

EGITTO E VICINO ORIENTE

Estratto

XXVII

2004

EDIZIONI

plūs
pisa university
press

A MAP OF MEANING APPROACHING CULTURAL IDENTITIES
AT THE MIDDLE EUPHRATES (1ST TO 3RD CENTURIES AD)¹

MICHAEL SOMMER

Part I
The Life of Meaning

For the last 15 to 20 years, identity has been, to say the least, a most fashionable research topic. It seems that the more we lack ourselves elementary experiences of belonging, and as Marx said, “all that is solid melts into air”, the more we are interested in and fascinated by how our ancestors dealt with identity. Again and again we are recurring to personal, collective, ethnic, social, political, cultural, linguistic, gender, tribal, religious, professional and so on and so forth identities. This paper, in that respect, is no exception.

My going back to ancestors as remote as the inhabitants of the middle Euphrates region in Parthian and Roman times is due to a number of reasons. First, I am ancient historian, and it is my job to deal with remote ancestors. Second, and more important, these remote ancestors lived in a political, social and cultural setting, which differs in almost any respect sharply from the environment of the national state, which we are accustomed to live in; in their reality, cultural heterogeneity was rather the rule than the exception; diaspora was ubiquitous – I will return to this aspect in a moment². Third, and still more

¹ A different version of this paper has been presented at a Corpus Christi College lecture in Oxford in November 2003. I am extremely grateful to Ted Kaizer for the kind invitation to talk. I further have to thank Stephanie Dalley, Olivier Hekster, Michael Macdonald, Fergus Millar for their useful remarks and criticism which in many respect caused me to look at my arguments from different points of view. I am finally indebted to the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung (Köln) for a research grant which enabled me to carry out my research on the middle Euphrates at a place as convenient as Oxford.

² For the cultural implications of empire see the contributions in G. LUNDESTAD, *The Fall of Great Powers. Peace, Stability, and Legitimacy*, Oslo/Oxford 1994; J. OSTERHAMMEL, *Jenseits der Orthodoxie. Imperium, Raum, Herrschaft und Kultur als Dimensionen von Imperialismustheorie*, *Periplus. Jahrbuch für außereuropäische Geschichte* 5 (1995), 119-131; ID.: *Imperialgeschichte*, in: Ch. CORNELIBEN (ed.), *Geschichtswissenschaften. Eine Einführung*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, 221-232; and now, above all, J. OSTERHAMMEL, *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats. Studien zu Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich*, Göttingen 2001. An essential point of reference within the puzzling image of cultural heterogeneity is, still after one decade, F. MILLAR, *The Roman Near East. 31 B. C.–AD 337*, Cambridge, Ma. 1993. On the Jewish Diaspora as a paradigm in the ancient world now T. RAJAK, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome. Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction*, Leiden 2000; E. GRUEN, *Diaspora. Jews amidst Greeks and Romans*, Cambridge, Ma. 2002, and forthcoming the contributions in E. GRUEN (ed.), *Diaspora in the Ancient World. Cultural Borrowings in Antiquity*, Stuttgart 2004.

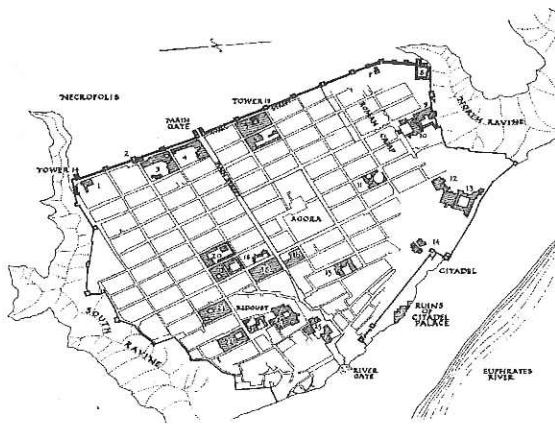
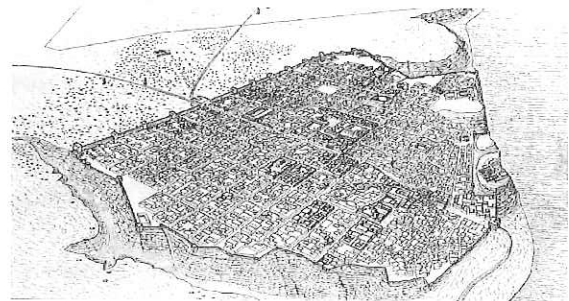
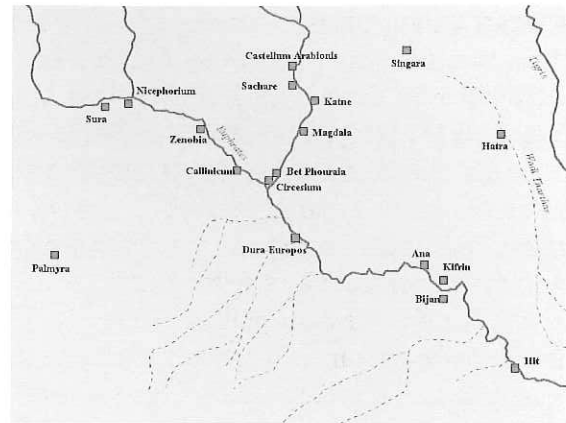


Fig. 1 - The Partho-Roman Near East (1st to 3rd Centuries AD).

Fig. 2 - The middle Euphrates: settlements and fortifications.

Fig. 3 - Dura-Europos (aerial view).

Fig. 4 - Roman Dura-Europos (reconstruction).

Fig. 5 - Dura-Europos: Temple of Zeus Kyrios (1); Christian Building (3); Synagogue (5); Temple of Adonis (7); Temple of Azzanathkonda/Praetorium (9/10); Dolichenum (12); Palace of the *dux ripae* (13); Temple of Zeus Theos (15); Temple of Atargatis (19); Temple of Artemis (20); Temple of Zeus Megistos (23); Redoubt Palace (24); Roman Bath (25).

important, they left traces in the material record of that particular region, that make worthwhile any effort of excavating, collecting and analysing them. If Palmyra can be called the Venice of the sands (“la Venise des sables”³), Dura-Europos may be labelled with any right the Pompeii of the East (Fig. 1-5)⁴.

³ So the suggestive title of Ernest Will’s book on Palmyra, summarising a lifetime’s research on the oasis city: E. WILL, *Palmyre. La venise des sables*, Paris 1992.

⁴ M. ROSTOVITZEFF, *Palmyra and its Art*, Oxford 1938, 2, and again L. DIRVEN, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos. A Study of Religious Interaction*, Leiden 1999, XV.

Dura's uniqueness is not due to size, nor to importance in antiquity. As a matter of fact, Dura-Europos was never more than a medium-size town, first in the heart of the Seleucid realm, than in the far west, respectively far east of the Parthian and Roman Empires, before it was destroyed by the Sasanians during Šapurs second invasion into Roman territory in the mid 250s AD⁵. Dura owes its paramount importance to the unique state of conservation of its remains⁶. Preserved by the arid climate of the Syrian Desert, hundreds of papyri survived⁷, and buried under a huge artificial embankment, a final attempt of the Romans to protect Dura against the Sasanians, a great deal of wall-paintings has been excavated in the western part of the city⁸. We actually know more about the Durenes than about the inhabitants of any other city in the Roman-Parthian Near East: what gods they worshipped, how they built and decorated their private houses, what business they did, what money they paid with, how they buried their deceased, what lifestyle they adopted or tried to adopt.

The problem we are confronted with when talking about identity is obvious: what does material culture tell us about the identity of the people involved? Wearing Persian costume does not necessarily imply that the person who wears it, defines him- or herself as a Persian. Wearing blue jeans today does not mean that the person who wears them be-

⁵ Dura never was a caravan city in the proper sense as M. ROSTOVITZ, *Caravan Cities*, Oxford 1920, labelled it under the direct impression of the overwhelming site. It certainly could not withstand comparison with the commercial centres of the region, first of all Palmyra.

⁶ The state of publication is still dissatisfying. A major source of information is still the excavation report of the Franco-Belgian expedition directed by Franz Cumont: cf. F. CUMONT, *Fouilles de Doura-Europos*, vols. 1-2, Paris 1926. The fieldwork in the late 20s and 30s, carried out by the Yale University in Newhaven and the French Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres, is documented in nine Preliminary Reports: cf. Aa.Vv., *The Excavations at Dura-Europos. Preliminary Reports*, New Haven/London 1929-1938 (below referred to as TEAD). So far, 12 Final Reports of the excavations have been published. Recently, a Franco-Syrian team has revisited the Yale archives and carried out some fieldwork on the site, published in *Syria* 63 (1986), 65 (1988) and 69 (1992) and in a separate volume: P. LERICHE/M. GELIN (eds.), *Doura-Europos. Études IV*, Beyrouth 1997.

⁷ Collected in C. BRADFORD WELLES et al., *The Parchments and Papyri (Dura-Europos Final Reports, vol. 5, part 1)*, New Haven 1959 (below referred to as "P. Dura"); D. FEISSEL - J. GASCOU, *Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.)*, *Journal des Savants* 1997, 65-119; D. FEISSEL - J. GASCOU - J. TEIXIDOR, *Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.)*, *Journal des Savants* 1997, 3-57; D. FEISSEL - J. GASCOU, *Documents d'archives romains inédits du Moyen Euphrate (IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.)*, *Journal des Savants* 2000, 157-208 (below referred to as P. Euphr.).

⁸ Most important, of course, the still enigmatic synagogue, the earliest surviving example of a Jewish congregational house in the world, with its figurative wall-paintings. The bibliography on the synagogue is huge, but see E.R. GOODENOUGH, *Symbolism in the Dura Synagogue*, Vols. 1-3 (= *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, Vols. 9-11), New York 1964 ff.; J. GUTMANN (ed.), *The Dura-Europos Synagogue. A Re-evaluation*, Atlanta ²1992; C.H. KRAELING, *The Synagogue (Dura-Europos Final Reports, vol. 8, part 1)*, New Haven 1956; K. WEITZMANN - H. KESSLER, *The Frescoes (sic!) of the Dura Synagogue and Christian Art*, Washington D. C. 1990; and most recently A. J. WHARTON, *Refiguring the Post-Classical City*, Cambridge 1995, 38-51; and J. ELSNER, *Cultural Resistance and the Visual Image. The Case of Dura-Europos*, *Classical Philology* 96 (2001), 269-304. On the embankment and city fortifications C. BRADFORD WELLES, *The Population of Dura-Europos*, in: P.R. COLEMAN-NORTON (ed.), *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson*, Princeton 1951, 251-274, here: 258.

lieves to be American or even that he or she intentionally follows the American way of life. A headscarf worn by a Muslim woman, however, is a strong symbol, and wearing it consciously expresses that the wearer considers herself belonging to a clearly defined group. A headscarf worn by the Queen of England and Scotland is quite a different symbol. Likewise, a tie or, say, a gown in their contexts have strong symbolic values, though certainly to a lesser degree. We all know about the symbolics of headscarves, ties and gowns, but being confronted with ancient costume we get into aporia. Was the wearer of a caftan a Persian, of a *chiton* a Greek, and of a *toga* a Roman? Would a person who used occasionally Greek as a language define him- or herself as being Greek? And above all: Did a person who wrote Greek speak Greek in everyday life? And does this imply that the person had a Greek identity?⁹

Open questions. Costume and language are merely two sectors in an immense field of traditions which can be detected by digging up or surveying the soil and can be classified by comparing them with other evidence¹⁰. Archaeology can tell us how people dressed, what they ate, what they cooked and served food with, what animals they bred, how they constructed their houses, what techniques they employed to decorate walls and furniture, what language they used to inscribe stones, coins and papyri etc. An archaeologist, on the solid ground of the material culture, can draw maps of costume, cuisine, pottery, animal husbandry, architectural design, and language. What he cannot do, is drawing maps of meaning. It is a simple truth that pots are pots, not people¹¹.

In order to find out what meanings contemporaries ascribe to costume, food, language or furniture, we use to seek the advice of texts. Indeed, many texts provide pertinent information, first of all self-reflections of individuals which normally give evidence of the person's awareness of the meaning of this or that. The book *Volevo i pantaloni* ("I wanted trousers"), the autobiography of a young woman from the countryside of Sicily trying to escape the constraints of tradition imposed by her family and thus struggling for a new social and cultural identity, explains the symbolics of clothing in a particular context of space and time to any-one who reads it¹². An archaeologist of, say, the year 3000 with this book in hand will have hardly any difficulty in aptly reading the material culture of costume in late-20th-century Sicily.

But what about the early 21st century's scholar who deals with the Roman-Parthian Near East? He disposes of no evidence produced between the Mediterranean and the river Tigris, which withstands comparison with *Volevo i pantaloni*, except perhaps Lucians

⁹ The problem of meaning attributed to things by individuals is an objective of semiotics. As a very valuable introduction see U. ECO, *Einführung in die Semiotik*, München ⁸1994; id., *Theory of Semiotics*, London 1977.

¹⁰ "Tradition" defined as "what is handed down": E. SHILS, *Tradition*, London/Boston 1981, 12. See also, for a more discursive approach to tradition, A. ASSMANN, *Zeit und Tradition. Kulturelle Strategien der Dauer*, Köln/Weimar/Wien 1999.

¹¹ Quite recently, S. JONES, *The Archaeology of Ethnicity. Constructing Identities in the Past and Present*, London/New York 1997, reminded us of the limitations of archaeological records and the misuse which has been made with it by modern Archaeologists. See also the detailed review by S. BRATHER, *Ethnographisch-Archäologische Zeitschrift* 1998, 457-462.

¹² L. CARDELLA, *Volevo i pantaloni*, Milano 1989.

puzzling text *On the Syrian Goddess*¹³. No inhabitant of the middle Euphrates ever left any document, which explicitly gives evidence of his or her individual experiences of belonging or of the meanings he or she ascribed to particular elements of material culture. Without such evidence, our attempt to draw a map of meaning seems to be doomed to failure.

Paradoxically, there is one particular feature of collective identity, that – at first sight – appears to make things even more complicated, but enables us to approach identities of the past even in environments characterised by a complete lack of literary texts. Scholars dealing with identity generally agree, that collectives hold together by a shared identity, are not given for granted. Collective identity is nothing that exists a priori, in a reality which could be labelled as “objective”. The space in which it is settled, is rather the “imaginaire”, the reality as perceived by individuals¹⁴. Consequently, there are no objective criteria – such as language, culture, or way of life – which can define collective identity. Identity, though in history objectively a potent factor, is essentially subjective and exists in the brains, not in the artefacts.

Obviously, nobody has just one identity. No-one defines oneself only as South African or only as a supporter of Juve. He or she may be in addition a member of a trade union, a reserve officer, a vegetarian and a Jew. The co-existence or rather multiplicity of identities under normal conditions tends to be no problem. In the west of Germany, catholic working class people used to vote for about a century not for the Social Democrats, but for the catholic Centre Party and its political heir, the Christian Democrats. Only when, from the sixties onwards, the Christian Democrats more obviously articulated the interests of employers and big money, most of the catholic workers changed their party affiliation and went to the Social Democrats. Multiple identities apparently begin to be perceived as a problem, when, with changing conditions, they become contradictory. In cross-pressure situations, individuals have to make a choice between two or more notions of belonging¹⁵.

¹³ See now LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA, *On the Syrian Goddess*, edited with introduction, translation and commentary by J.L. Lightfoot Oxford 2003.

¹⁴ Most important the contributions in F. BARTH, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organisation of Culture Difference*, Bergen 1969 (which puts much emphasis on the aspect that collective identities are a means of drawing boundaries between social entities); C. GEERTZ, *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*, New York 1996; K.E. MÜLLER, *Das magische Universum der Identität. Elementarformen des sozialen Verhaltens. Ein ethnologischer Grundriß*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 1987; L. NIETHAMMER, *Kollektive Identität. Heimliche Quellen einer unheimlichen Konjunktur*, Reinbek 2000. On the dependence of collective identities on historical situations and conditions E.J. HOBBSAWM, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge 1990. The paramount importance of fictional traditions for the formation of identities is stressed by J. ASSMANN, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen*, München 1997; P. L. BERGER - Th. LUCKMANN, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York 1966, 47-116; E. HOBBSAWM, *Introduction*, in: ID. T. RANGER (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983, 1-14; B. ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Rise of Nationalism*, London 1982.

¹⁵ On the voting behaviour of the west German catholic working class see J. SCHAUFF, *Das Wahlverhalten der deutschen Katholiken*, Mainz 1975; G. MIELKE, *Des Kirchturms langer Schatten*.

Choosing requires awareness. That's why cross-pressure effects are so crucial for the genesis and restructuring of identities. For a person who grows up in a purely catholic village and goes to church every Sunday, going to church is simply part of his way of life, not of his identity. He has no notion of possible alternatives, as for example going to a pub, to a football match or watching TV. If, however, conditions change, and going to church is, say, banned by law, attending service may become a deliberate act of resistance, giving expression to convictions shared with others and creating a feeling of belonging, thus becoming an intrinsic part of collective identity¹⁶.

The same is true when our catholic leaves his isolated village and settles down in a city where several religious communities rival for believers, the catholics just being a small minority. He is not any more the limb of a society where being catholic is taken for granted, but forms part of a minority group, a diaspora in the proper sense. In this environment, being catholic takes a new significance. Again, being catholic in this milieu is a matter of deliberate choice, not just of an unaware tradition. The individual will inevitably change its notions of artefacts connected with his or her faith when exposed to the experience of diaspora; also the group the individual is part of, will take a new significance¹⁷.

Acculturation comprehends, according to an already classic definition¹⁸, "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups." Translated into more updated terms, it reads: Acculturation is an alteration of cultural basic patterns taking place when groups with different traditions come in touch with each other. It is, thus, the most general description of processes, in which culture contact results. Sub-types of acculturation can be assimilation, adaptation, and rejection. Acculturation may result in multiculturalism as well as segregation; cultural tolerance as well as the extinction of original cultural patterns; deliberate remembrance of proper tradition as well as cultural amalgams. Cultural pluralism, however, as a result of acculturation, is rather the rule than the exception; even when marginalised almost completely, cultural patterns use to survive and continue to be relevant¹⁹.

Konfessionell-religiöse Bestimmungsfaktoren des Wahlverhaltens, in: H.G. WEHLING (ed.), *Wahlverhalten*, Stuttgart 1991, 139-165. Political sciences have contributed much to the analysis of cross-pressure situations: S. M. LIPSET - St. ROKKAN (eds.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments. Cross-National Perspectives*, New York 1967; G. BINGHAM-POWELL Jr., *Political Cleavage Structure, Cross-Pressure Processes and Partisanship. An Empirical Test of the Theory*, *American Journal of Political Science* 20 (1976), 1-23.

¹⁶ On the interrelation between resistance and identity see St. HALL, *Resistance Through Rituals*, London 1976.

¹⁷ On diaspora and identity G. BAUMANN, *Contesting Culture. Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*, Cambridge 1996; St. HALL, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, in: J. EVANS BRAZIEL - A. MANNUR (eds.), *Theorizing Diaspora*, Oxford 2003, 233-246; L. SMADAR - T. SWEDENBURG (eds.), *Displacement, Diaspora and Geographies of Identity*, Durham, NC 1996; N. MIRZOEFF (ed.), *Diaspora and Visual Culture*, London 1999; J. RUTHERFORD (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London 1990.

¹⁸ R. REDFIELD - R. LINTON - M.J. HERSKOVITS, *Memorandum on the Study of Acculturation*, *American Anthropologist* 38 (1936), 149-152. See also M.J. HERSKOVITS, *Acculturation. The Study of Culture Contact*, Gloucester, Ma. 1958.

¹⁹ So far, the best overview is given by U. GOTTER, 'Akkulturation' als Methodenproblem der

Coming into contact with people not sharing our traditions, norms, and convictions, tends to influence our notions about the others and ourselves. We start to perceive a divided world, with “we-groups” with whom we share elementary patterns of identity, and “other-groups” marked by difference and distinction, and all too often associated with negative notions²⁰. Thus, otherness – alterity – and identity are just two sides of the same coin. The perception of alterity intensifies the idea of belonging to a given collective. Thus, what Erving Goffman remarks on personal identity, that it “has to do with the assumption that the individual can be differentiated from all others and that around this means of differentiation a single continuous record of social facts can be attached, entangled, like candy floss, becoming then the sticky substance to which still other biographical facts can be attached”²¹, is true *mutatis mutandis* also for all forms of collective identity. Cultural traditions becoming meaningful to the people who stick to them are, to stay in Goffman’s image, the candy floss on which everything that has to do with society clings.

So far, it has become evident, that changing conditions may have deep impacts on our map of meaning, on the significance given to artefacts by individuals and on their respective experiences of belonging. Identity becomes an issue

1. in cross-pressure situations with multiple identities becoming mutually exclusive,
2. under oppression, when maintaining proper traditions becomes an act of resistance, and
3. in multi-cultural environments with groups sharing heterogeneous cultural backgrounds coming into continuous contact.

In all cases, traditions take significance which they lacked before. For scholars approaching identity, this means that they have to analyse thoroughly the conditions under which collectives sharing common patterns of identity could come into being. Why Dura is such a promising case-study in identity, should now be beyond doubt. Nowhere else in the Roman-Parthian Near East such a variety of groups with heterogeneous cultural backgrounds can be detected. Nowhere else there is so much evidence for them coming into close and continuous contact.

Part II *The Dynamics of Empire*

Like Edessa, the capital of Osrhoene and in some respect its urban alter ego, Dura-Europos was founded by Seleucus Nicator, the first ruler of the Seleucid realm, in the very last years of the 4th century BC. Like Edessa, Dura owed its existence mainly to strategic considerations of the Seleucids; both cities became parts of the Arsacid kingdom

historischen Wissenschaften, in: W. EBBACH (ed.), *wir/ihr/sie. Identität und Alterität in Theorie und Methode (Identitäten und Alteritäten*, vol. 2), Würzburg 2000, 373-406.

²⁰ MÜLLER, *Magisches Universum*, 51, on the symbolic meaning given to space. Pre-modern societies tend to a binary perception of space, divided in a friendly endosphere, associated with the own household, village, town, territory, and a hostile exosphere, inhabited by demons and spectres.

²¹ E. GOFFMAN, *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J. 1963.

slightly later than the middle of the 2nd century BC, and both came under indirect Roman rule in the 2nd century AD, Edessa in the 160s with the Parthian campaign of Lucius Verus, Dura at about the same time. But unlike Edessa, Dura and its hinterland never rose to the status of an autonomous Parthian *regnum*; and unlike Edessa, Dura was destroyed by the Sasanians and abandoned in the 250s – and thus never achieved any importance in the intellectual history of early Christianity²².

The Macedonian foundation remained the reference point for urban identity throughout the entire history of Dura-Europos. Macedonian names were clearly more popular than Greek ones. And Seleucus Nicator was worshipped as the city's *heros ktistes* until its very last days²³. Nevertheless, Dura's position in the hegemonic imperial structure underwent dramatic changes when the Seleucids retreated from Mesopotamia and the Arsacids took over power. In the Seleucid kingdom Dura, like any other "Greek" city, enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy. The entire kingdom was actually a federation of *poleis* and tribes rather than a monolithic state. Unfortunately, our information on Seleucid Dura is more than scant, but there is no evidence that Dura differed in any respect from other cities in the kingdom²⁴.

Under the Arsacids, the image becomes more complicated. Power in their realm was as decentralised as in the Seleucid kingdom, but in a different way. *Poleis* ceased to play a major role in the imperial structure. Instead, autonomous territorial states, in Latin historical literature usually labelled as *regna*, occupied the bulk of the imperial surface. Osrhoene with its capital Edessa thus became a *regnum* in the 1st century BC, Hatra, the so-called Kingdom of the Arabs, in the 2nd century AD. Charakene in the south of

²² On the history of Edessa now St. K. ROSS, *Roman Edessa. Politics and Culture on the Eastern Fringes of the Roman Empire, 114–242 CE*, London 2001, and – not considered by Ross – A. LUTHER, *Elias von Nisibis und die Chronologie der edessenischen Könige*, *Klio* 81 (1999), 180-198; id.: *Die ersten Könige von Osrhoene*, *Klio* 81 (1999), 437-454. An overview is given by H.J.W. DRIJVERS, *Hatra, Palmyra und Edessa. Die Städte der syrisch-mesopotamischen Wüste in politischer, kulturgeschichtlicher und religionsgeschichtlicher Beleuchtung*, ANRW II, 8, 799-906; MILLAR, *Roman Near East*, 437-488. The political and military history of the region is summarised by B. ISAAC, *The Limits of Empire. The Roman Army in the East*, Oxford 1990; M.G. ANGELI BERTINELLI, *I Romani oltre l'Eufrate nel II secolo d.C. (le provincie di Assiria, di Mesopotamia e di Osroene)*, ANRW II, 9, 1, 3-45; M. SARTRE, *Le Haut-Empire romain. Les provinces de Méditerranée orientale d'Auguste aux Sévères*, Paris 1997; id., *D'Alexandre à Zénobie. Histoire du Levant antique. IV^e siècle av. J.-C.–III^e siècle ap. J.-C.*, Paris 2001, 961-971. For the history of Dura-Europos still valuable ROSTOVITZ, *Caravan Cities*, 153-219; id., *Dura-Europos and its Art*, Oxford 1938, 1-32; S.B. MATHESON, *Dura-Europos*, Newhaven 1982; and now F. MILLAR, *Dura-Europos under Parthian Rule*, in: J. WIESEHÖFER, *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse*, Stuttgart 1998, 473-492; DIRVEN, *Palmyrenes*, 1-40.

²³ On the cult of Seleucus Nicator as *heros ktistes* *ibid.*, 117-119.

²⁴ Fundamental on the role of cities in the Hellenistic empires still A. HEUB, *Stadt und Herrscher des Hellenismus in ihren staats- und völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen*, Leipzig 1937. There is some controversy on the structure of the Seleucid kingdom. M. SOMMER, *Babylonien im Seleukidenreich. Indirekte Herrschaft und indigene Bevölkerung*, *Klio* 82 (2000), 73-90, argues much in favour of a high degree of local autonomy; similarly A. KUERT - S. SHERWIN-WHITE, *From Samarkhand to Sardis. A New Approach to the Seleucid Empire*, London 1993; in part contra A. MEHL, *Gedanken zur 'herrschenden Gesellschaft' und zu den Untertanen im Seleukidenreich*, *Historia* 52 (2003), 147-160, who with good arguments (note 28) differs on the paradigm of colonialism put forward by SOMMER, *Babylonien*.

Mesopotamia and Adiabene on the middle Tigris formed other autonomous kingdoms under the Parthian king's suzerainty, who thus was a "king of kings" in the proper sense of the word. The territory directly controlled by the Arsacid kings comprised hardly more than the immediate surroundings of their capital, the city of Ctesiphon in Babylonia. The Parthian realm was made up by a tiny core under direct rule and a huge periphery ruled by autonomous *reges*²⁵.

This model, suggestive as it is, is highly simplistic. In effect, there were not merely two levels of Parthian rule, but a whole scale of autonomy, stretching from quasi-sovereignty at the western outskirts of the realm to very limited forms towards the core. Territories of paramount strategic importance, like Media Atropatene and above all Armenia, were tied to the imperial centre by dynastic links and thus ruled by offsprings of the Arsacid house. But even the other territories forming the kingdom's periphery were, in terms of status, prestige, and autonomy, by no means equal. Modern scholarship has often blurred the differences between the various degrees of dependence. The misconception of the Parthian periphery in modern scholarship is very much due to preceding misconceptions in the imperial Roman historiographic literature, our one and only source. But it is also due to a widespread ignorance of the universal dynamics of Empire²⁶. Without a notion how the Parthians organised their western territories, we have, however, no chance to reconstruct the local history of Dura-Europos, not to mention patterns of identity of its inhabitants.

²⁵ The key evidence on the internal structure of the Parthian realm is Plin. nat. 6,112 who lists 18 kingdoms (*regna*): *Regna Parthorum duodeviginti sunt omnia; ita enim dividunt provincias a meridie, Hyrcanum a septentrione. ex his XI, quae superiora dicuntur, incipiunt a confinio Armeniae Caspiisque litoribus, pertinent ad Scythas, cum quibus ex aequo degunt; reliqua VII regna inferiora appellantur. quod ad Parthos attinet, semper fuit Parthyaea in radicibus montium saepius dictorum, qui omnes eas gentes praetexunt.* J. WIESEHÖFER, *Das antike Persien*, Düsseldorf/Zürich ²1998, 198, counts Persis, Elymais, Charakene, Hatra, Osrhoene, Adiabene, Media Atropatene and (probably) Hyrcania as Parthian *regna*.

²⁶ The terminology, namely in the German literature, is blurred. Cf. e.g. E. WINTER, *Die sasanidisch-römischen Friedensverträge des 3. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. Ein Beitrag zu den außenpolitischen Beziehungen zwischen den beiden Großmächten*, Frankfurt am Main 1988, 34 ("Das Beispiel zeigt die Folgen dieser 'Machtzersplitterung' für die arsakidischen Herrscher, die der Unabhängigkeit lokaler Fürstentümer letztlich durch Tolerierung des Königstitels Rechnung tragen mußten"); id./B. DIGNAS, *Rom und das Perserreich. Zwei Weltmächte zwischen Konfrontation und Koexistenz*, Berlin 2001, 184 ("Die Hatrenser lösten sich insbesondere im Verlauf des 2. Jahrhunderts aus der parthischen Abhängigkeit, und es entwickelte sich ein lockeres Klientelverhältnis zur Arsakidendynastie."); ibid. ("[...] Pufferstaat zwischen dem römischen und dem arsakidischen Reich [...]"); St. HAUSER, *Hatra und das Königreich der Araber*, in: WIESEHÖFER, *Partherreich*, 493-528, here 515 ("[...] erscheint mehr als fraglich, ob die traditionelle Interpretation des Königstitels als Zeichen von Unabhängigkeit taugt, da dies im Arsakidenreich der übliche Titel für die Herrscher der wichtigsten Provinzen war."); ibid., 516 ("eine halbunabhängige Pufferstellung"); J. WIESEHÖFER, *Die Anfänge sassanidischer Westpolitik und der Untergang Hatras*, *Klio* 64 (1982), 437-447, here 439-440 ("Zumeist als Klientelstaaten in Abhängigkeit von Rom bzw. vom Parther- oder Sassanidenreich geraten, dienten sie als Pufferstaaten gegenüber den Territorien des Gegners, konnten aber zu Zeiten der Schwäche ihrer jeweiligen Oberherren oft nicht zu unterschätzende Eigeninitiativen entwickeln.", "Die Abhängigkeit [Hatras, M.S.] wurde zur lockeren Klientel"); M. SCHUOL, *Die Charakene. Ein mesopotamisches Königreich in hellenistisch-parthischer Zeit*, Stuttgart 2001, 454 ("Vielleicht unterstand das Gebiet [die Charakene, M. S.] [...] direkter parthischer Oberherrschaft.").

Like all pre-modern empires, direct control of their entire territory for the Parthians was beyond reach. Simply for economic reasons they had to limit direct rule on a relatively small scale and set autonomous rulers over the rest of their realm. The degree of autonomy these rulers enjoyed varied with space and time; it depended on the general condition of the Parthian state, on the strategic position of their territory and in particular on its closeness to frontiers exposed to enemies. In the Carolingian as well as in the Parthian realm, "margraves" commanding detachments of the frontier army, were much more independent in their decisions than the rulers of the relatively pacific inner territories. Consequently, the autonomous local rulers were subject to hierarchy²⁷.

The problem is, that the surviving fragments of Parthian official terminology belong to four different languages. To reconstruct the mosaic, we depend on a puzzling jumble of seemingly incoherent Latin, Greek, Aramaic, and Iranian bits. When, for example, at some point in the second half of the 1st century BC, the rulers of Osrhoene abandoned their traditional Aramaic title *mry'* ("lord") and adopted a new, obviously more prestigious one, likewise Aramaic (*mlk'* – "king"), we ignore the exact meaning of the change that took place²⁸. The "lords" of Hatra, roughly 200 years later, in the 160s or 170s AD, did exactly the same and labelled themselves "kings of Arab". We neither know the precise meaning of the title, nor do we have a clear notion of what "Arab" in this context really was²⁹. Nevertheless, the parallelism of both cases is obvious. It suggests, that the change of titles adopted by the autonomous rulers reflected not merely developments of a local, but also of an imperial scale. In other words: the "lords" of Edessa and Hatra were "promoted" for some Parthian *raison d'état*. Consequently, the local Aramaic titles had to

²⁷ A good overview on the categories of imperial power is provided by I. GEISS, *Great Powers and Empires. Historical Mechanisms of their Making and Breaking*, in: LUNDESTAD, *Fall of Great Powers*, 23-43. See also OSTERHAMMEL, *Jenseits der Orthodoxie*; ID., *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats*. All empires, whether pre-modern or modern, share six universal patterns, which distinguish them from the post-French-Revolution model of national states: (1.) They dispose of a clearly distinct centre and a likewise distinct periphery; power diminishes from the centre towards the periphery, ideally in concentric circles; (2.) The interaction between the centre and each periphery is closer than the interaction between several peripheries; (3.) Ruling élites are ethnically and culturally distinct; (4.) Empires dispose of two levels of culture: cultural patterns, ideologies and religions radiating from the centre towards the peripheries use to penetrate and transform 'little traditions' which nevertheless survive; (5.) Empires do not have borders but open frontiers; (6.) Empires are products of military conquest and depend on the military hegemony of their centres. On the formation of Roman imperial power in the East see M. SOMMER, 'Sie ergreifen das Szepter über Land und Meer'. *Römische Herrschaft im hellenistischen Osten als Paradigma der Macht*, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 50 (2002), 505-526.

²⁸ LUTHER, *Erste Könige*, 452: "Über die möglichen historischen Hintergründe für die Annahme des Königstitels kann nur spekuliert werden, da wir kaum Informationen darüber besitzen, unter welchen Umständen lokale Fürsten im Partherreich den Königstitel annehmen konnten und welche politischen Implikationen die Annahme des Titels hatte."

²⁹ On the political history of Hatra St. R. HAUSER, *Ecological Limits and Political Frontiers. The 'Kingdom of the Arabs' in the Eastern Jazira in the Arsacid Period*, in: L. MILANO et al. (eds.), *Landscapes. Territories, Frontiers and Horizons in the Ancient Near East*, Padova 2000, 187-201; ID., *Hatra*, 509-519; M. SOMMER, *Hatra. Geschichte und Kultur einer Karawanenstadt im römisch-parthischen Mesopotamien*, Mainz 2003; ID., *Hatra. Imperiale und regionale Herrschaft an der Steppengrenze*, *Klio* 85 (2003), 384-398.

correspond to some official Parthian titles, for which, of course, we lack evidence³⁰.

A possible solution is offered by a text from Dura-Europos. In effect, to me Papyrus Dura 20, a Greek antichretic loan contract found in 1929 in the south west tower of the so-called Palmyra Gate, seems to be a key document for our understanding the inner organisation of what could be called the Parthian western frontier. The contract dates "in the reign of the king of kings Arsaces, benefactor, just, manifest god, and friend of the Greeks, in the year 368 as the king of kings reckons, but 432 of the former [i. e. Seleucid] era"³¹, thus from AD 121, a couple of years after the Roman occupation following Trajan's Parthian War had ended. The loan-giver is a eunuch bearing the wonderful Persian name Phraates. Phraates himself has the Parthian title *argapetes*, which is witnessed also outside the Parthian realm. He is, according to the text, "one of the people of Manesos" (τῶν παρὰ Μανήσου, 3), who is, for his part, "member of the order the *batesa* and of the *eleutheroi*, *parapates* and *strategos* of *Mesopotamia kai Parapotamia* and *arabarches*"³². What the text confronts us with, seems to be a chaotic and incoherent mess of titles.

Indeed, it reflects several backgrounds. *Strategos* in different systems of reference may take different meanings: in most Greek *poleis* of the Hellenistic East, the supreme official was a *strategos*; at the same, the Governors of the Parthian provinces, which were ruled directly from Ctesiphon, were called *strategoï* in Greek texts. At first sight, it seems evident that Manesos was a Parthian provincial governor. He was *strategos* of *Mesopotamia kai Parapotamia*, beyond doubt the territorial unit of the Parthian realm to which Dura belonged. But he was also *arabarches*. *Arabarches*, "the ruler of the Arabs", in the corpus of texts from Dura-Europos is a harpaxlegomenon, but it occurs in other local contexts of the Roman-Parthian Near East and seems, to make it even more complicated, to have different meanings. Generally, the title seems to be settled in the environment of dimorphic societies, societies with a tribal structure that included nomadic, rural, and urban components. An inscription from Dura, however, mentions a strikingly similar title: *genearches* ("ruler of clans") which was a title of the first *strategos* of Dura whom we know by name, a certain Seleucus in the 1st century BC. To me, *genearches* and *arabarches* as titles seem to be entirely equivalent and synonymous. Like the *genearches* Seleucus, the *arabarches* Manesos was most likely to be a *strategos* of the city of Dura. This implies that the *strategeia* of the territory of *Mesopotamia kai Parapotamia* and the one of the *polis* of Dura-Europos were held by the same person. It furthermore implies that both positions were functionally identical³³.

³⁰ On the role of the Parthian central government in the case of Hatra see HAUSER, *Ecological Limits*, 191; SOMMER, *Hatra. Imperiale und regionale Herrschaft*, 396-397.

³¹ P. Dura 20, 1-2: Βασιλεύοντος βασιλέως βασιλέων Ἀρσάκου εὐεργέτου, δικαίου, ἐπιφανοῦς καὶ φιλλέλληνος, ἔτους ηξήτ' ὡς ὁ βασιλεὺς βασιλ[έων] ἄγει, ὡς δὲ πρότερον βλ[ύ].

³² Ibid. 4-5: ἐδόνεισεν Φραάτης, εὐνοῦχος, ἀρκαπάτης, τῶν παρὰ Μανήσου τοῦ Φραάτου τῶν βότησα καὶ τῶν ἐλευ[.]θέρων, πα[ραπάτ]ης καὶ στρατηγοῦ Μεσοποταμίας καὶ Παραποταμίας καὶ Ἀραβάρχου. As reconstructed (πα[ραπάτ]ης) by W. Ensslin, quoted by J. WOLSKI, *Parthian and Iranian Titles in the Parchment No. 10 from Dura*, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 7-8 (1953/54), 284-294, here 287, contra BRADFORD WELLES.

³³ The question is discussed, with similar results, in P. ARNAUD, *Doura-Europos. Microcosme grec ou*

In addition to the twofold *strategiea*, the title of *arabarches* and some Parthian court titles which seem to make clear that he was a middle-rank imperial aristocrat, Manesos held the rank of *batesa*, which clearly is of Iranian origin and refers to the later Sasanian title of *padheša* meaning “margrave”³⁴. Hesychius of Alexandria’s Greek encyclopedia lists the term *bistax* and translates it with *basileus*, which is certainly misleading. If *Mesopotamia kai Parapotamia* would have been a Parthian *regnum* and Manesos its “king”, Papyrus Dura 20 would not have referred to him as *strategos*. More helpful is a little known passage in Ammianus Marcellinus, which distinguishes three holders of gubernatorial offices in the Parthian realm: *reges*, *satrapae* and *vitaxae*³⁵. Ammianus equates the Parthian term *vitaxa* with a Roman *magister equitum*. His analogy is most probably due to the fact that Ammianus had a keen interest in the military function of the office. But by putting them in one context with *reges* and *satrapae*, Ammianus makes perfectly clear that also *vitaxae* were regional administrators. In terms of prestige and autonomy, they obviously have to be located right in the middle between *reges* and *satrapae*.

The hierarchy of Parthian territorial administrators which comprised three instead of two levels provides a framework in which we can settle the enigmatic “lords” of Osrhoene and the “Kingdom of the Arabs” in Hatra. Before being elevated to the rank of kings, they hold the office of *padheša-vitaxa* which had its equivalent in the local Aramaic term *mry*. Once the territories of Osrhoene and Hatra had achieved strategic importance with the Roman frontier coming closer and closer, their rulers obtained royal rank. The rulers of *Mesopotamia kai Parapotamia* were less privileged: they remained *vitaxae*, which implied a lesser degree of autonomy and prestige. Nevertheless, the office was hereditary and usually held by local notables. The office-holders were probably identical with the urban *stratego*i of Dura-Europos, who – with the exception of our Manesos – all belonged to the same dynasty. The dynasty with lots of Seleucus’ and Lysias’ was undoubtedly of Macedonian origin.

One open question still remains: How does a Manesos with his Iranian name match with a pedigree of Seleucus’ and Lysias’ who in AD 121 ruled over Dura for more than one century and for the next about 80 years to come? The odd man out, in my view, can be easily explained by the particular historical situation of the year 121. The Roman occupants had just retreated from the middle Euphrates and the Parthian administration had to be re-established. In such a state of emergency, the temporary replacement of the local dynasty by an Iranian coming from the realm’s core made sense. Manesos might well have been the caretaker for a couple of years.

Mesopotamia kai Parapotamia with its capital Dura-Europos and its local dynasty in the

rouage de l’administration arsacide? Modes de maîtrise du territoire et intégration des notables locaux dans la pratique administrative des rois arsacides, Syria 63 (1986), 135-155.

³⁴ WOLSKI, *Parthian and Iranian Titles*, 290.

³⁵ Amm. XIII, 6, 14: *sunt autem in omni Perside, hae regiones maximae, quas vitaxae (id est magistri equitum) curant, et reges et satrapae – nam minores plurimas recensere difficile est et superfluum – Assyria, Susiana, Media, Persis, Parthia, Carmania maior, Hyrcania, Margiana, Bactriani, Sogdiani, Sacae, Scythia infra Imaum et ultra eundem montem, Serica, Aria, Peropanisadae, Drangiana, Arachosia et Gedrosia.*

Parthian period enjoyed a considerable degree of inner autonomy, though the *polis* as a framework of social and political life obviously came to an end. The coming of Rome in 164/165 AD changed remarkably little: the new territories on the middle Euphrates did not become subject to the jurisdiction of the Roman governor in Antioch; no regular Roman army unit was garrisoned in the region; and Rome, like the Arsacids before, limited itself to indirect rule exercised this time by the Palmyrenes whose archers took station in Dura and its surroundings.

According to a Latin inscription, in AD 200, an offspring of Seleucus' family, a certain Septimius Lusias, who clearly had become a Roman citizen very recently, was still in office as *strategus Durae*³⁶. Soon after this inscription had been put up, however, the conditions in Dura changed thoroughly. Roman direct rule reached the middle Euphrates, with numerous army detachments being garrisoned along the river and its tributary, the Khabur. The main unit consisted still of Palmyrene archers, who, however, now became part of a regular Roman contingent forming the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*. The whole region was heavily fortified, with strongholds along the Khabur, in the villages of Katne and Sachare and in Castellum Arabionis, and the Euphrates itself, in Dura, Circesium, Ana, Kifrin, on the tiny river island Bijan and certainly in other, so far unknown places. Rather than a *limes*, a borderline in the proper sense, the Roman middle Euphrates was a thorn in the flesh of the Parthian kingdom and of the pastoralist tribes of the steppe.

It is thus easy to find good reasons for the Roman occupation and annexation of the Dura region. With Dura, the pivotal checkpoint of the western road connecting Babylonia with Syria and the Roman province of Mesopotamia, was in Roman hands. The stronghold of the eastern road was Hatra, which was soon – still in Severan times – to house a Roman garrison as well, though only for a couple of years until its final destruction by Šapur in AD 241³⁷. The middle Euphrates was the ideal operational basis against the Mesopotamian heartlands of the Arsacids. Commercial considerations may have played their role as well, for the longest part of the caravan trail between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf was now under Roman control, but they were certainly secondary in rank. More important may have been the desire to limit Palmyrene autonomy, which so far had been unique in the Roman world³⁸.

In the first decade of the 3rd century AD, Dura-Europos changed its face thoroughly. A large proportion of the city was pulled down in order to give way for the Roman garrison. The entire northern neighbourhood of Dura was now militarised, housing accommodation and leisure devices for the soldiers, sanctuaries for cults which came with the Roman military, and the palace of the *dux ripae*, the commander of the Roman forces in and around Dura-Europos³⁹. The palace was a perfect example of the imperial military architecture of

³⁶ See for inscription and commentary TEAD 2, 148-151.

³⁷ See M.L. CHAUMONT, *A propos de la chute de Hatra et du couronnement de Shapur I^{er}*, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 27 (1979), 207-237; Wiesehöfer: *Anfänge*, 446-447.

³⁸ U. HARTMANN, *Das palmyrenische Teilreich*, Stuttgart 2001; M. SOMMER, *Palmyra and Hatra. 'Civic' and 'Tribal' Institutions at the Near Eastern Steppe Frontier*, in: GRUEN, *Diaspora in the Ancient World*.

³⁹ TEAD 9, 1-96.

the period and as such differed sharply from the local architectural tradition which continued to flourish in the rest of the town under Roman rule⁴⁰. Highly homogeneous, secluded in its headquarters and with a strong esprit de corps, the Roman military in Dura obviously formed a city in the city.

To sum up, from the 1st century onwards, we can detect four phases in the local history of the middle Euphrates. They coincide with the gradual expansion of Roman power in the Near Eastern frontier region.

Period of unquestioned Parthian rule (until AD 114): Dura was the capital of the autonomous Parthian territorial state *Mesopotamia kai Parapotamia*. Its ruler held the rank of *padheša-vitaxa*, inferior to a Parthian *rex*, but superior to *satrapae*.

Period of power vacuum (AD 117-AD 164/165): After the short intermezzo of Roman occupation, Parthian rule at the Middle Euphrates was re-established, but remained precarious. After a period of transition, the Macedonian dynasty returned to power.

Period of indirect Roman rule (AD 164/165-c. AD 200): With L. Verus' Parthian campaign Arsacid control of the middle Euphrates collapsed. The region, however, was not subject to direct rule and was not incorporated into the province of Syria. Palmyrene archers, but no regular Roman troops, were garrisoned in Dura-Europos. A small detachment of Roman troops, however, took station in Dura under the rule of Commodus.

Period of direct Roman rule (c. AD 200-AD 256): The middle Euphrates and Khabur region was heavily fortified and garrisoned with regular Roman units. Dura became the headquarters of a local military commander, the *dux ripae*. Another military district possibly was established at Kifrin, still further downstream. Dura-Europos became a city of the newly established province of *Syria Coele*, the Kifrin region perhaps of *Syria Phoenice*.

Part III *Cultural Identities at the Middle Euphrates*

One of the most notable artworks of Dura-Europos has neither been found in the glorious Synagogue, now in the National Museum in Damascus, nor in the shrine of Mithras nor in any other of the numerous sanctuaries and houses which preserved wall-paintings. It is the very sketchy representation of a mounted soldier shooting with a composite arch and wearing a conical helmet with a crescent at the top. The awkward dipinto comes from one of the rooms of the *dux ripae*'s palace which opened to a huge terrace overlooking the Euphrates valley. The clumsy execution of the drawing and the context in which it was found suggest that we even might have in hand one of the rare self-representations of an individual resident or at least present at Dura (Fig. 6)⁴¹.

⁴⁰ Ibid. On domestic architecture in Roman Dura-Europos (Agora area) see TEAD 9.1, 28-28. In general A. ALLARA, *Les maisons de Doura-Europos. Questions de typologie*, Syria 63 (1986), 39-60; ID., *Les maisons de Doura-Europos. Les données du terrain*, Syria 65 (1988), 323-342.

⁴¹ TEAD 9, 66-68, Fig. 6. The rather odd way the archer holds his bow is not necessarily an argument against this hypothesis. It might well be due to the evident artistic insufficiencies.

The horse is represented in flying gallop, in full profile, the soldier's body turned at the waist. His body and head face full front. In spite of the sketchy character of the scene, the horse's armour – a single piece covering the body like a blanket and a long piece hanging from the neck towards the front legs – can be clearly distinguished. The cross-hatching design obviously represents the single metal scales of the armour, which was typical for the Partho-Sasanian cavalry, the Roman *cataphracts* and the likewise Roman but externally recruited *clibanarii*⁴².

It might be assumed, of course, that the dipinto was made by a Sasanian soldier after the occupation of Dura in 256 and therefore is irrelevant for the topic of this paper. Indeed, in proper Sasanian art we find representations which iconographically and iconologically come pretty close to our dipinto

and may well have served as a paradigm. The galloping horse in profile with a mounted soldier or hunter shooting with a bow is a characteristic feature of Iranian art. The Sasanian silver bowl with a hunting scene which probably shows Khosro I. is an excellent example (Fig. 7)⁴³. The dipinto from the palace of the *dux ripae* is, however, just another in a large series of Dura graffiti representing mounted soldiers, most of them be-

longing to contexts which are clearly Roman and all sharing a number of common features (Fig. 8). The assumption is therefore more convincing, that, despite its apparent "Persianness", the dipinto from the palace of the *dux ripae* was executed in Roman times.

A dipinto is not a proper piece of art but the result of a moment's inspiration. One might assume, that the image was intended as a 'cartoon', the representation of a Sasanian warrior and thus a member of the "other-group". Though the Sasanians in a frontier town like Dura must have been present in the population's 'immaginaire', this is not very likely. The image, though sketchy it is, is not a cartoon comparable to those we know from Pompeii. Our horseman with every probability was a Roman soldier, most likely a Palmyrene archer of the *cohors*



Fig. 6 - The mounted archer from the palace of the *dux ripae* (dipinto) (TEAD 9, 66-68, Fig. 6).



Fig. 7 - Sasanian silver bowl with the king as a mounted archer (Khosro I.?) (H.H. VON DER OSTEN, *Die Welt der Perser*, Stuttgart 1956, T. 102).

⁴² Y. LE BOHEC, *The Imperial Roman Army*, London 1994, 28-29; J.B. CAMPBELL, *Kataphraktoi*, *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 6, Stuttgart 1999, 339.

⁴³ H.H. VON DER OSTEN, *Die Welt der Perser*, Stuttgart 1956, T. 102, commentary p. 281.



Fig. 8 - Dipinto of a mounted archer from the Synagogue building.

XX Palmyrenorum in the reign of Severus Alexander, when the heavily armoured cavalry was introduced in the Roman army in large scale. This makes him, in the context of the *dux ripa's* palace, a member of the "we-group", a fellow soldier of the artist or perhaps even the artist himself.

What does it mean, when a Roman soldier, Palmyrene in origin, by a member of his own group is represented with Persian armour and a Persian royal symbol on his head – the conical helmet or crown with a crescent – and quotes a characteristic Persian mode of representation? Or better: what meaning does the artist attribute to these elements of material culture? Does he employ them consciously to express a local cultural identity, which has at least some traces of "Persianness" and distinguishes him from soldiers coming from other parts of the Empire? I would

suggest, that the features quoted by both images do not belong to a particular Persian iconography, but are shared by a cultural *koiné* which overlaps political borders. One might argue that the artist simply depicts the military dress and equipment worn by a *cataphractus*, without much regard to expressions of identity. But that does not explain the particular mode of representation, which belongs to the East, not to the West. However clumsily the dipinto was executed, it clearly represents the soldier how he wanted to be seen. In a culturally homogeneous context, the drawing would be meaningless; in the environment of Dura-Europos, it is highly significant.

Being a Roman soldier, the archer shared the vigorous corporate identity of the Roman army as a professional group. He was a Roman citizen. He was, at the same time, a Palmyrene, most likely from the Palmyrene countryside and with some probability, since he was a horseman, of nomadic origins. He shared the collective identity of a local community (Palmyra) and a tribal group. And he apparently belonged to a wider cultural *koiné* which might be labelled "oriental". It is this belonging, to which is given expression by the dipinto. The drawing, therefore, represents just one collective identity of a whole cluster. How did the Roman army "work" as an identity group at the middle Euphrates and what impact did it have on the map of meaning we want to draw of this particular region?

A possible approach is provided by the numerous surviving papyri found in the region and their onomastics. Much has been written on the use and misuse of onomastics. Quite recently, Michael Macdonald has warned us not to draw too bold conclusions from personal names⁴⁴. It is, once again, the environment that counts. Giving a name to their children, for parents is a matter of choice. Admittedly, in many cases, the choice depends on

⁴⁴ M. MACDONALD, *Personal Names in the Nabatean Realm. A Review Article* (Reviel A. Negev, *Personal Names in the Nabatean Realm*, Jerusalem 1991), JSS 44 (1999), 251-289, esp. 259-262.

esthetical rather than cultural or ideological values. Calling a child Michael, in a Western society usually does not imply any religious or cultural belonging. Calling a child Mohammed in the same milieu, however, does. I argue that in an environment made up by various distinct and rivalling traditions, the different onomastic options for parents had a strong significance that went far beyond the esthetical. The same had, for a grown-up individual, the adoption or non-adoption of the Roman *tria nomina*, at least after AD 212, when all free inhabitants of the Empire had become Roman citizens. In diasporic environments, names certainly are declarations of cultural belonging.

A number of questions arise: First, is the Roman military, in terms of onomastics, discernible as a distinct and coherent group in the regional context? Second, if yes, what makes them distinct and coherent? Third, what social position was held by the military and the veterans? And fourth, in what way did they influence or alter basic social and cultural patterns in the region? Special attention will be paid to the veterans who decided to stay in the Dura region after their discharge from the army.

Our evidence consists of two corpora: the parchments and papyri found in Dura-Europos during the excavations (Papyri Dura) and a corpus of documents from the middle Euphrates (Papyri Euphratenses), which “appeared” on the market quite recently. In total, 23 documents will be considered, naming – apart from individuals mentioned twice or more times – 138 persons. With these figures we are, of course, far from representative statistical data; but at least they should provide a solid ground to establish some trends⁴⁵.

Three classes of names can be distinguished: indigenous (i. e. mostly Aramaic and some Persian), Greek, and Roman (i. e. the *tria nomina*). The Roman *tria nomina* may have Greek or indigenous components or they may be purely Roman. The two corpora differ in many respects: whereas the people mentioned in the Papyri Dura use to come from an urban context, most individuals appearing in the documents from the middle Euphrates can be supposed to be resident in a rural environment, in particular the village of Bet Phouraia on the lower Khabur, where most of the texts come from⁴⁶.

Of all names, 53% reflect an indigenous linguistic background, 35% a Greek one, and only 12% a Latin one (Fig. 9). Not surprisingly, indigenous names prevail in the

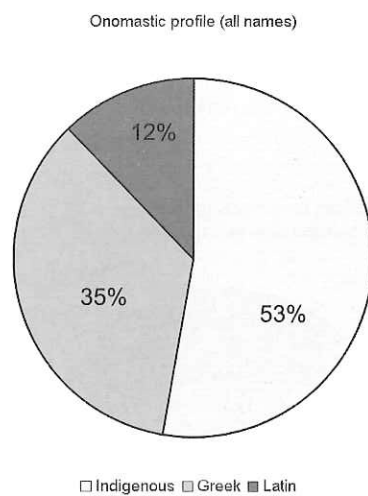


Fig. 9 - Distribution of linguistic groups in the onomastic record of the middle Euphrates in the Roman period (P. Dura and P. Euphr.).

⁴⁵ The following documents have been analysed in an onomastic database: P. Dura 17, 25-27, 29-32, 46; P. Euphr. 1-15. See Appendix 1.

⁴⁶ The categories may seem arbitrary but a further differentiation of ‘indigenous’ names raises immense difficulties. It is not always possible to look behind the mimicry of names practised by the people involved. It would, however, be a thrilling challenge to identify onomastic components going back to languages spoken in the area in pre-Hellenistic times.

Euphrates documents (88%), whereas a relative majority of individuals mentioned in the Dura papyri bear Greek names (49%) (Fig. 10-11). Even more unequivocal is the image provided by documents which can be clearly attributed to an urban respectively rural context: 58% of the people mentioned in documents from an urban context bear Greek names, even 75% of the people who supposedly come from the countryside indigenous ones (Fig. 12-13). That the various language groups are integrated in the im-

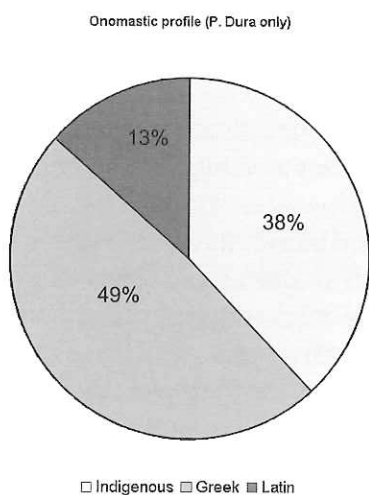


Fig. 10 - Distribution of linguistic groups in the onomastic record of the middle Euphrates in the Roman period (P. Dura only).

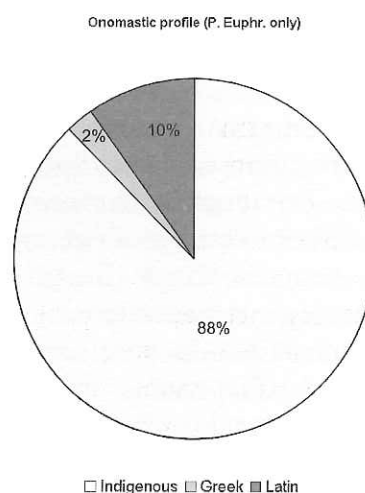


Fig. 11 - Distribution of linguistic groups in the onomastic record of the middle Euphrates in the Roman period (P. Euphr. only).

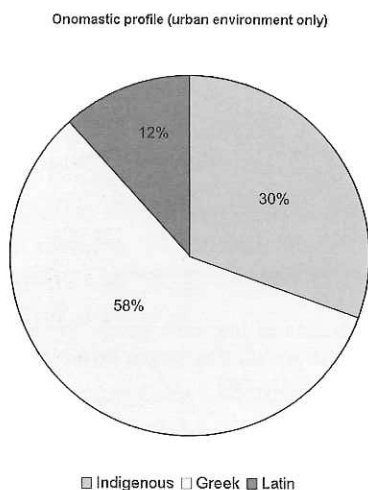


Fig. 12 - Distribution of linguistic groups in the onomastic record of the middle Euphrates in the Roman period (documents from an urban environment only)

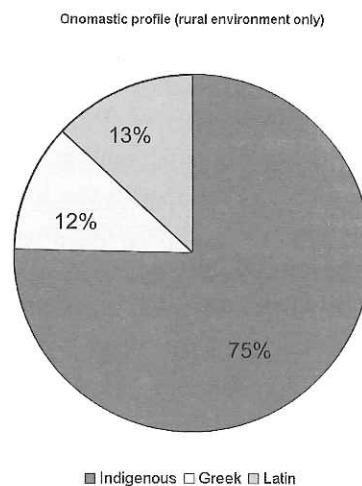


Fig. 13 - Distribution of linguistic groups in the onomastic record of the middle Euphrates in the Roman period (documents from a rural environment only).

perial society to different extents, is proven by a glance on the functional status of males. It makes sense to distinguish between documents dating before and after the *constitutio Antoniniana*. Before 212, all males holding any political office, had Greek names. 100% of males with Latin names and a considerable minority of males bearing Greek names (48%) held or had held official duties (whether as political officials, soldiers, or veterans), whereas a huge majority (89%) of people bearing indigenous names held no duty at all (Fig. 14). After 212, still many “Greeks” (67%) and “Latins” (59%) held official functions, but now “officials” made up a considerably increased proportion (26%) among males with indigenous names (Fig. 15). Most of the officials with indigenous names, however, were soldiers who bore the *tria nomina* with an indigenous component.

The most striking feature of the documents’ onomastics is the rather low proportion of people who adopted the *tria nomina* after 212. As pointed out, with the *constitutio Antoniniana* virtually all inhabitants of the region became Roman citizens. Being a Roman citizen in the third century didn’t imply many juridical privileges, but it certainly meant prestige. Consequently, in most regions of the Roman Near East, people were eager to display their recently gained “Romanness” by bearing the *tria nomina*. The situation at the middle Euphrates was entirely different: In the urban context of Dura-Europos only 26% of the individuals mentioned in our texts adopted the *tria nomina*; in rural areas the proportion (45%) was considerably higher (Fig. 16-18).

Onomastic and social profiles (before 212)

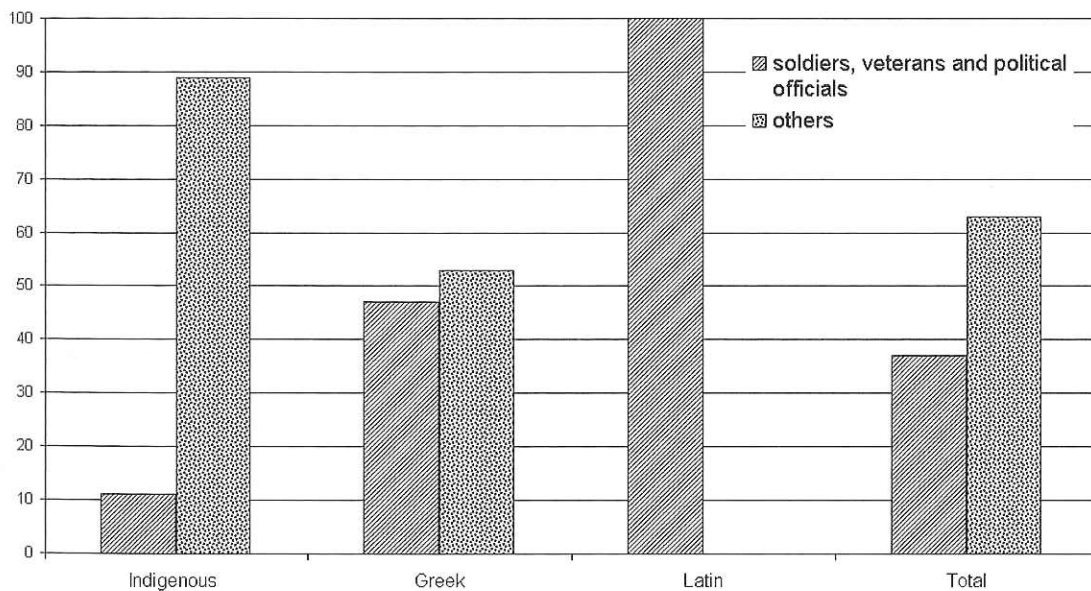


Fig. 14 - Holders of official positions (political and military, without females, slaves and persons mentioned only for reasons of filiation) according to linguistic groups (documents dating before 212 only).

Onomastic and social profiles (212 and later)

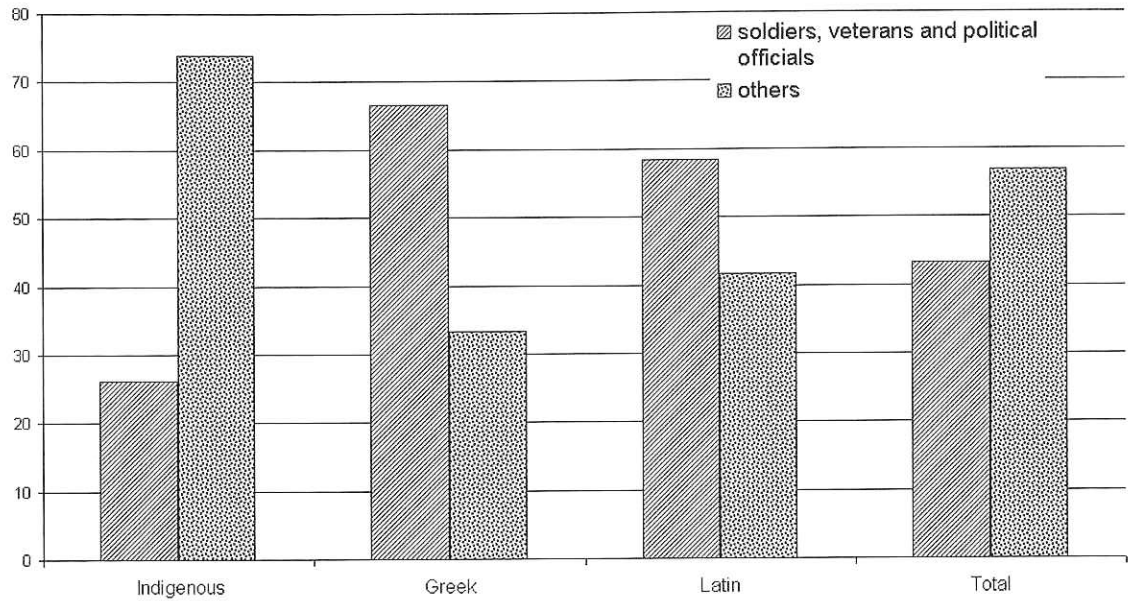


Fig. 15 - Holders of official positions (political and military, without females, slaves and persons mentioned only for reasons of filiation) according to linguistic groups (documents dating 212 and later only).

Onomastic profile and tria nomina

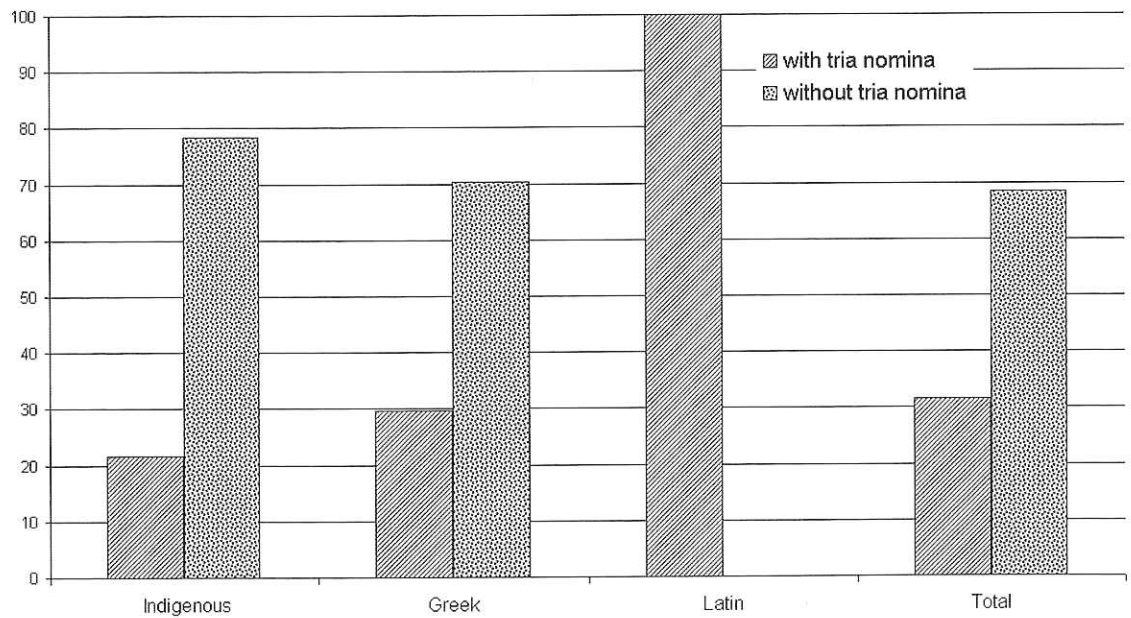


Fig. 16 - Individuals (without females, slaves and persons mentioned only for reasons of filiation) displaying *tria nomina* according to their linguistic backgrounds (all documents).

Onomastic profile and tria nomina (urban environment only)

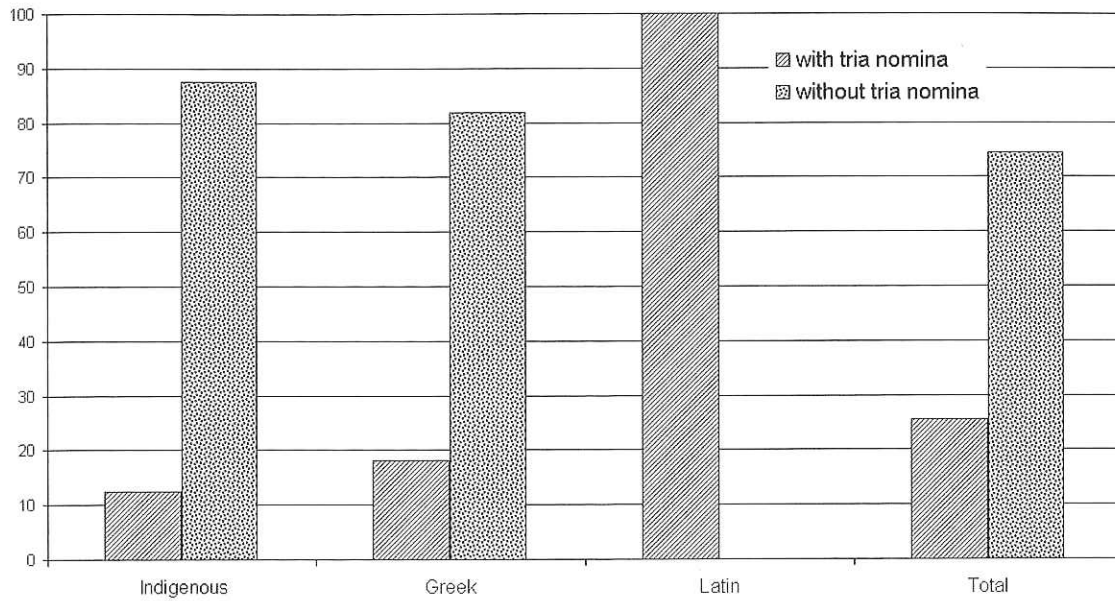


Fig. 17 - Individuals (without females, slaves and persons mentioned only for reasons of filiation) displaying *tria nomina* according to their linguistic backgrounds (documents from an urban environment only).

Onomastic profile and tria nomina (rural environment only)

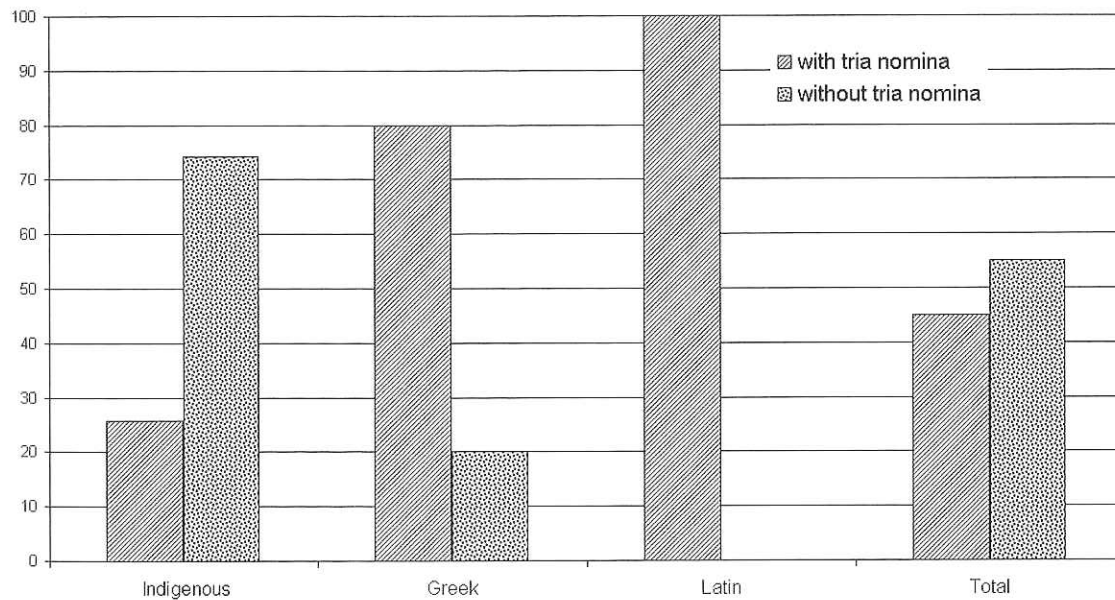


Fig. 18 - Individuals (without females, slaves and persons mentioned only for reasons of filiation) displaying *tria nomina* according to their linguistic backgrounds (documents from a rural environment only).

Who were the few people who bore or adopted the *tria nomina* in the middle Euphrates region? A glance on the group's social composition is rather illuminating: Of all individuals (except women and slaves) mentioned in texts dating after 212, not even one fourth are soldiers (17%) or veterans (7%). On the other hand, all soldiers and veterans, without exception, displayed the *tria nomina*. Respectively, the vast majority of individuals bearing the *tria nomina* were either soldiers (48%) or veterans (20%) (Fig. 19). Among males

Tria nomina and the military (individuals with tria nomina only)

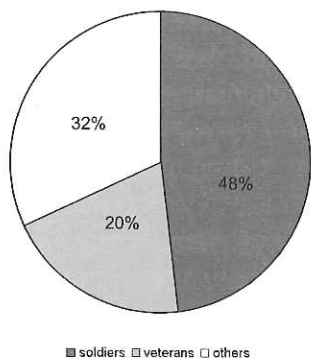


Fig. 19 - Proportions of soldiers and veterans among individuals (without females, slaves and persons mentioned only for reasons of filiation) with *tria nomina*.

with purely Roman *nomina* persons connected with the military make up 61% (39%, resp. 22%), the ones with a local Aramaic component are, without exception, soldiers (60%) or veterans (40%). Slightly less dominant, but with 57% still a huge majority, are the soldiers (not veterans) among individuals bearing the *tria nomina* with a Greek component (Fig. 20).

Again, the image provided by the data is striking. Though they were, from 212 onwards, Roman citizens and entitled to bear the *tria nomina*, the local population as a whole seemed to be highly reluctant to do so. Though people in other parts of the Roman Near East used to express their "Romanness" by adopting Roman names and though the *tria nomina* still had an

Tria nomina and the military

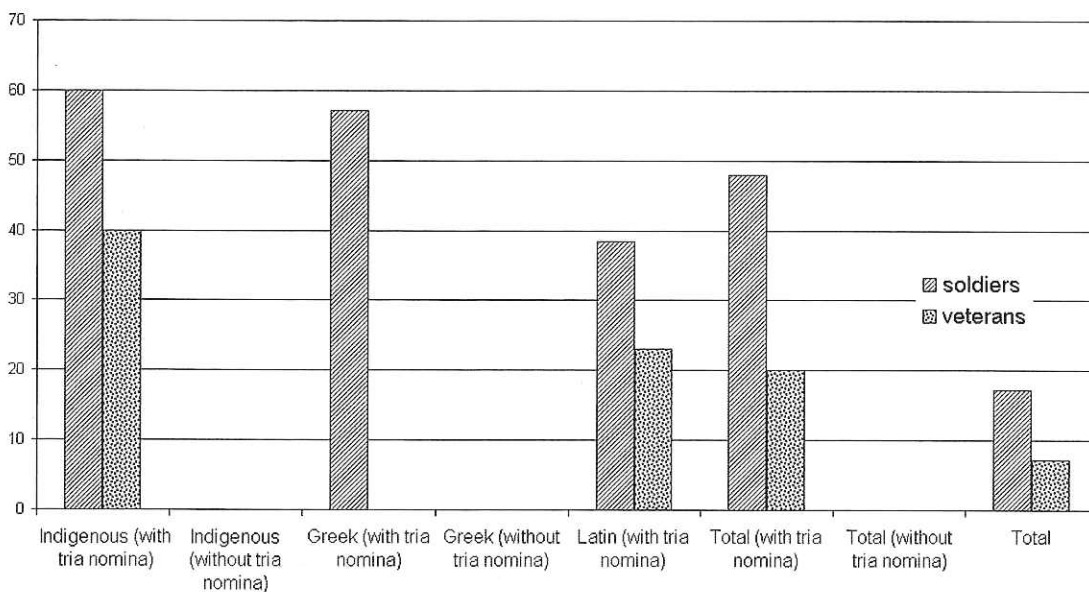


Fig. 20 - Proportions of soldiers and veterans among individuals (without females, slaves and persons mentioned only for reasons of filiation) with *tria nomina* according to their linguistic backgrounds.

imperial nimbus of prestige, the people in the Dura region stuck to their traditional Greek and local names in great numbers, with one significant exception: the soldiers, whether active or retired, seemed to take pride in writing their Roman names in full length on parchments and papyri.

Onomastic data has to be read with caution. I am far from labelling people who used to bear Aramaic names as “the Aramaics” and therefore as an identity group. Further information should decide about this issue. On the other hand, the existence of two distinct groups, one adopting Roman names and one not, is significant. Still more significant is the congruency of one of these groups with a social body, whose coherence in terms of corporate identity is an open secret: the Roman army and its human estate, the veterans settling down in the regions where they were garrisoned. The onomastic evidence throws light on how these two sub-groups were considered by the local population and how they considered themselves: as the avantgarde of “Romanness” and as representatives of the Empire at its far-off outpost. For the rest of the population, their legally being Roman was not even important enough to sign with three names. Evidently, for these groups, other identities – in a local or regional framework – prevailed.

Finally, we should have a look at the role the soldiers played in the local society when discharged and having settled down. Some hints are provided by Papyrus Dura 26. The date given by the Greek deed of sale is AD 227⁴⁷. The document records the purchase of a property with fruit-bearing trees by Iulius Demetrius, a veteran of the *cohors III Augusta Thracum*. The property was in the village of Sachare on the river Khabur, where the winter quarters of the cohort were. The seller was a local called Otarnaios⁴⁸. Demetrius already was the owner of a plot of land, a vineyard, which, according to the document, was adjacent to the property in question⁴⁹. We do not know where Demetrius came from; whether or not his unit, which goes back to the days of Domitian, was still recruited in Thracia cannot be decided; more likely the cohort’s soldiers came from all over the Empire.

For the plot of land, Demetrius paid 175 *denarii*, about one fifth of the annual salary of a legionary of those days⁵⁰. The size of the property, not given in the document, may have come to one, at maximum two acres. By purchasing the land, Demetrius was far from becoming a large-scale landowner. He was, however, able to enlarge his property and to invest money in his farm quite shortly after having been discharged⁵¹. Furthermore, he cultivated wine and selected fruits; apparently, he produced for a local market, not – like most peasants in the Near Eastern world – for subsistence⁵². From his living not in

⁴⁷ P. Dura 26, 4: Ἐπὶ ὑπάτων Νουμμίου Ἀλβεΐνου καὶ Λαιλίου Μαξίμου.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 5-8: ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιβεβλημένων καὶ ἐσφραγισμένων ἀνδρῶν ἐν Σαχάρῃ παραχειμασία [σ]πρεΐ[ης] γ' Σεβ[αστῆς] Θρακῶν. ἐπρίατο Ἰούλιος Δημήτριος, πάλαι στ[ρα]τιώτης σπείρης τῆ[ς] προγεγραμμένης, οἰκῶν ἐν Ῥακουκαίθῃ, παρὰ Ὀταρναίου Ἀβαδάβου κώμης Σαχαρη-δα-αουαράη [...].

⁴⁹ Ibid., 15-17: γείτονες τῆς αὐτῆς χώρας ἀπὸ μὲν ἀνατολῶν κανάλιν ὕδατος καὶ Ἀβούρα ποταμός, δυσμῶν ἄμπελος τοῦ ἡγορακότος [...].

⁵⁰ Ibid., 12-13: τεμῆς ἀργυρίου δαναρίων ἑκατὸν ἑβδομήκοντ[α] πέντε.

⁵¹ Some of his fellow soldiers who signed as witnesses were still active.

⁵² The rural population’s situation in the Hellenistic east has been thoroughly analysed by P. BRIANT, *Remarques sur laoi et esclaves ruraux en Asie Mineure hellénistique*, Actes du Colloque 1971 sur

Sachare, but in another place called Raquqeta, it can be inferred that he did not have to cultivate the land personally, but had some slaves to do the work for him. Compared to the indigenous population, Demetrius was clearly privileged; he was the representative of a new local élite, of a grass root leisure-class coming from outside and adding a new element to the social structure of the Khabur region⁵³.

Being privileged, people like Demetrius also had the power to impose their norms on the local society. We know of two Roman cohorts garrisoned on the Khabur, each of them with a strength reaching from 500 to 1000 men. Assumed that the cohorts on the Khabur were *quingenaria* and the time of service averaged 15 years, assumed in addition a death percentage of 20% during service time and only a one fourth quota of discharged soldiers remaining close to their final place of garrison, then we come to 13 soldiers settling down along the Khabur year by year. This is a substantial number, if we take into consideration the extensions of a river valley stretching over approximately 200 km. Given the social cohesion of the veterans as a group and their privileged status, we may assume that in the long run, they turned the social structure of the Khabur region upside-down. The reputation and prestige they enjoyed can be seen from the sheer number of veterans signing as witnesses for all sorts of contracts. Much emphasis was put on their status as veterans.

The veterans, thus, formed a new local élite of “notables” in the sense of Max Weber. They were socially coherent, were members of a leisure-class not concerned about their material subsistence, and had sufficient prestige to influence the system of values of their environment. If there was one factor of “Romanisation” in the middle Euphrates region, it was, like in many other parts of the Empire, the group of retired military professionals. For them, their “Romanness” was a criteria of status, conspicuously displayed by using the *tria nomina* in a milieu to which they were utterly unfamiliar.

Of the “map of meaning” promised in the beginning of this paper, the dipinto of the *dux ripa*'s palace, the onomastics of the middle Euphrates region, and the Roman veterans settling down in the Khabur valley are just single square grids. Though tiny in dimension they are, they hopefully show, how traces of traditions found in the material record, may be used when we approach cultural identities of the past. The promising story of multiculturalism and acculturation came to a sudden end, when Šapur captured Dura in AD 256. The city and most parts of the middle Euphrates region never recovered. If Ammianus Marcellinus when campaigning with the emperor Julian would have marched by Dura, he would have found the site *in plena solitudine*.

l'esclavage, Paris 1973, 93-133; id., *Villages et communautés villageoises d'Asie achéménide et hellénistique*, JESHO 19 (1975), 165-258; id., *Colonisation hellénistique et populations indigènes*, Klio 60 (1978), 57-92.

⁵³ The bibliography on the social and political implications of veteran settlement in the Roman provinces is huge. Nevertheless, there are still many unsolved problems, especially with regard to the role played by veterans in the social, political, and religious life of local communities. Most pertinent are J.C. MANN, *Legionary Recruitment and Veteran Settlement During the Principate*, London 1983; Le Bohec, *Imperial Roman Army*, 223-225; E. TODISCO, *I veterani in Italia in età imperiale*, Bari 1999; S. DEMOUGIN, *Les vétérans dans la Gaule Belgique et la Germanie inférieure*, in: M.-Th. RAEPSAET-CHARLIER, *Cités, Municipales, Colonies. Le processus de municipalisation en Gaule et en Germanie sous le Haut Empire romain*, Paris 1999, 355-380, esp. 367-373; L. KEPPIE, *From Legionary Fortress to Military Colony. Veterans of the Roman Frontiers*, in: ID., *Legions and Veterans. Roman Army Papers 1971-2000*, Stuttgart 2000.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Documents from the middle Euphrates (P. Euphr.)

No.	Year (approx.)	Language	Document Type	Environment
1	245	Greek	Petition	Rural
2	250	Greek	Petition	Rural
3	250	Greek	Petition	Rural
5	243	Greek	Petition	Rural
6	249	Greek	Deed of sale	Rural
8	251	Greek	Deed of sale	Rural
9	252	Greek	Deed of sale	Rural
10	250	Greek	Deed of sale	Rural
11	232	Greek	Deed of sale	Rural
12	244	Greek	Other	Rural
13	243	Greek	Deed of Loan	Rural
14	241	Greek	Deed of Loan	Rural
15	236	Greek	Other	Rural

Appendix 2: Documents from Dura-Europos (P. Dura)

No.	Year (approx.)	Language	Type	Environment
17	180	Greek	Other	Urban
25	180	Greek	Deed of sale	Urban
26	227	Greek	Deed of sale	Rural
27	225	Greek	Deed of sale	Urban
29	251	Greek	Other	Urban
30	232	Greek	Deed of marriage	Rural
31	204	Greek	Deed of divorce	Rural
32	254	Greek	Deed of divorce	Urban
46	200	Greek	Brief	Urban

Appendix 3: Personal names from the middle Euphrates region

No.	Name	Dokument	Status	Office hold	Location
1.	Aurelius Archodes	P. Euphr. 1			Bet Phouraia
2.	Phallaios	P. Euphr. 1			
3.	Philotas	P. Euphr. 1			Bet Phouraia
4.	Nisraibos	P. Euphr. 1			
5.	Sumisbarachos	P. Euphr. 1			
6.	Ouorodes	P. Euphr. 1			Bet Phouraia
7.	Aurelius Abedsautas	P. Euphr. 1	official	<i>bouleutes</i>	Bet Phouraia
8.	Abediardas	P. Euphr. 1	official	<i>procurator</i>	
9.	Claudius Ariston	P. Euphr. 1			
10.	Rostamos	P. Euphr. 2			Birtha Okbanon
11.	Aurelius Barsemaias	P. Euphr. 2	veteran		
12.	Thaimos	P. Euphr. 2			
13.	Bathsabbatha	P. Euphr. 2			Magdala
14.	Sibbaraios	P. Euphr. 3			
15.	Iulius Marinus	P. Euphr. 5	soldier	<i>centurio</i>	
16.	Aurelius Abilaas	P. Euphr. 5	soldier		
17.	Iabathnanaia	P. Euphr. 5			
18.	Absalmas	P. Euphr. 8			Beathagae
19.	Abidrodakos	P. Euphr. 8			
20.	Immedabou	P. Euphr. 8			
21.	Samsaios	P. Euphr. 8			Banathsamsa
22.	Teias	P. Euphr. 8			
23.	Aulaeias	P. Euphr. 9			Bet Phouraia
24.	Abdilaos	P. Euphr. 9			

No.	Name	Dokument	Status	Office hold	Location
25.	Ouardannaia	P. Euphr. 9			
26.	Nisraibos	P. Euphr. 10			Bet Phouraia
27.	Ouorodes	P. Euphr. 10			
28.	Aurelius Konas	P. Euphr. 10			
29.	Aurelius Corbulo	P. Euphr. 11	soldier	<i>kybernator</i>	Bet Phouraia
30.	Oda	P. Euphr. 12			Bet Phouraia
31.	Mannaia	P. Euphr. 12			
32.	Athein	P. Euphr. 12			
33.	Magnus	P. Euphr. 12			
34.	Metolbesumenos	P. Euphr. 12			
35.	Mokeimeos	P. Euphr. 13			Bet Phouraia
36.	Lisamsos	P. Euphr. 13			
37.	Ouorodes	P. Euphr. 13			Bet Phouraia
38.	Phallaios	P. Euphr. 12			
39.	Marcus Aurelius [...]	P. Euphr. 14	soldier		Appadana
40.	Salmana Mazabana	P. Euphr. 14			Dusarios
41.	Aurelia Barabous	P. Euphr. 15			Bet Phouraia
42.	Sammones	P. Dura 17			Tetyrus
43.	Abdallathos	P. Dura 17			
44.	Heliodoros	P. Dura 17	official	<i>strategos kai epistates</i>	Dura-Europos
45.	Konon	P. Dura 17			Dura-Europos
46.	Nikostratos	P. Dura 17			Dura-Europos
47.	Seleukos	P. Dura 17			Dura-Europos
48.	Theomnestos	P. Dura 17			Dura-Europos

No.	Name	Dokument	Status	Office hold	Location
49.	Amathiara	P. Dura 17			
50.	Artemidoros	P. Dura 17			Dura-Europos
51.	Barbaizabadata	P. Dura 17			
52.	Olympos	P. Dura 17			
53.	Lysias	P. Dura 17			
54.	Artemidoros	P. Dura 17			
55.	Theodoros	P. Dura 17			
56.	Konon	P. Dura 17			Dura-Europos
57.	Ariabazos	P. Dura 17			
58.	Aribabazos	P. Dura 17			
59.	Abiginaios	P. Dura 17			
60.	Ortonopates	P. Dura 17			
61.	Zobaios	P. Dura 17			
62.	Mokimos	P. Dura 17			
63.	Nabu	P. Dura 17			
64.	-azus	P. Dura 17			
65.	-amelos	P. Dura 17			
66.	Lysanias	P. Dura 25	priest	<i>hiereus Dios</i>	Dura-Europos
67.	Zenodotos	P. Dura 25			
68.	Heliodoros	P. Dura 25			
69.	Theodoros	P. Dura 25	priest	<i>hiereus Apollonos</i>	Dura-Europos
70.	Athenodotos	P. Dura 25			
71.	Artimidoros	P. Dura 25			
72.	Heliodoros	P. Dura 25	priest	<i>hiereus ton progonon</i>	Dura-Europos

No.	Name	Dokument	Status	Office hold	Location
73.	Diokles	P. Dura 25			
74.	Heliodoros	P. Dura 25			
75.	Danymos	P. Dura 25	priest	<i>hiereus basileos</i>	Dura-Europos
76.	Lysias	P. Dura 25			Nabagath
77.	Lysias	P. Dura 25			
78.	Heliodoros	P. Dura 25			
79.	Aristonikos	P. Dura 25			
80.	Achabos	P. Dura 25			
81.	Heliodoros	P. Dura 25			Nabagath
82.	Theomnestos	P. Dura 25	official	<i>chreophylax</i>	Dura-Europos
83.	Theodotos	P. Dura 25	official	<i>chreophylax</i>	Dura-Europos
84.	Athenodoros	P. Dura 25	official	<i>chreophylax</i>	Dura-Europos
85.	Olympos	P. Dura 25			Dura-Europos
86.	Lysias	P. Dura 25			
87.	Artemidoros	P. Dura 25			Dura-Europos
88.	Theodoros	P. Dura 25			
89.	Apollophanes	P. Dura 25			Dura-Europos
90.	Charanides	P. Dura 25			
91.	Iulius Demetrius	P. Dura 26	veteran		Raqueta
92.	Otaraios	P. Dura 26			Sachare
93.	Abadabos	P. Dura 26			
94.	Habibas	P. Dura 26			Sachare
95.	Bozanas	P. Dura 26			
96.	Abdelath	P. Dura 26			Sachare

No.	Name	Dokument	Status	Office hold	Location
97.	Aurelius Salmanes	P. Dura 26	veteran		
98.	Flavius Serapio	P. Dura 26	soldier	<i>nuntius</i>	
99.	Iulius Diogenes	P. Dura 26	soldier	<i>cornicularius</i>	
100.	Iulius Monimus	P. Dura 26	soldier	<i>tesserarius</i>	
101.	Vepo Flavianus	P. Dura 26	soldier	<i>tubicen</i>	
102.	Zebida	P. Dura 27			
103.	Rhechomnaios	P. Dura 27			
104.	Antoninus	P. Dura 27			
105.	Aurelia Gaia	P. Dura 29			Dura-Europos
106.	Saturnilus	P. Dura 29			
107.	Amaththabeile	P. Dura 29			Dura-Europos
108.	Aurelius Theodorus	P. Dura 29			Dura-Europos
109.	Antonius	P. Dura 29			
110.	Flavius Valerius	P. Dura 29			
111.	Aurelius Oniaces	P. Dura 29			
112.	Aurelius Alexandros	P. Dura 30	soldier		
113.	Aurelia Marcellina	P. Dura 30			Qatna
114.	Agrippinus	P. Dura 30			
115.	Faustinus Avianus	P. Dura 29	veteran		
116.	Antonius Mezianus	P. Dura 30	soldier	<i>optio</i>	
117.	Nabusamaos	P. Dura 31			Ossa
118.	Konon	P. Dura 31			
119.	Akozsis	P. Dura 31			Ossa
120.	Seleukos	P. Dura 31			

No.	Name	Dokument	Status	Office hold	Location
121.	Abissaeos	P. Dura 31			
122.	Barnaios	P. Dura 31			
123.	Lysias	P. Dura 31			
124.	Iulius Germanus	P. Dura 31	veteran		
125.	Zabinas	P. Dura 31			
126.	Adaios	P. Dura 31			
127.	Abissaios	P. Dura 31			
128.	Abissaios	P. Dura 31			
129.	Iulius Antiochus	P. Dura 32	soldier		Dura-Europos
130.	Aurelia Amimma	P. Dura 32			Dura-Europos
131.	Aurelius Valentinus	P. Dura 32			Dura-Europos
132.	Antoninus	P. Dura 32			
133.	Patroclianus	P. Dura 32	soldier		
134.	Abbouis	P. Dura 32			
135.	Iulius [...]	P. Dura 32			
136.	Asklepiodotos	P. Dura 32	official	<i>bouleutes</i>	Dura-Europos
137.	Athenodoros	P. Dura 32			
138.	Barsabbathas	P. Dura 46	soldier		Dura-Europos