaden: TAVO, 1982, pp. 28–31.

103 Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, p. 31.
104 Oates, *Northern Iraq*, p. 89.
105 Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, p. 35 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 283.
106 Ibid., p. 40 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, pp. 285–6.
107 Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, p. 37 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 284.
108 *HA, Gord.*, 23.5–6.
109 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 371–2.
110 Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 23–5.
111 Ibid., pp. 29–30; Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.17.
112 Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 29–31.
113 Ibid., p. 32.
114 *SKZ*, lines 6–9. Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 234, claims that the death of Gordian III at Meshike is nonsense because he was actually killed at Zaitha. We know that Gordian was buried at Zaitha from Ammianus, but there is nothing in the Graeco-Roman tradition to contradict the *SKZ*'s claim that Gordian was killed at Meshike.
115 See G. Hermann, *The Iranian Revival*, Oxford: Phaidon, 1977, pp. 87–96, for an informative discussion and illustration of the carvings.
116 Loriot, 'La grande crise', pp. 770–4, discusses four separate traditions that are identifiable in the texts regarding the death of Gordian III. See also L. De Blois, 'The Reign of the Emperor Philip the Arabian', *Talanta* 10–11, 1978/9, 11–43.
117 *SKZ*, lines 13–20.
118 Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 356, note 10.
119 Zosimus III.32.4.
120 Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.7. The location of Zaitha has been much discussed. B. Geyer and J.-Y. Monchambert, *La Basse Vallée de L'Euphrate Syrien du Néolithique à l'avènement de l'islam*, 2 vols, Beyrouth: IFAPO, 2003, pp. 156–61, analyse in detail the various attempts that have been made to locate Zaitha and the site of Gordian's tomb. They suggest, at p. 161, that it was one of three sites located on the left bank of the Euphrates between 50 and 60 km from Deir-ez-zor.
121 It may have been in the form of a tower tomb, similar to those of which the remains have been found at Dura Europos and those still standing at Palmyra.
122 Victor, *Caes.*, 27.8; Festus, *Brev.* 22, p. 64, 2–7; Zonaras XII.17 (*CSHB*, p. 580, 7–14), which states that Gordian died at Rome from a fracture of the thigh he had sustained after his horse fell while on campaign in Persia; *HA, Gord.*, 27.1–28.6, which recalls a speech to the senate attributed to Gordian III detailing the extent of the success of his Persian campaign, implying that the campaign had been concluded at this time. Gordian was later slain at the instigation of Philip; *HA, Gord.*, 30.8.
123 Eutropius, *Brev.*, IX.2.3; Jerome, *Chron.*, s.a. 241–4; Amm. Marc., XXIII.5.17, who says that Gordian was murdered at the same place in which he was buried – that is, Zaitha; *Epit. De Caes.* 27.1–3; Orosius, *Adv. Pag.*, VII.19.5; Zosimus I.19.1; Jordanes, *Hist. Rom.*, 282; John of Antioch, frag. 147 (*FHG* IV, p. 597); Porphyry, *Plot.* 3, claimed that Plotinus, having accompanied Gordian on his campaign against Persia, fled to Antioch after Gordian was killed in Mesopotamia. The use of the term 'Mesopotamia' offers no more specific detail than the other accounts.

124 Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.17.

125 D. MacDonald, 'The Death of Gordian III – Another Tradition', *Historia* 30, 1981, 502–8; see also Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 35–6. Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 235, makes the suggestion that Philip was not even with the army when Gordian III died.

126 *SKZ*, line 8 (Greek).

127 De Blois, 'Emperor Philip', p. 14, discusses the coin legends. Zonaras XII.19 (*CSHB*, p. 583, 5–9), referred to the distress of the Romans at Philip's loss of Mesopotamia and Armenia and his breaking of the peace to retrieve them. See Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 225. In his translation and commentary of the *Eis Basilea*, 'The Anonymous Encomium of Philip the Arab', Swift noted an attempt by the orator to defend Philip's treaty with the Persians as what was left of Gordian's army was in such a state of chaos that Philip had little choice but to appeal to Shapur for peace. The encomium is, therefore, in agreement with the *SKZ* on this point; L. Swift, 'The Anonymous Encomium of Philip the Arab', *GRBS* 7, 1966, 275–6 (paras 13–15) and commentary on 283–5.

128 Zosimus, I.19.2, claimed that Priscus was placed in charge of the Syrian forces before Philip's departure.

129 See Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 221–5, and E. Winter, *Die sasanidisch-römischen Friedensvertrage des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der ausenpolitischen Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Grosmachten*, Frankfurt: M. Bern, 1988, pp. 90–2.

130 The identification of denarii as Persian gold dinars or Roman *aurei* was first suggested by J Guey and T. Pékary at the same time although they had been working independently of each other: J. Guey, 'Autour des *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* 1: Deniers (d'or) et (de compte) anciens', *Syria* 38, 1961, 261–74; T. Pékary, 'Le "tribut" aux Perses et les finances de Philippe l'Arabe', *Syria* 38, 1961, 275–83. Guey noted at pp. 265–7 that 500,000 silver denarii would have been a very small amount in comparison to donatives and other distributions made in silver denarii from Augustus to Septimius Severus. Both Pékary and Guey also analysed a bilingual Greek/Palmyrene inscription dated 193 that refers to a donation of 300 old gold denarii (χρυσᾶ παλαιὰ δενάρια); *PAT 0294*, line 5. The term χρυσᾶ παλαιὰ was described by T.V. Buttrey, ' "Old Aurei" at Palmyra and the Coinage of Pescennius Niger', *Berytus* 14, 1961–3, 120, as the simple translation of the Latin 'denarii aurei' and the most logical way of speaking of Roman aurei. Pékary at 283 interpreted χρυσᾶ παλαιὰ δενάρια as meaning not Roman coins but Persian ones; that is, Persian dinars. Pékary, at p. 277, claimed that the conversion from aurei to Sasanian Persian dinars would have been relatively easy in the mid-third century as both coins weighed similar amounts. Frye, 'Sassanians', p. 468, seems unaware of the argument over denarii and aureii. De Blois, 'Emperor Philip', p. 14, suggests that the tribute was probably partially paid in Antiochene tetradrachms because there was a sudden demand for these coins after 244/5. See also Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 238, regarding Priscus' extraction of taxes. If the peace was broken soon after Philip's return, as Potter also claims, it is unlikely that the tribute was ever actually paid.

131 M. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir*, Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1953, p. 85, suggested that the payment was associated with ransoming prisoners held by Shapur. The distinction between ransom and tribute, and that prisoners may also have been ransomed, was also made by Guey 'Autour des *Res Gestae*', pp. 261–2; by Potter, *Third Sibylline Oracle*, p. 225; and by C. Körner, *Philippus Arabs*, Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2002, pp. 122–3.

132 Evagrius, *Hist. Eccl.*, V.7; Zonaras XII.19 (*CSHB*, p. 583, 1–5). See B. Bleck-mann, *Die Reichkrise des III. Jahrhunderts in der spätantiken und byzantinis-chen Geschichtsschreibung*, Munich: Tuduv, 1992, pp. 76–8, on Philip's reign as reported by Zonaras.

133 Zosimus, I.19.1, referred to the treaty but did not discuss its terms. Zosimus, III.32.4, compared Philip's treaty with that of Jovian, noting that while Philip's treaty was a disgraceful one it did not give up any territory.

134 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 221–5.

135 D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'Archives Romains Inédits du Moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle après J-C)', *CRAI*, 1989, 546–8. The editors accept that Mesopotamia was ceded to the Persians after the death of Gordian III on the basis of Zonaras' claim. M.I. Rostovtzeff, '*Res Gestae Divi Saporis* and Dura', *Berytus* 8, 1943, 31, claimed that there was no evidence for military operations in Syria or Mesopotamia during the reign of Philip and rejected the idea that Mesopotamia had been lost to the Romans as a result of an agreement between Philip and Shapur. Julius Priscus, who had been left in the East as *rector orientis*, is described as *Praefectus Mesopotamiae* in two undated inscriptions (*IGRR* III 1201 and 1202) from Philippopolis. On the basis of *P.Euphr. 1*, we now know that he had held this appointment from at least August 245.

136 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 223.

137 Oates, *Northern Iraq*, pp. 80–92; see also S. Gregory, *Roman Military Archi-tecture on the Eastern Frontier*, 3 vols, Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1996, vol. 2, pp. 109–15. Gregory emphasizes the purely Roman structure of the barracks and that they could have accommodated two *alae miliariae*, approximately 2,000 soldiers. See also A. Poidebard, *La Trace de Rome dans le Désert de Syrie*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1934: vol. 1, pp. 144 and 150; vol. 2, plates CXXII and CXXXIX. D.L. Kennedy and D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier from the Air*, Austin: University of Texas, 1990, pp. 168–70.

138 Gregory, *Military Architecture*, vol. 2, p. 89.

139 J. Lander, *Roman Stone Fortifications: Variation and Change from the First Century A.D. to the Fourth*, BAR-IS 206, Oxford: BAR, 1984, pp. 134–5.

140 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 224. Oates, *Northern Iraq*, pp. 89–90, posed the question as to whether the barracks were ever used. The rooms of the *castellum* showed some evidence of sudden destruction, but the site was later occupied to some extent as a medieval house was built over part of it and surface finds of Islamic pottery were extensive. Wilkes, 'Provinces and Frontiers', p. 255, sounds a note of caution on the dating of Ain Sinu's con-struction and operation.

141 Oates, *Northern Iraq*, p. 90.

142 Ibid., p. 89.

143 Ibid., pp. 81–5. Most of the coins and artifacts were surface finds.

144 A.R. Bellinger, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Final Report Volume VI – The Coins*, New Haven: Yale, 1949, pp. 165–87 (henceforth *Dura Final Report VI*).

145 F. Cumont, *Fouilles de Doura Europos (1922–23)*, 2 vols, Paris: Geuthner, 1926, vol. 2, p. LXI.

146 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 224.

147 A. Invernizzi, 'Kifrin and the Euphrates *Limes*', in Freeman and Kennedy, *Defence of Roman and Byzantine East*, vol. 2, p. 362, thought that Kifrin was the main Roman fortification on the stretch of the Euphrates below Anatha.

148 M. Gawlikowski, 'Bijan in the Euphrates', *Sumer* 42, 1985, 15–21; M. Krogulska, 'Bijan – Lamps from the "Roman" Layer', *Mesopotamia* 22,

1987, 91–100; M. Krogulska, 'Bijan Island: Polish Excavations on the Middle Euphrates', in *Études et Travaux* 16, Warsaw, 1992, 353–62; A. Reiche, 'Excavations on Bijan Island: The Graves', in *Études et Travaux* 16, 1992, 417–19. See also Gregory, *Military Architecture*, vol. 2, pp. 164–70. Gregory claims that nothing of a specifically military nature has been found at Kifrin and that the majority of evidence from the site 'seems to point to the whole complex as having been of native origin and occupation'. She suggests that there were significant problems with Invernizzi's identification of the *principia* and disagrees with Invernizzi's suggestion that Kifrin was built to be equal and independent of Dura. She also disagrees with the idea that the garrison was much larger than the detachments from Dura and that they occupied the citadel only. Gregory's suggestion is that Kifrin may have been built by the Parthians after their loss of Dura to the Romans as 'it is after all on the "Parthian" side of the river'. She concludes further: 'The style, construction and plan of the defences do not provide any evidence for a Roman military origin'. This conclusion presumes that Dura had operated as a permanent garrison for Parthian troops, which appears unlikely, and it also fails to consider that the Palmyrenes may have been responsible for Kifrin's construction as Palmyra was probably under formal Roman control by the time of its construction. A Palmyrene military presence is attested at Anatha from as early as 132, and it is possible that Palmyra controlled this section of the Euphrates militarily for much of the second century AD.

149 Invernizzi, 'Kifrin and the Euphrates *Limes*', p. 368: 'Septimius Severus was therefore responsible for the founding of Kifrin'; E. Valtz, 'Kifrin: A Fortress of *Limes* on the Euphrates', *Mesopotamia* 12, 1982, 88: 'The foundation of Kifrin is thought to be connected with the policy of Severus Alexander when Mesopotamia underwent a rapid process of colonization by Rome'.

150 Invernizzi, 'Kifrin and the Euphrates *Limes*', p. 368.

151 Ibid., p. 369.

152 Ibid., p. 372.

153 Ibid.

154 Gawlikowski, 'Bijan', p. 17; Invernizzi, 'Kifrin and the Euphrates *Limes*', p. 373.

155 Invernizzi, 'Kifrin and the Euphrates *Limes*', p. 374.

156 Ibid.

157 Valtz, 'Kifrin 1982', p. 90; E. Valtz, 'Kifrin, the "*limes*" fortress', in *The Land Between Two Rivers*, Turin: Quadrante Edizioni, 1985, p. 120.

158 Dura Europos was in the province of Coele Syria, which is shown in the correspondence between the governor of Coele Syria and the tribune of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum from as early as 208. *P.Dura 56* of 208 is one of a number of examples. Palmyra was described by Ulpian, *De Cens.*, 50.15.1.5, as a colony in the province of Syria Phoenice *c.* 212. It is likely, therefore, that Kifrin was also in Syria Phoenice.

159 Bleckmann, *Die Reichskrise*, p. 79, suggests that the treaty recognized the status quo, which at that stage effectively meant the cession of part of Mesopotamia. Körner, *Philippus Arabs*, p. 124, argues against this suggestion because the Romans had advanced into the Persian Empire under Gordian III before the defeat at Meshike. On this analysis, Mesopotamia had effectively been restored to the Romans following the victory at Rhesaina. As argued on p. 177, it is not possible to reach such detailed conclusions given the limitations of the evidence. Frye, 'Sassanians', p. 469, appears to think that Philip did not cede any territory.

160 Körner, *Philippus Arabs*, pp. 133–4, proposes that the well-known rock relief carving showing Valerian as captive, Gordian III being trampled underfoot and Philip begging for mercy depicts Shapur about to extend his hand in friendship to Philip. This is an interesting suggestion, though obviously speculative.

161 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 223. C.S. Lightfoot, 'Armenia and the Eastern Marches', in *CAH Vol. XII*, 2nd edn, p. 492, agrees with the notion of a non-intervention agreement over Armenia.

162 Zonaras XII.19 (*CSHB*, p. 583, 5–9). Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 225, suggests that the treaty was broken in the summer of 245 or 246.

163 Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist. Arm.*, II.71.

164 Agathangelos, *Hist. Arm.*, I.36.

165 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 225.

166 *Orac. Sib. XIII*. 35–49, 59; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 231–2.

167 *Orac. Sib. XIII*. 21–34; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 167–9.

168 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 212–21.

169 Ibid., pp. 227–8. The main element of the agreement, which was the payment of a large ransom, would have required tax levies to replace it. Philip's brother, Julius Priscus, seems to have extracted taxes ruthlessly from the cities and towns of the whole of the Roman East (Zosimus I.20.2). This was probably to raise funds necessary to make up for the ransom payment and funding for the millennial games of 248 (Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 246–7). Other costly exercises included the large imperial building project undertaken at Philippopolis, Philip's birthplace in Arabia. As noted earlier, it is unlikely that any ongoing tribute was paid by Philip to the Persians, as the outbreak of hostilities appears to have begun soon after his return from Persia.

170 Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist. Arm.*, II.71–3, was unaware of the death of Ardashir and the succession of his son Shapur as co-regent in 240 and Shahanshah by 242. The Persian king is referred to as 'Ardashir' all the way to the reign of the Roman emperor Probus (276–82). Moses also telescoped events in Armenia immediately following the Sasanian overthrow of the Parthians, with events during Philip's reign showing a clear problem regarding his source material and knowledge of the period.

171 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 222, claims that Moses 'seems not to have known what he was talking about'.

172 Agathangelos, *Hist. Arm.*, I.18–23.

173 Ibid., I.25–34.

174 Moses Khorenats'i, *Hist. Arm.*, II.78.

175 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 257.

176 D. Kienast, *Römische Kaistertabelle: Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990, p. 197.

177 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 261–7, discusses Decius' edict and its eventual implication for Christians.

178 G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, p. 255.

179 *Orac. Sib. XIII*, 89–100. Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 268–73.

180 For the date of Decius' death on the basis of numismatic evidence, see Kienast, *Römische Kaistertabelle*, p. 202; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 278–9, where the likely date for Decius' death is discussed in detail.

181 *Orac. Sib. XIII*, 89–30; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 173.

182 *HA, Trig. Tyr.*, 2, described the flight of Kyriades to Persia following the theft of large amounts of gold and silver from his father. W. Felix, *Antike literarische*

Quellen zur Außenpolitik des Sāsānidenstaates, Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985, pp. 59–60, discusses why Kyriades should be identified as Mariades. Malalas XII (*CSHB*, p. 295,20) described Mariades' expulsion from the *boule* of Antioch and his subsequent flight to Persia. The similarity of the events surrounding Mariades' flight to Persia and the activity of the unnamed individual mentioned in the oracle suggests that they are the same person.

183 Malalas XII (*CSHB*, pp. 295,20–296,10).

184 J. Gagé, 'Les Perses à Antioche et les courses de l'hippodrome au milieu du iii(e) siècle à propos du "transfuge" syrien Mariadès', *BFLS*, 31, 1953, 301–24, proposed that Mariades was the head of a circus faction at Antioch comprised of Syrians, as opposed to another comprised of Greeks. The Syrian faction, which Gagé argued that Mariades led, was considered by him to be pro-Persian. Gagé asserted that the Persians would have regarded the faction led by Mariades as a favourable element in the disintegration of the defences of the city, but he cautioned that it is hazardous to suppose that they were so well organized as early as the third century. Downey, *Antioch*, p. 255, thought Gagé's suggestions were plausible. A.D.E. Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. 200–1, claimed that Gagé's assertions were anachronistic, and Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 269, note 200, describes Gagé's suggestion as fanciful.

185 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 272, also notes the importance of Mariades as an aid to the Persians, and as a rebellious figure more generally, in that he received a separate biography in the section of the *HA* known as *Tyrannorum triginta* or 'Lives of the Thirty Tyrants'.

186 Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 249, suggests that Mariades probably influenced Shapur's decision to invade up the Euphrates.

187 *HA Trig. Tyr.*, 2. The gold and silver may have been presented to Shapur as a gift in an attempt by Mariades to promote himself as more than a small-time political renegade.

188 Barnes, *Sources of Historia* Augusta, p. 69.

189 *Anonymous Continuator of Dio Cassius*, frag. 1, *FHG* IV, p. 192 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 53.

190 Malalas XII (*CSHB*, pp. 295,20–296,10).

191 Zosimus I.27.2.

192 A. Alföldi, 'Die Hauptereignisse der Jahre 253–261 n. Chr, im Orient im Spiegel der Münzprägung', *Berytus* 4, 1937, 41–68. A. Bellinger, 'The Numismatic Evidence from Dura', *Berytus* 8, 1943, 61–71. See also R.A.G. Carson, 'The Hamâ Hoard and the Eastern Mints of Valerian and Gallienus', *Berytus* 17, 1968, 123–42, esp. 132.

193 Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle*, p. 210, for the dates of Aemilianus' reign.

194 Alföldi, 'Die Hauptereignisse', p. 61, identified Samosata as a location to which the mint may have moved from Antioch in 253/254, but Bellinger, 'Numismatic Evidence from Dura', pp. 65–71, proposed that the mint had moved to Emesa. H.R. Baldus, *Uranius Antoninus: Münzprägung und Geschichte*, Bonn: Habelt, 1971, pp. 245–6, rejected the suggestion of the transfer of the mint to Samosata or Emesa at this time. He claimed instead that the break in the coinage from late 252/early 253 to late 253/early 254 came about as the result of a reduction in activity at the Antioch mint, in favour of the mint at Emesa, traceable to as early as 245/246. The minting of tetradrachms at Emesa under Uranius Antoninus was part of his activity as a usurper from summer 253 rather than an

indicator of the recent transfer of the mint. See also H.R. Baldus, 'Uranius Antoninus of Emesa: A Roman Emperor from Palmyra's Neighbouring-city and his Coinage', in M. Gawlikowski, ed., *Palmyra and the Silk Road*, Damascus: AAAS, 1997, pp. 371–7. Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 292, concludes: 'nor is enough known about the working of the Antiochene mint to make a firm case to explain any break in its operation'.

195 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 291–7.

196 *Chron. Se'ert* 2 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 297; Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, pp. 31–2 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 282.

197 Tabari, *Ann.*, Nöldeke, pp. 31–2 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 282. The ninth-century Arabic annalist Eutychius (*Ann.*, pp. 109.10–110 = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 295) told of a siege of Nisibis in very similar terms to those of Tabari and claimed that the siege took place before Shapur's first campaign against the Romans.

198 S. James, *The Excavations at Dura Europos: Final Report VII – The Arms and Armour and other Military Equipment*, London: British Museum Press, 2004, (henceforth *Dura Final Report VII*), pp. 23–4, summarizes the evidence from Apamea of a number of military tombstones dating to the year 252, suggesting a major military engagement in that year. He notes some reservations with Balty's dating of the brief Persian occupation of Dura to 252 rather than in 253, before its final capture in 256/257. Cf. J.C. Balty, 'Apameé (1986): Nouvelles données sur l'armée Romaine d'Orient et les raids Sassanides du milieu de IIIe siècle', *CRAI*, 1987, 213–41.

199 Potter, *Empire at Bay*, p. 249, suggests that Trebonianus Gallus had been preparing for a Persian invasion, which is why a large army was able to be mustered so quickly to meet the Persians at Barbalissos.

200 The formulaic inclusion of πόλιν σὺν τῇ περιχώρῳ (the city of … with its surrounding territory) is only included in this translation on the first occasion.

201 For example, Rostovtzeff, '*Res Gestae* and Dura', pp. 23–7; A.T. Olmstead, 'The Mid-third Century of the Christian Era', *CP* 37, 1942, 403–10; Sprengling, *Third Century Iran*, pp. 87–97; Baldus, *Münzprägung und Geschichte*, pp. 229–36; Especially Kettenhofen, *Die Römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 50–87; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 303–7; P. Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Ka'ba-i Zardûšt (ŠKZ)*, 2 vols, London: SOAS, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 59–77.

202 See A. Lemaire and H. Lozachmeur, '"Bīrāh/Birtā" en Araméen', *Syria* 64, 1987, 261–6, for the historical development of the meaning of the term BYRT' in Parthian, Hebrew, Nabataean and middle Persian.

203 *SKZ*, lines 13–14; Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 304; Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 56–67, Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, pp. 361–2, notes 9 and 10.

204 Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, pp. 360–1, note 7, suggest that the inscription describes simultaneous actions of the two units rather than each of their continuous campaigns.

205 *SKZ*, line 15.

206 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 306; Cyrrhus was not a minor fortification and would have required considerable effort to capture. It appears to have had a Hellenistic origin, and in the early first century AD was the legionary base of Legio X Fretensis; Tacitus, *Ann.*, II.57.

207 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 306, suggests that a passing column was detailed to lay siege to Cyrrhus, which it did not do successfully until after the capture of Seleucia and Antioch.

208 Rostovtzeff, 'Res Gestae and Dura', pp. 17–60.

209 Though see Frye, 'Sassanians', p. 469, who claims that Antioch was probably captured three times and that the first capture belongs to 256.

210 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 306.

211 Wilkes, 'Provinces and Frontiers', p. 240, notes that Antioch was central to a whole network of roads.

212 *HA, Trig. Tyr.*, 2, claimed that Mariades also assisted Shapur in the capture of Caesarea.

213 Libanius, *Or.*, XXIV.38; Amm. Marc. XXIII.5.3; Eunapius, *Vit. Sophist.* VI.5.2.

214 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 306–7.

215 *Anonymous Continuator of Cassius Dio*, frag. 1 (*FHG IV*, p. 192) = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 53.

216 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, pp. 306–7.

217 Malalas XII (*CSHB*, p. 296,10).

218 For the location of this theatre, referred to as the Theatre of Caesar, see B. Cabouret, 'Sous les Portiques d'Antioche', *Syria* 76, 1999, p. 131.

219 Amm. Marc. XX.11.11. A battering ram was brought up from Carrhae by Constantius II in 359 in an attempt to recapture Bezabde from Shapur II. The battering ram had been used by the Persians in a former capture of the city. Potter suggests that the battering ram described by Ammianus was probably used to capture Carrhae in 260, rather than Antioch in 252, as Carrhae was not captured in the campaign that saw Antioch fall and Antioch on the Orontes seems not to have been the Antioch that fell in 260.

220 This was first argued by Rostovtzeff, 'Res Gestae and Dura', p. 25. Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 304, note 290, summarizes the scholarship since. Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, pp. 60–1.

221 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 304.

222 The *Anonymous Continuator of Dio* (*FHG IV*, p. 192) = Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 53, indicated that some citizens fled while others stayed in the belief that Mariades would protect them.

223 Ibid.

224 Ibid.; Libanius, *Or.*, LX.2–3, claimed that Shapur I took Antioch by treason.

225 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 307, using Malalas XII (*CSHB*, p. 296,10) for the claim of a night attack and that the Persian army had marched from Chalcis.

226 *Orac. Sib. XIII*, lines 124–8.

227 Malalas XII (*CSHB*, p. 296.10); Libanius, *Or.*, LX.2–3.

228 Libanius, *Or.*, XV.16.

229 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 298, notes that the tradition that Mariades persuaded Shapur to go to war 'has been dismissed as ill-founded fantasy' but that Mariades was of some use to him in the attack on Antioch.

230 Malalas XII (*CSHB*, p. 296,10) says that Mariades was beheaded, while Amm. Marc., XXIII.5.3, claims that Mariades was burnt to death. Both writers claimed that Mariades was killed for betraying Antioch. Shapur may have been concerned by Mariades' support base and his potential to harness this support. *HA, Trig. Tyr.*, 2, claimed that Mariades had been hailed Augustus.

231 Kettenhofen, *Die römisch-persischen Kriege*, p. 66.

232 *SKZ*, lines 13–17.

233 Potter, *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, p. 306; Dodgeon and Lieu, *Eastern Frontier*, p. 362, note 13, for the identification of Sinzara, Chamath and Ariste.

234 Rostovtzeff, 'Res Gestae and Dura', p. 45 and Downey, Antioch, p. 258 held that Antioch was merely raided and plundered by the Persians and not retained for any period of time.
235 Zosimus I.27.2.
236 Malalas XII (CSHB, pp. 296,10–297,20).
237 Orac. Sib. XIII, lines 147–54; Potter, Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle, p. 323, emphasizes that the use of the word πάλι, a poetic form of πάλῖν, in this passage suggests that the attack was not the same as that previously alluded to in the oracle in which Antioch was captured.
238 Potter, Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle, pp. 308–22.
239 Ibid., pp. 175–7.
240 Ibid., pp. 323–4.
241 Baldus, 'Uranius Antoninus of Emesa', p. 374, dates Uranius Antoninus' seizure of power to summer 253.
242 Malalas XII (CSHB, pp. 296,10–297,20). Malalas claimed that Shapur was killed in this engagement, which is clearly an error as he ruled until 272.
243 Potter, Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle, p. 324; Dodgeon and Lieu, Eastern Frontier, p. 364, note 30.
244 G. Turton, The Syrian Princesses, London: Cassell, 1974, pp. 3–4.
245 Potter, Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle, pp. 324–6; Baldus, Münzprägung und Geschichte, pp. 236–55.
246 The capture of the Cilician cities of Alexandretta and Nicopolis would therefore have marked the end of the first phase of the invasion after which the Persian army returned via Cappadocia as claimed by Philostratus.
247 Potter, Empire at Bay, p. 250.
248 Dura Final Report V.1 pp. 30–1, discusses the strength of Cohors XX Palmyrenorum on the basis of two partially surviving rosters of 219 and 222. The cohort's total strength is estimated at 1,210 in 219 and 1,040 in 222. Allowing for the presence of vexillations such as those from Legio IV Scythica and XVI Flavia Firma at certain times, the total strength of the garrison would be approximately 1,500–2,000 men, although we have no indication as to the size of the vexillations.

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Postscript

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