

THE *ORNAMENTA TRIUMPHALIA* OF M. ULPIUS TRAIANUS MAIOR

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The article examines the conferral of *ornamenta triumphalia* upon Marcus Ulpius Traianus, father of Emperor Trajan, as recorded by Pliny the Younger (*Panegyricus*, 16.1) and other sources. It explores the political and military context of this honor, granted for his service, situating the episode within the broader framework of Flavian reward practices for senatorial commanders and the general outline of Roman frontier policy in the East. By combining literary, epigraphic, and prosopographical evidence, the article contributes to understanding the mechanisms of Roman foreign policy the late first century CE. To understand the mechanism, we must address the question what was the main purpose and function of the reorganization of the Roman system of garrisons and roads in the upper reaches of the Euphrates and how the activity of M. Ulpius Traianus pater affected it? It seems that the exclusive connection of these transformations to the protection of Roman territories from the raids of the Alans was not the only function of the newly created system of military garrisons and communications. The Sarmatian raids, may have stimulated existing transformations, but their global goal was to secure control over the Euphrates, where Rome's key rival remained the Arsakids (both in Parthia and in Armenia, formally under control of Rome, but de facto controlled by the Parthians).

The questions that still require a special study include how the Romans tried to connect their perception of the region which is depicted in the written sources with their military and political actions in the area. The need for the reevaluation of the ancient sources evidence for our study of Pontic-Cappadocian area in Flavian period remains to be an important task which is a key to the understanding of the situation in the region. Can we conclude what the real 'threat' was that bothered the Romans? And can archaeology solve the problem (or perhaps a small part of it considering the Sarmatian presence in the area)?

The evidence of the narrative Roman tradition leads to the clear conclusion that during the 1st century CE the Parthians in fact were the main factor in administrative and military transformations in the region. The existing epigraphical and archeological evidence, as it seems, currently supports the Parthian issue as the main reason for creation of the garrison system of the frontier areas both in Syria and the Pontic-Cappadocian region. The importance of the Parthian factor, despite the existing attempts to demonstrate its secondary nature, in our opinion is clearly indicated by the episode with Marcus Ulpius Traianus the Elder, who received the *ornamenta triumphalia* for his actions in the East.

Keywords: *ornamenta triumphalia*, Marcus Ulpius Traianus pater, Flavian dynasty, Syria, Roman East, Roman frontier in the East, Parthia, Roman Empire.

In his *Panegyricus Traiani*, Pliny notes that the father of the second emperor of the Antonine dynasty—Marcus Ulpius Traianus—received *ornamenta triumphalia* for his service in Syria (Pliny *Panegyr.* 16.1). These honors are also mentioned in several inscriptions (notably ILS 8970). However, reconstructing the reasons that led Vespasian to grant such a distinction to Trajan remains highly problematic.

Trajan the Elder belonged to the circle of provincials who, during the mid to late 1st century CE, managed to build rather distinguished political careers. One of the stages in his career was his governorship over certain eastern provinces of Rome, particularly Syria. When in 72 CE the term of Caesennius Paetus ended, the province was likely (possibly after a brief interim governorship) transferred to Ulpius Trajan the Elder. From 73/74 to 77/78 CE he served as *legatus* of Syria. The reconstruction of the chronology of Trajan's governorship remains quite uncertain, and G. Bowersock has provided a thorough analysis of the scholarly approaches and arguments – based mainly on epigraphic material¹.

Developing certain theses of G. Bowersock² and E. Dąbrowa³, L. Gregoratti⁴ examined the activities of Trajan the Elder in the East and proposed a coherent account of the governor's actions, further elaborating on Bowersock's ideas. In his view, Trajan acted as Vespasian's chief executor of plans in the Near East, which aimed at ensuring Roman military and administrative control over frontier territories. Given his own experience of military operations in the East, Vespasian needed a man capable of expanding the communication network that would secure both rapid responses to regional developments and the mobility of military units.

¹ Glen Bowersock, "Syria under Vespasian", *The Journal of Roman Studies* 63 (1973): 133–140.

² Ibid.

³ Edward Dąbrowa, *La politique de l'état parthe à l'égard de Rome – d'Artaban II à Vologèse I (ca 11 - ca 79 de n.è.) et les facteurs qui la conditionnaient.* (Cracovia 1983), 64.

⁴ Leonardo Gregoratti, "Marcus Ulpius Traianus pater in the East", *Ianua Classicorum. Temas y formas del mundo clásico (Actas del XIII Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos)*, II (2015): 681–688.

In the region of the middle Euphrates, the need to control vast “uninhabited” (as L. Gregoratti describes them)⁵ areas compelled the Romans to begin intensive road construction. Indeed, existing epigraphic evidence records the emergence of new communication routes in the region: a stelae dated to 76 CE was found at a junction of several key roads connecting Apamea with Palmyra and Chalcis. Two other inscriptions from the Antioch area attest to efforts to improve water communications between the provincial center and Seleucia Pieria, as well as with the Orontes River. A series of inscriptions from neighboring areas also allows us to trace Trajan’s activity in transforming the communication systems of the region. The road linking Palmyra with the Euphrates was likely built in 75 CE but is attested by two Palmyrene inscriptions from 76 and the early 80s CE.⁶

The practice of granting *ornamenta triumphalia* in the 1st century CE generally supports the convincing assumption of those scholars who associate Trajan the Elder’s honors with the transformations in Syria and adjacent territories that took place in the mid-70s CE. Nevertheless, interpretations concerning the direct impact of Trajan’s activity, particularly in the longer perspective, appear to require critical reconsideration.

The thesis that these roads were intended to mark the eastern frontier of Rome—reaching the Middle Euphrates and encompassing lands east of Palmyra which, most likely, were not directly under Roman administration at the time—also calls for re-evaluation. Even more questionable are the claims regarding Parthian policy, whose supposed passivity is explained by Pacorus’ conflict with the Alans in the Caucasus region. In our view, the granting of *ornamenta triumphalia* to Trajan the Elder reflected general trends in the use of this practice within Roman political life of the period and carried rather a symbolic character. The actual efforts of the provincial governor and the results of his activity, however, should be analyzed within a broader framework of Roman policy in the region—one that requires understanding the context in which these events took place and developed. In our opinion the general outline of Roman policy of that time not only in Syria but in the neighboring region must be considered. And if for Syria we have a remarkable reconstruction by L. Gregoratti⁷, the role of other regions in M. Ulpius Traianus Elder actions still needs a special analysis. We will try to focus on the area of the Pontic-Cappadocian frontier that went through the transformations that can help us to understand and to explain the actions and the honors that M. Ulpius Traianus pater received for his service.

The administrative and military transformations in the East carried by the rulers of the Flavian dynasty were one of the main key points in the transformation of the Roman frontier in the East. The reasons for the administrative transformations that Vespasian and his successors carried out in the East of the Roman Empire still cause significant interest⁸. In addition to the conflict with Parthia we can see that the idea that the nomadic threat might be one of the main reasons for the transformations in the Pontic-Cappadocian area seems to be quite popular (see the overview of the studies in the latest works of Jakub Kozłowski⁹). Another event that influenced the transformations of the deployment of Roman forces in the region was the Judean War. At the same time, the organization of the system of Roman provinces in the Upper Euphrates region and in the East of Asia Minor is most clearly traced in various source materials which, nevertheless, are often difficult to analyze. Our priority is to try to reconstruct the causes and nature of the transformations of the frontier based on the data of ancient sources in the comparative geographical and chronological perspective.

Until the time of Vespasian, the border kingdoms, in addition to controlling the border territories, played a role as buffer zone in the relations between Rome and Parthia. At the same time, the reasons for the change in Roman policy regarding Commagene, Armenia Minor and other eastern territories, their transformation into Roman provinces and the placement of new Roman garrisons there remain debatable¹⁰. To understand it, we must consider the transformation of Roman provincial policy in the East before the Flavian age.

⁵ Gregoratti, “Marcus Ulpius Traianus pater in the East”, 681–688.

⁶ Ibid, 686.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ronald Syme, “Flavian wars and frontiers”, *Cambridge Ancient History*, XI (1936), 131–188; Edward Dąbrowa, “The Bellum Commagenicum and the *ornamenta triumphalia* of M. Ulpius Traianus”, *The Roman and Byzantine army in the East. Proceedings of a colloquium held at the Jagiellonian University, Kraków in September 1992*: 19–27; Edward Dąbrowa, “The rivers in the defensive system of Roman Syria (from Augustus to Septimius Severus)”, *Roman Frontier Studies 1995. Proceedings of the XVIth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies*, (1997): 109–111; Edward Dąbrowa, “Parthian-Armenian relations from the 2nd century BCE to the second half of the 1st century CE”, *Electrum* 28 (2021): 41–57.

⁹ Jakub Kozłowski, “Inkorporacja panstw wasalnych (71/72 n.e.) a stosunki z królestwem Arsacydów”, *Studia Flaviana* (2011): 199–223; Jakub Kozłowski, *Wschód rzymski pod panowaniem Flawiuszy (70–96 po Chr.). Reformy administracyjne i polityka zewnętrzna*. (Poznań, 2012).

¹⁰ Kozłowski, “Inkorporacja panstw wasalnych (71/72 n.e.) a stosunki z królestwem Arsacydów”, 198.

During the reign of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, the role of the provincial administration and the activities of the governors of the provinces were often decisive in the context of the implementation of the foreign policy of the Empire. We cannot say that Augustus completely removed the governors from the decision-making process. In year 10 BCE Phraates sent his children to Rome, and he handed them over to the governor of Syria Marcus Titius (Tacitus *Annales* 2.1; Augustus *Res gestae divi Augusti* 32; Suetonius *De vita Caesarum*, *Augustus* 21.3; Velleius *Paterculus Historia Romana* 2.94; Flavius Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* 16.8.4). In year 6 BCE, Augustus nominated Artavazd as a contender for the throne of Media; however, due to the difficulties that arose, Augustus decided to entrust the case to Tiberius (Cassius Dio *Historia Romana* 55.9.4-5). In the end, the grandson of the emperor – Gaius Caesar was sent to Armenia (Cassius Dio *Historia Romana* 55.10.18; Velleius *Paterculus Historia Romana* 2.99; Tacitus *Annales* 2.4). Later, Augustus refrained from any active actions in the East¹¹. An interesting episode of the activity of the provincial administration in the time of Augustus was the situation surrounding the internal political struggle in Parthia in 10-11 CE (Flavius Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* 18.2.4 (48-49, 50-52); Tacitus *Annales* 2.1.3-4).

A special case was the mission of Germanicus to the East. Despite the threatening precedent in the confrontation between the governor of Syria and his relative, Tiberius, he continued to strengthen the position of the provincial administration. Tacitus accused Tiberius of the fact that the lack of changes in the leadership of the provinces led to the failures of the Romans, but on the other hand, Josephus believed that the long stay of capable persons in their positions allowed them to reduce corruption in the provinces¹².

The eastern policy of Tiberius, given the specifics of the ideas about the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ emperor, received a rather critical evaluation in the Roman historical tradition. However, the governor of Syria, Lucius Vitellius coordinated Roman interactions into Parthian political life (Tacitus *Annales* 6.32). Claudius in 47 AD attempted a similar attempt to confirm the grandson of Phraates – Meherdates as the ruler of Parthia¹³. Gaius Cassius, the governor of Syria, was appointed responsible for the movement of Meherdates to the Euphrates (Tacitus *Annales* 12.11). The Legate of Syria Vibius Marsus had previously secured the loyalty of the local dynasties to the Romans. At the end of the rule of Claudius/beginning of the reign of Nero, the war between the Armenians and the Iberians, in which the intervention of the Roman administration in the Caucasus region played a significant role, caused extreme tension in the region and the following conflict with the Arsakid Kingdom¹⁴ (Tacitus *Annales* 12.44-47). As a result, Armenia left the sphere of Roman influence (Tacitus *Annales* 12.50).

A few words must be said about Tacitus’ account of the events in the East. He mostly avoids any comparisons or evaluations of periods outside those events of the 1st century CE which are the basis of his works. Only in some exceptional cases does he mention the events of the Republic era. Such a choice of subjects by Tacitus can be both a consequence of the desire to follow to the chosen chronological structure and be determined by other reasons and depend on the internal Roman realities caused by the rule of the Flavian and early Antonine periods. It seems that the image of Parthia and its relations with Rome left by Tacitus reflects the transformations of the stereotypical image of the ‘other world’, which was already familiar to the Romans at that time with the parallels between the Parthian and Roman history through which the reader was presented with the actual Roman past of the Julio-Claudian era, taking into account the conjuncture of the beginning of the 2nd century CE. In this context, two central problems arise and still remain: the search for the origins of those models that Tacitus used as the basis for his description of the situation in Armenia in the middle of the 1st century CE and on the other hand – the actual problems of using the evidence of Tacitus for the reconstruction of the events of Julio-Claudian and Flavian Age¹⁵.

The other kingdoms in the region, including the ones which later became of interest to the Flavian dynasty were also influenced by imperial frontier policy. Emperor Tiberius hated king Archelaus, which became decisive in the fate of Cappadocia (Tacitus *Annales* 2.42) which was turned into a province. At the same time, Antiochus, the king of Commagene, and Philopator, the king of Cilicia died, which caused

¹¹ Edward Dąbrowa, “The commanders of Syrian legions (1st to 3rd c. AD)”, *The Roman army in the East, Portsmouth Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 18*, 1996: 277–297.

¹² Susan Mattern, *Rome and the enemy. Imperial strategy in the Principate*, (Berkeley, 1999), 27–41.

¹³ Marek Jan Olbrycht, *Imperium Parthicum. Kryzys i odbudowa państwa Arsakidów w pierwszej połowie I wieku po Chr.* (Kraków, 2013), 171–188.

¹⁴ Alan Barrett, “Annals 14.26 and the Armenian Settlement of AD 60”, *The Classical Quarterly*, 29/2 (1979): 465–469.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Keitel, “The role of Parthia and Armenia in Tacitus Annals 11 and 12”, *The American Journal of Philology*, 99/4 (1978): 470.

excitement among the population, and in the light of the Latin-speaking Roman tradition, part of the population advocated the independence of the kingdoms and wanted to be ruled by their own kings, while others wanted to surrender themselves in the power of the Romans (Tacitus *Annales* 2.42). The general picture of the situation in the East was completed by the fact that the provinces of Syria and Judea asked for a reduction in taxes (Tacitus *Annales* 2.42). Josephus reports how ephemeral control of one or another party over the territories in the East could be, writing about the realm of Anileus and Azineus in Upper Mesopotamia (Flavius Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* 18.310-379).

Contacts between the kingdoms were of a rather diverse nature, and the Romans rarely positively perceived attempts to conduct affairs behind their backs or without their permission. For example, in the year 43 CE, Herod Agrippa tried to gather in Tiberias his brother Herod of Chalkides, Antiochus of Commagene, the king of Armenia Minor – Kotis, and Polemon, the king of Pontus. The governor of Syria Vibius Marsus took it very ambiguously and upon arriving at the meeting place forced the dynasts to leave (Flavius Josephus *Antiquitates Judaicae* 19.8.1). In fact, the combination of all these factors together with the internal political struggle in the Arsakid Kingdom led to a situation where the Parthian kings were no longer able to adequately control the emerging situation. Artabanus III was forced to recognize the independence of large areas of his country. After the Rhandea Agreement, the Arsakids established themselves on the Armenian throne.

The reason for the escalation of the conflict with the Parthians during the Flavian era was the liquidation of Commagene and its annexation to Cappadocia (Flavius Josephus *De Bello Iudaico* 7.7.1). At first, the kingdom of Cilicia was turned into a province. Antiochus of Commagene and his son Epiphanes perhaps began to seek an alliance with Parthia, which must have caused clear dissatisfaction in Rome. This, in fact, decided the fate of the kingdom, since it was a strategically important entity for the East. Using its territory, it was possible to maintain control over crossings across the Euphrates, so the possible intervention of the Parthians in this area was dangerous (Flavius Josephus *De Bello Iudaico* 7.7.1). Cesenius Petus, the governor of Syria at the time, was sanctioned to act decisively. Together with Aristobulus of Chalcis, Sohaemus of Emesa and reinforced by the forces of the VI Legion, he unexpectedly entered the kingdom.

Antioch fled from Samosata. The Romans tried to storm the capital of the kingdom, but despite this, the sons of Antioch – Epiphanes and Callinicus desperately fought the Romans (Flavius Josephus *De Bello Iudaico* 7.7.2). The battle ended favorably for the Commagenians, but Antioch left his army and with his wife in the evening went to Cilicia. Epiphanes crossed the Euphrates with a dozen people. Vologeses, in his turn, accepted the fugitive (Flavius Josephus *De Bello Iudaico* 7.7.2). Vespasian sent Antiochus, arrested in Tarsus, to Lacedaemon, where he lived until the end of his days. The late dynasts later moved to Rome, where they stayed at the imperial court (Flavius Josephus *De Bello Iudaico* 7.7.3).

Therefore, the small kingdoms that were located on the Roman-Parthian border began to play one of the important roles in the future confrontation since the time of the Flavians. The transformation of Commagene into a province due to the suspicion of the pro-Parthian sentiments of its ruler, and due to the desire to control one of the main crossings across the Euphrates, became one of the harbingers of the changes that were coming. Trajan, turning Armenia into a province, nevertheless behaved carefully in relation to other kingdoms in the region, generally demanding only help from them. Another interesting example was Charakene, where Atambel remained an ally of the Romans until the end and provided them with financial assistance.

A significant number of events in the border kingdoms were related to the complex mosaic of Roman-Parthian relations. For Sophene, such events became Roman-Parthian confrontation in the age of Nero¹⁶. Transformations, which the new emperor began in 54 CE, in connection with the difficult situation in the East, also impacted Armenia Minor and Sophene, which received new rulers – Aristobulus and Sochemos¹⁷. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say who became the new ruler of Sophene. M. Marciak considers that until 114 CE Sophene was not under Roman political influence¹⁸. The situation with Osroene was quite similar. During Trajan's campaign in the East, the reluctance of the local dynasts to intervene directly in the Roman-Parthian conflict caused a specific reaction by the emperor¹⁹.

Another area that rarely falls into the field of view of researchers was Gorduene, which at a certain stage found itself under the rule of the authorities of Adiabene²⁰. The references in Festus and Eusebius are

¹⁶ Michal Marciak, *Sophene, Gordyene, and Adiabene. Three Regna Minora of Northern Mesopotamia Between East and West.* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 134.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid, 134–137.

¹⁹ Benjamin Isaak, *The Near East under Roman rule. Selected papers.* (Leiden, 1998), 57.

²⁰ Marciak, *Sophene, Gordyene, and Adiabene. Three Regna Minora of Northern Mesopotamia Between East and West*, 245.

fragmentary. A special territory in the context of Roman policies in the East was Adiabene. Augustus mentions Artaxerxes of Adiabene (*Res gestae divi Augusti* 17.32), along with the Parthian kings Tiridates and Phraates and Artavazdes of Media. Others key rulers of Adiabene were Izates I and Monobazes I. Mention of the first is rather fragmentary; Josephus records him only as a father of Helen (*Flavius Josephus De Bello Iudaico* 5.147). He also describes their conversion to Judaism, so it is difficult to say how reliable the information provided by him is. Describing the rule of Izates II, Josephus emphasizes his help to Artabanes and the conflict of Izates with Vardan (*Flavius Josephus De Bello Iudaico* 20.69–73; see also *Tacitus Annales* 11.10).

Josephus Flavius informs us that internal opposition led to the invasion of the Arab tribal leader Abias, and later Vologezes I (*Flavius Josephus Antiquitates Judaicae* 20.75–91). M. Marciak²¹ believes that the campaign of Vologezes on Adiabene can be dated back to 53 CE, the period of the Parthian invasion of Armenia (by other chronological indicators in his opinion, it is possible to date the events by the Uprising of 55 CE and the rebellion in Hyrcania in 57 CE).

During the campaigns of Corbulo Adiabene stayed under the authoriy of Monobazes II, as appears in Tacitus during the description of the campaign of Tigranes VI to Adiabene, the siege of Tigranokerta and during the negotiations about the coronation of Tiridates in Rome. During the events of 61 CE, Monobazes is described Tacitus as an ally of Vologezes²² (*Tacitus Annales* 15.1–2). It is noticeable that during the battles for Tigranokerta in 62 CE, infantry from Adiabene was mentioned as a part of the army of Vologezes. Cassius Dio (*Historia Romana* 62.32.4) informs us that Monobazes sent hostages to Rome together with Vologezes, which is mentioned again during the description of Tiridates' arrival to Rome in 66 CE, with the king of Media Atropatene (*Cassius Dio Historia Romana* 63.1.2).

However, the idea that Osroene was all the same turned into a province in 116 CE, and which found support from R. Longden²³, M. Angeli Bertinelli²⁴, M.-L. Chaumont²⁵ remains quite popular in the scholarship. In general, it is based on reports of Flavius Eutropius (*Breviarium Historiae Romanae* 8.3.2 and 8.6.2) and Rufus Festus (*Breviarium rerum gestarum populi Romani* 14.3 and 20.3). In neither case the territory is named directly.

The events of the middle of the 1st century CE led to the incorporation of Armenia Minor, Commagene, and Emesa into the Roman Empire and the transformation of the provincial organization of Cappadocia (Suetonius *De vita Caesarum, Vespasianus* 8.4). After the Treaty of Rhandeia the strengthening of the Roman positions in the East seemed extremely necessary and urgent²⁶. In addition to the formation of the large province of Galatia/Cappadocia another rather revealing Roman step in the region was the formation of the province of Cilicia. The territory of Cilicia before all was under the control of Antiochus IV and Cilicia Pedias was previously part of the province of Syria²⁷.

These changes, together with the annexation of the kingdom of Pontus, which took place as early as 64 CE provided the Romans with virtually complete control not only over the Upper Euphrates, but also over a few key crossings through this waterway, which was traditionally considered the Roman-Parthian boundary²⁸. A military base was established in Trapezum (Trebizond) for the Roman fleet to control the territory of Eastern Pontus. Sophene came under Roman influence, most likely before 70 CE, and Emesa between 72 and 78 CE.

At the time of the incorporation of Commagene in 72 CE, Armenia Minor was under the direct jurisdiction of the legate of Cappadocia. A certain version of the reasons for the reorganization of Cappadocia is given by Suetonius (*De vita Caesarum, Vespasianus* 8.4.), primarily pointing to the ‘incessant raids of the barbarians’ (*adsiduos barbarorum incursus*).

²¹ Marciak, *Sophene, Gordyene, and Adiabene*, 245.

²² Frederik Vervaet, “*Tacitus, Domitius Corbulo and Trajanus’ Bellum Parthicum*”, *L’Antiquité Classique*, 68, (1999): 289–297.

²³ Rodger Longden, “Notes on the Parthian campaigns of Trajan”, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 21 (1931): 1–35.

²⁴ Maria Angeli Bertinelli, “I Romani oltre l’Eufrate nel II secolo d. C. (le province di Assiria, di Meopotamia e di Osroene)”, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Principat. Politische Geschichte*, II.9.1 (1976): 3–45.

²⁵ Marie-Louise Chaumont, “L’Arménie entre Rome et l’Iran I. De l’avènement d’Auguste à l’avènement de Dioclétien”, *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Principat. Politische Geschichte*, II.9.1 (1976): 71–194.

²⁶ Kozłowski, *Wschód rzymski pod panowaniem Flawiuszy (70-96 po Chr.). Reformy administracyjne i polityka zewnętrzna*, 202.

²⁷ Syme, “*Flavian wars and frontiers*”, 139.

²⁸ Everett Wheeler, “Rethinking the upper Euphrates frontier. Where was the western border of Armenia?”, in: *Roman Frontier Studies 1989. Proceedings of the XVth International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, Exeter*, (1991): 505–511; Anthony Comfort, “Crossing the Euphrates in antiquity. Zeugma seen from space”, *Anatolian Studies*, 50 (2000): 99–126.

Scholars (such as R. Syme²⁹, D. Magie³⁰, E. Dąbrowa³¹) tried to connect these words of Suetonius either with the local population of the region or with Sarmatian tribes, in particular, with the Alans. But was the Roman perception of the nomadic threat the main reason for the full-scale transformations in the area? The evidence both from the Pontic-Cappadocian area and the surrounding regions of the East indicates that during the 1st century CE the Parthians in fact were the main factor in the political, administrative and military transformations and activities that the Romans carried out in the region. And despite all the critical interpretations the evidence which can be reconstructed from the written sources still needs to be analyzed in connection with the archaeological and epigraphical data.

The traditional system of strengthening the Roman border during the early empire, in the East, primarily depended on two key components – the provision of stable and reliable communication routes in the provinces and the creation of a system of garrisons that had to perform both defensive and offensive functions. A remarkable study of the garrison system in the east of Asia Minor by T. Mitford³² corresponds quite well with the analysis of the narrative tradition. Legio XII Fulminata was moved from Syria to Melitena by Titus (Flavius Josephus *De Bello Iudaico* 7.18), at the end of 70 CE. In 70/71 CE Legio XVI Flavia Firma was located near Satala. The existing chronology of the redeployment of the legions indicates its connection with the events of the Jewish War. A unit of Legio VI Ferrata or Legio III Gallica was also, most likely, located near Samosata, in Aina, at this time. Legion bases in Melitena, Satala, Samosata, and Zeugma were not only intended to ensure Roman control over the Euphrates, but they were also the nucleus of a powerful Roman military group in the region, which could perform offensive functions as well.

Legio XVI Flavia Firma was in Satala until 114 CE when it was replaced by Legio XV Apollinaris, transferred from Pannonia. The territory of the legions was so important that even at the beginning of the 5th century CE, to the north of the Taurus mountains there were Roman forces numbering three legions³³. The surviving epigraphic material allows, at least to some degree, the reconstruction of the career paths of the legates, tribunes and centurions of Legio XII Fulminata and, to a lesser extent, XVI Flavia Firma. The local aristocracy from Galatia and the southern and western regions of Asia Minor, often served as military tribunes of the frontier Roman legions in the East. However, it is still difficult to say how widely the masses of people from Cappadocia were involved in the service in the Roman legions. Galatia and Cilicia give us a total of ten known auxiliary units of the Roman army³⁴.

Epigraphic material from Roman Ankyra (Ankara) is of particular interest. The town was an intermediate point for military units moving towards or serving on the Euphrates and in Syria. In addition to the soldiers of the already mentioned legions XII Fulminata, XVI Flavia Firma, XV Apollinaris, texts record a significant number of descendants from Legio IV Scythica, whose base was situated at Zeugma.

The legions that were involved in Corbulo's actions before the campaigns against Parthia later performed their functions during the Judean War. Titus moved Legio XII Fulminata to Melitena, perhaps in the spring of 71 CE for it to serve as the basis of Roman forces in Cappadocia. At the same time Legio XVI Flavia Firma was probably moved to Satala (Cassius Dio *Historia Romana* 55.23.5; Flavius Josephus *De Bello Iudaico* 7.1.3 (18); Tacitus *Annales* 2.42). In Melitena, the legion found its permanent location until the 5th century CE. Legio XII Fulminata was involved in the construction of a military road from Melitena, in the time of Vespasian and Domitian along with the forces of Legio XVI Flavia Firma which built a military road to Satala. It is significant that the mentioned forts played an important role in the eastern campaigns of the Antonine period.

The situation with the *auxilia*, which were in the newly formed provinces, looks much more complicated. Alae and cohorts from Galatia and Cappadocia are known to us from the military diplomas which date to the periods of Domitian and early Trajan. Some of the units that appeared in the East during the Flavian era later took part in Trajan's Parthian campaign. In general, if we talk about Cappadocia, the system of location of Roman military units there turned out to be incredibly stable, and a significant number of garrisons, which were located there already under the Flavians, is later recorded not only by Arrian in the first half of the 2nd century CE, but much later. The size and composition of the garrisons was apparently finally formed during the reign of Domitian and remained stable at least until the time of early Trajan. The movement

²⁹ Syme, "Flavian wars and frontiers", 148.

³⁰ David Magie, *Roman rule in Asia Minor to the end of the third century after Christ*. (Princeton, 1950).

³¹ Dąbrowa, "Parthian-Armenian relations from the 2nd century BCE to the second half of the 1st century CE", 41–57.

³² Timothy Mitford, *East of Asia Minor. Rome's hidden frontier*. (Oxford, 2018).

³³ Ibid, 426.

³⁴ Ibid, 427.

of regular garrisons in 71 CE was undoubtedly accompanied by the movement of significant auxiliary forces. Military diplomas record at least 16 auxiliary units by 94 CE, most of them were moved by the Flavians to the territory of the newly created provinces³⁵.

What was the main purpose and function of the reorganization of the Roman system of garrisons and roads in the upper reaches of the Euphrates and how the activity of M. Ulpius Traianus pater affected it? It seems that the exclusive connection of these transformations to the protection of Roman territories from the raids of the Alans was not the only function of the newly created system of military garrisons and communications. The Sarmatian raids, may have stimulated existing transformations, but their global goal was to secure control over the Euphrates, where Rome's key rival remained the Arsakids (both in Parthia and in Armenia, formally under control of Rome, but *de facto* controlled by the Parthians).

The questions that still require a special study include how the Romans tried to connect their perception of the region which is depicted in the written sources with their military and political actions in the area. The need for the reevaluation of the ancient sources evidence for our study of Pontic-Cappadocian area in Flavian period remains to be an important task which is a key to the understanding of the situation in the region. Can we conclude what the real 'threat' was that bothered the Romans? And can archaeology solve the problem (or perhaps a small part of it considering the Sarmatian presence in the area)?

The evidence of the narrative Roman tradition leads to the clear conclusion that during the 1st century CE the Parthians in fact were the main factor in administrative and military transformations in the region. The existing epigraphical and archeological evidence, as it seems, currently supports the Parthian issue as the main reason for creation of the garrison system of the frontier areas both in Syria and the Pontic-Cappadocian region. The importance of the Parthian factor, despite the existing attempts to demonstrate its secondary nature, in our opinion is clearly indicated by the episode with Marcus Ulpius Traianus the Elder, who received the *ornamenta triumphalia* for his actions in the East.

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³⁵ Mitford, *East of Asia Minor. Rome's hidden frontier*, 430.

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ORNAMENTA TRIUMPHALIA МАРКА УЛЬПІЯ ТРАЯНА СТАРШОГО

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Стаття досліджує надання *ornamenta triumphalia* Марку Ульпію Траяну, батькові імператора Траяна, про що повідомляє Пліній Молодший (*Panegyricus*, 16.1) та інші джерела. У ній розглядається політичний і військовий контекст цієї відзнаки, наданої за його службу, а також визначається місце цього епізоду в ширшій системі практики нагородження командувачів і в загальних рамках римської прикордонної політики на Сході. Поєднані літературні, епіграфічні та просопографічні свідчення, стаття сприяє розумінню механізмів римської зовнішньої політики наприкінці I ст. н. е.

Щоб зрозуміти цей механізм, необхідно звернутися до питання: якою була основна мета та функція реорганізації римської системи гарнізонів і доріг у верхів'ях Євфрату, і як на цей процес вплинула діяльність Марка Ульпія Траяна-батька? Видеться, що виключно оборонне тлумачення цих перетворень — як спримованих на захист римських територій від набігів аланів — не вичерпє всієї суті новоствореної системи військових гарнізонів і комунікацій. Сарматські напади, можливо, лише стимулювали вже наявні трансформації, однак їх глобальною метою було забезпечення контролю над Євфратом, де головним суперником Риму залишалися Аршакіди — як у самій Парфії, так і у Вірменії, формально під владою Риму, але фактично контролювані парфянами.

Питання, що й досі потребують спеціального дослідження, стосуються того, як римляни намагалися поєднати своє сприйняття регіону, відображене у письмових джерелах, із їхніми військово-політичними діями на цій території. Необхідність переоцінки свідчень античних джерел для вивчення Понтійсько-Каппадокійського регіону у добу Флавіїв залишається важливим завданням, що є ключем до розуміння ситуації в регіоні. Чи можемо ми визначити, у чому саме полягала справжня «загроза», яка непокоїла римлян? І чи здатна археологія розв'язати цю проблему (або хоча б частково, з огляду на сарматську присутність у регіоні)?

Свідчення римської наративної традиції дозволяють чітко стверджувати, що протягом I ст. н. е. саме парфяні були головним чинником адміністративних і військових трансформацій у цьому регіоні. Існуючі епіграфічні та археологічні дані, як видається, підтверджують, що саме парфянське питання було основною причиною створення системи прикордонних гарнізонів як у Сирії, так і в Понтійсько-Каппадокійській області. Важливість парфянського чинника, попри спроби звести його роль до другорядної, на нашу думку, яскраво засвідчує епізод із Марком Ульпієм Траяном Старшим, який отримав *ornamenta triumphalia* за свої дії на Сході.

Ключові слова: *ornamenta triumphalia*, Марк Ульпій Траян-батько, династія Флавіїв, Сирія, римський Схід, римський кордон на Сході, Парфія, Римська імперія.