

Defining the *alter orbis*: The Roman View of Parthia in the Early Principate.

by

Steven Hill

University of Wales, Trinity Saint David

Classics Department

Under the Supervision of Dr. Kyle Erickson

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Abstract

During the reign of Augustus the idea of Parthian Empire as an *alter orbis* was developed. For the Romans of the early Principate, the kingdom of the Arsacids represented the antithesis of their own values, embodying the vices of despotism and licentiousness. In the absence of a decisive military victory, the Roman people used this image of the Parthians to assert their own sense of superiority, while also acknowledging the formidable military strength of their eastern neighbour. This depiction of the Parthians (and later the Persians) was to persist throughout the centuries, despite increased contact through diplomacy and trade. As a result, the rivalry between the two powers never diminished, despite long periods of relative peace.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the various ways in which this view of Parthia was developed during the early Principate, both in the literature of the period and also in the iconography, such as coinage and public monuments. I shall discuss the influence of earlier attitudes towards the 'oriental' East, particularly those of the Greeks, and the impact these had on the Roman mentality. In doing so, I shall examine why this view of the Parthians, once established, became so dominant. Finally I shall demonstrate how the Roman people used this image of an *alter orbis* to come to terms with the presence of a powerful neighbour, while at the same time maintaining a sense of hostility towards Parthia.

Introduction

From the first century BC onwards, the often volatile relationship with the Parthian Empire became one of the principal concerns of Roman foreign policy. As the only powerful unified state on the Empire's borders, the potential for conflict between the two powers was always just below the surface, although actual military confrontation was averted during the Augustan Principate. Consequently the Arsacid kingdom was, as Isaac has noted, important enough 'to guarantee it a special place in the Roman perception of foreigners'.¹

The first recorded encounter between Rome and Parthia took place in either 96 or 92 BC, when the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Sulla established diplomatic relations with the Parthian King Mithridates II through his ambassador, Orobazus. Sulla had recently restored Ariobarzanes I of Cappadocia to his throne, and Orobazus, according to Plutarch, had been sent to his encampment on the banks of the Euphrates to seek 'friendship and alliance' with the Roman people.² Yet Sulla, who seemingly viewed the Parthians as merely another weak Eastern kingdom, treated Orobazus in a 'lofty' manner, ordering three chairs, and seating himself in between the Parthian ambassador and the Cappadocian king.³ It is unclear whether Sulla's treatment of Orobazus demonstrated his ignorance of Parthian power, for as Plutarch had noted, there had yet 'been no intercourse between the two nations'.⁴ However the reaction of Mithridates II to this perceived slight is clear. Upon his return to Parthia, Orobazus was promptly put to death. Despite this inauspicious first encounter, the first four decades of Roman – Parthian relations were generally peaceful, with potential conflicts averted through diplomatic manoeuvring.⁵

This state of affairs changed dramatically in 53 BC when Marcus Licinius Crassus, wishing to emulate the military successes of his fellow triumvirs Pompey and Caesar, used his position as governor of Syria to launch a disastrous invasion of Parthia. This invasion, which Plutarch tells us was a private enterprise rather than a policy of the Roman state, cost Crassus not

¹ Isaac (2004), 371.

² Plu. *Sull.* 5.4.

³ *Ibid.* 5.4.

⁴ *Ibid.* 5.4.

⁵ Debevoise (1938), 71.

only his own life, but also that of his son and most of his army.⁶ Up until this point, the Roman people seem to have viewed the Parthians in much the same way as they viewed other eastern races which had fallen under Rome's dominion, namely that they were militarily weak, and therefore an easy target for ambitious and rapacious generals and their armies.⁷ However, as a result of this calamity, their attitude towards the Arsacid kingdom shifted dramatically, as they were now forced to acknowledge the existence of a fellow military power. The defeat of Crassus at Carrhae and the subsequent loss of his legionary standards was a blow to Roman prestige comparable to Hannibal's victories at Lake Trasimene and Cannae during the Second Punic War, therefore the idea of avenging Carrhae became a matter of honour for the Roman people.⁸ Lucan, in his history of the Civil Wars, lamented the fact that the Romans had been making war on one another, 'while the ghost of Crassus still wandered unavenged'.⁹ Consequently, those who sought supreme power in Rome during the final years of the Republic looked to Parthia as a source of military glory which would enable them to establish their legacy. Caesar, for example, had planned his own Parthian campaign before his murder in 44 BC, while Mark Antony's invasion of the East in 36 BC had been largely unsuccessful, further fuelling Roman anger.

However, with the culmination of the Civil Wars and the establishment of the Principate under Augustus, Roman policy towards Parthia entered a new phase. The date which is commonly given to mark the beginning of this new policy is 20 BC.¹⁰ It was in this year that the Parthian king Phraates IV returned to Augustus the standards which had been lost at Carrhae, along with the surviving prisoners from Crassus' army. Yet this diplomatic success was presented by the Augustan government as a triumph of Roman might, and was celebrated with all the trappings of a great military victory, such as a Parthian arch, a temple to Mars Ultor which housed the recovered standards, and a series of commemorative games.¹¹ At the same time, the great poets of the Augustan age, such as Horace, celebrated

⁶ Plu. *Crass.* 31.7.

⁷ *Ibid.* 18.1. "For they had been fully persuaded that the Parthians were not different at all from the Armenians or even the Cappadocians, whom Lucullus had robbed and plundered till he was weary of it."

⁸ App. 5.65, cf. 30.6-3 i-5n.

⁹ Luc. 1.11-12.

¹⁰ Sonnabend (1986) 198-199; Shayegan (2011) 334; Brosius (2006) 136.

¹¹ Dio. *Aug.* 54.8.

the event as evidence of Parthian submission to the power of Rome.¹² The sheer scale of the official response to this 'triumph' supports Schneider's assertion that this was 'one of the most pronounced political events of the Principate'.¹³

How can we account for this seeming disparity between reality and imagery? How did Augustus manage to reverse what has been described as the 'loss of face and appearance of weakness', suffered by the Romans after the defeat at Carrhae, without scoring a decisive victory over the Parthians on the battlefield?¹⁴ As we shall see, his principal method of achieving this was to create an ideological divide between the two empires. Indeed, as Sonnabend has noted, there are two clearly defined stages in the Roman perception of the Parthians, 'before *and* after the Augustan Parthian policy'.¹⁵ It was during the reign of Augustus that the idea of Parthia as an *alter orbis*, (other world), was formed.¹⁶ For the Romans of the early Principate, the Parthian Empire represented the antithesis of their own values, embodying the vices of despotism and licentiousness, which stood in contrast to their own perceived liberties and virtues. In many respects, this was nothing new. Any study of Roman attitudes towards foreign races would show that they had always attributed negative characteristics to those they considered to be 'barbarians'.¹⁷

Nevertheless, they could not view the Parthians in the same dismissive manner as they did other eastern races, as they had always to acknowledge the formidable military strength of the Arsacids. Therefore it was necessary for the Romans to create an image of this rival empire which acknowledged their martial prowess, whilst at the same time asserting the ultimate superiority of their own society. Once established, this depiction of the Parthians (and later the Sassanid Persians) was to persist throughout the centuries, despite increased contact through diplomacy and trade. As a result, tensions between the two powers never diminished, even during the long periods of relative peace. Indeed, it was only with the Arab

¹² Hor. *Carm.* 4.14.41-4.

¹³ Schneider (1998) 97; Brosius (2006) 136.

¹⁴ Mattern (1999), 186.

¹⁵ Shayegan (2011) 334

¹⁶ We find many references in Roman literature to the division of Parthia and Rome into separate worlds. For example; Manilius' *Astronomica* 4.674-5 refers to the *orbis alter*. See also Tacitus *Ann* 2.2.2 (*alio ex orbe*); Pompeius Trogus *Historiae Philippicae* 41.1.1 (*divisione orbis*).

¹⁷ Isaac (2004) 3.

conquests of the Seventh Century, and the resultant destruction of the Persian Empire, that their uneasy coexistence finally came to an end.

The purpose of this discussion, therefore, is to determine how the image of Parthia as an *alter orbis* was defined, both in the literature and iconography of the Augustan Principate, and to what extent we can ascertain the impact of this policy on the mind-set of the Roman people. Edward Said once noted that all knowledge 'that is about human society, and not about the natural world, is historical knowledge, and therefore rests upon judgment and interpretation.'¹⁸ With this in mind, I have divided my discussion into three chapters, which will explore the following themes; knowledge, interpretation, and effect.

The task of my first chapter is to address the following question: What did the Romans actually know of Parthian history and culture? What sources did the Augustan authors use to support their assertions? We can then compare what they tell us to what we know of the Parthians through their own records. By making such a comparison, we can determine to what extent Roman perceptions of the Arsacid Empire were based on their own preconceived ideas of the East, rather than on actual historical knowledge. This is a point I will develop in my second chapter when, having established the extent of Roman knowledge in relation to Parthia, I will now consider how the image they created of their eastern neighbour differed from the way they viewed other 'barbarous' races. In doing so, we can also explore the extent to which the Romans viewed themselves as heirs to a historical tradition stretching back to the Greek and Hellenistic period, one which viewed the 'oriental' East as a land of despotism and decadence. Consequently, we can ascertain how the Augustan regime was able to create a coherent image of an *alter orbis* which could be set against the *orbis Romanus*.

Finally, for my third chapter, I will turn inwards to consider how the poets and authors of the Augustan period responded to the policy of the *princeps* in their treatment of the Parthians, and how the image they developed contrasts with the iconography of the government. As Merriam has noted, we can 'gauge the degree of co-operation of an author' by the way he addresses the Parthian question in his writings.¹⁹ Therefore, by examining the

¹⁸ Said (1981) 162.

¹⁹ Merriam (2004) 56.

works of these authors in greater detail, I will attempt to gauge the success of Augustan propaganda to understand just how powerful a hold the image of the Parthian *alter orbis* had on the imaginations of the Roman people.

Much of what was written in the classical period has unfortunately been lost to us; for instance the influential *Parthica* of Apollodorus of Artemita, a Greek writer who lived in the Parthian Empire during the first century BC.²⁰ Therefore we must rely on the works of a few key authors for the majority of our information. Our primary sources for the rise and development of the Arsacid kingdom are the *Geography* of Strabo and the *Historia Philippicae* of Pompeius Trogus. Both of these works were written during the early years of the Principate, although Trogus' work is known to us through the *Epitome* of the historian Justin, who lived two centuries later.²¹ As Momigliano has noted, is no coincidence that both of these sources can be dated to the Augustan period, 'when Rome had to decide whether to live with the Parthians'.²² Other important sources can be found slightly later in the imperial period. These include the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder, which was composed between AD 77 and 79; the fragmentary remains of Arrian's *Parthica*, which was published during the reign of Hadrian, and the works of authors such as Plutarch, Josephus and Tacitus. We also find a Persian digression in the works of Ammianus Marcellinus, which, although written in the fourth century AD, discusses the origins of the Parthians in a way that indicates some familiarity with the writings of earlier authors.

It is important to note that most of what we know about the Parthians derives from these Graeco- Roman accounts. Because of the fragmentary nature of first-hand information from the East, it is extremely difficult for us to gauge their veracity. As a consequence, our view of the Parthians is imbalanced, as it is with other defeated enemies of Rome, such as the Carthaginians, and the tribes of Britain and Gaul. Nevertheless, recent archaeological discoveries, for instance the excavations of Parthian Nisa, have provided us with important

²⁰ Nikonorov (1998), 107.

²¹ There has been much debate regarding the extent of Justin's contribution to Trogus's *Historia*. Justin himself claimed that his work was a '*breve velut florum corpusculum*' of Trogus, and this has been generally accepted by modern scholars such as Syme (1988). However Jal (1987) 194-209 notes that on several occasions in the text, Justin uses the first person 'I' or 'We' (eg. 20.1.2; 2.0.5.1), while at other times he refers his audience back to earlier discussions (eg. 2.5.9). He therefore argues that Justin regarded his *Epitome* as an 'autonomous work'. See also Yardley (2003).

²² Momigliano (1975), 140.

historical information regarding the early years of Arsacid rule, which we can use to supplement our literary sources and make an assessment of their accuracy and reliability.²³

²³ Bivar (1983), 22; Olbrycht (1998) 31-34; Invernizzi (1998), 45-59.

Chapter 1

Knowledge

As I noted in my introduction, the first recorded encounter between Rome and Parthia took place in either 96 or 92 BC, and that prior to this encounter there had ‘been no intercourse between the two nations’.²⁴ Furthermore, as scholars such as Isaac have noted, there was no sizable Parthian population in Rome to impress their manners and customs on the native inhabitants.²⁵ Consequently, the Roman people, including the governing classes, relied on their own writers and historians to provide them with knowledge of this powerful new rival on their borders.²⁶ By exploring these works in greater detail, and considering the extent of their authors’ knowledge of the geography, history, and government of the Parthian Empire, we can determine how much of Roman propaganda was informed by genuine historical understanding, and how much was the result of ignorance and mistaken assumptions.

1.1: Geography

In the first book of his *Geography*, Strabo tells us that the expansion of the Roman and Parthian Empires, which had occurred in the decades preceding the publication of his work, presented to the geographers of his time a considerable addition to their empirical knowledge, ‘just as did the campaign of Alexander to geographers of earlier times.’²⁷ Yet, as scholars such as Drijvers have noted, we cannot find in any of our Roman sources a ‘concrete’ image of the topography and geography of the Parthian Empire.²⁸ Of course, one of the chief reasons for this is the lack of surviving written evidence which makes any discussion of Roman knowledge of the East conjectural. Although Parthia had been a province of the Seleucid Empire for many years before the establishment of the Arsacid monarchy, there is little surviving information that can be attributed to this period.²⁹ It

²⁴ Plu. *Sull.* 5.4

²⁵ Isaac (2004), 371.

²⁶ Schneider (2007), 60.

²⁷ Strabo. 1.2.1.

²⁸ Drijvers (1999) 200.

²⁹ See Grajetzki (2011) 9.

seems however, that the Seleucids did not regard the area as an important part of their realm; therefore it is doubtful that they would have made any considerable effort to record the history or geography of the area.³⁰

Our most detailed and extensive descriptions of the lands beyond the Euphrates River can be found in Strabo's work and the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder. Unfortunately, neither author gives a full bibliography of their own sources, although we know that Strabo was particularly dismissive of the accuracy and truthfulness of the Alexander historians, as tells us that they were known to 'toy with facts'.³¹ However, it is generally believed that Greek authors who had lived among the Parthians, such as Apollodorus of Artemita, provided both Strabo and Pliny with a great deal of their geographical information.³² Indeed, Strabo makes explicit reference to Apollodorus' influence in Book 11 of his *Geography*, when he discusses the extent of the Parthian realm, noting the distance from the Caspian Gates to Rhagae.³³ There is no clear reference to an Apollodorus of Artemita in the *Natural History*, although Pliny does mention several writers who possess the same first name. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that the *Parthica* was an important source for Pliny, as one reference to an Apollodorus can be found in the section of his work which describes the geography of the East.³⁴

In Book 11, Strabo describes the heartland of the Parthian realm, as distinct from the wider empire. He tells us that the area is not large, and that, in addition, it is thickly wooded and mountainous, and also poverty-stricken.³⁵ Because of this, the kings would send their own throngs through it in 'great haste', as the country lacked the resources to support them even for a short time.³⁶ Having given us a description of Parthia proper, Strabo then proceeds to note how the Parthians had gradually expanded their territory to include the region which extended as far as the Caspian Gates and Rhagae and Tapyri, lands which had

³⁰ Momigliano (1975) 138 also argues that our lack of evidence indicates 'a profound indifference of the Hellenistic - even of the Seleucid - intellectuals to the emergence of the Parthian state'.

³¹ Strabo. 11.6.2.

³² Tarn (1985) 44-45; Wolski (1976) 440; Nikonorov (1998) 112; Drijvers (1998) 281, (1999) 200 .

³³ Strabo. 11.9.1.

³⁴ Pliny, Index to Book 6.

³⁵ Strabo. 11.9.1.

³⁶ Presumably, as Drijvers (1998) 282 has noted, the Persian and Macedonian overlords Strabo has just referred to.

formerly belonged to Media. The brevity of Strabo's geographical account and his dependence on earlier written sources suggests that the cultural interaction between Rome and Parthia must have been rather limited in the century since diplomatic relations had first been established between Mithridates II and Sulla. Indeed, although we cannot be certain just how detailed Apollodorus' account was in relation to the geography of Parthia, it is clear from Pliny that Augustus himself eventually realised that more information was needed. He tells us that when the *princeps* sent his adopted son Gaius to Armenia to take the command against the Parthians and Arabians, the geographer Isidorus of Charax was dispatched to 'gather all necessary information in the East', which he later published in his *Stathmoi Parthikoi* (Parthian Stations).³⁷

The result of this increased focus on the East can be found in Pliny's *Natural History*, which provides greater detail regarding the various geographical regions of the Parthian realm. For example, we are told by Pliny that the empire was comprised of eighteen provinces (or kingdoms) in total, eleven of which were called the upper kingdoms, which 'begin at the frontiers of Armenia and the shores of the Caspian, and extend to the Scythians', while the other seven were known as the lower kingdoms, which were located on the plains of Mesopotamia. As for the original Parthian lands, they lay at the foot of the mountains 'which overhang all these nations'.³⁸ It is notable that Pliny, at several points in his work, highlights the smallness of Parthia in contrast to the Mediterranean world of Rome. We learn in Book 6 for instance, that the kingdom of Parthia 'may comprise 944 miles in width', which does not seem that great when compared to Italy, which 'extends in length 1020 miles'.³⁹ We find a similar emphasis on the size of the Mediterranean West in contrast to the Parthian East when we examine Ptolemy's world map, which was produced in the second century AD. As Muller illustrated in his reconstruction of the map, Ptolemy exaggerated the length of the Mediterranean by several hundred miles.⁴⁰ Although this may simply be a mistake on Ptolemy's part, the effect is that Parthia is 'diminished' by

³⁷ Pliny, 6.4.1 refers to the author as Dionysus, however Schoff (1914); Mattern (1999) 34; and others have argued that this is a mistake and Isidore is probably meant. Tarn (1951) 54-55 has argued that much of Isidore's work was based on a survey made under Mithridates II of Parthia c.110-100 BC, with some 'instructive notes' of his own added. Yet, as Mattern has stated, this is 'pure conjecture'.

³⁸ Pliny, 6.29.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.6. Mattern (1999) 59 has described Pliny's view as 'Eurocentric'.

⁴⁰ Muller (1883-1901, vol.3, fig. 27); Thomson (1948) 337-338.

comparison.⁴¹ Yet we must be wary of trusting these Greco-Roman accounts as objective sources of information. As we shall see in my next chapter, the geography of the Parthian Empire would be used by Roman propagandists to make value judgements about the Parthians themselves, as a common feature of ancient literature was to attribute certain characteristics to people of different geographical origins.⁴²

1.2: Arsaces and early Parthian History

As Drijvers has argued, the chronology of early Parthian history is ‘problematic and difficult to unravel’.⁴³ We know from our ancient sources that Parthia had once been a satrapy of the Persian Empire. Herodotus, for instance, had included them in his list of peoples subject to the Achaemenids during the Greco-Persian Wars of 499–449 BC. According to the *Histories*, the Parthians, along with the Chorasmians, Sogdians and Areioi formed a unit in the army of Xerxes I.⁴⁴ Later; during the Battle of Gaugamela (331 BC) Arrian tells us that they served under the satrap Phrataphernes in the army of Darius II.⁴⁵ Following the defeat of the Achaemenid Empire, Parthia fell under the dominion of Alexander, and after his death changed hands several times until 316 BC, when Stasander, a vassal of Seleucus I Nicator and governor of Bactria became satrap.

Yet when exploring the beginnings of the Arsacid era, we find various contradictions and inconsistencies among our ancient sources, giving an indication of the numerous legends and rumours which must have been recorded in Graeco-Roman literature. Consequently, scholars such as Wolski have argued that we can detect two distinct historical traditions in these works. The first is that of Apollodorus of Artemita, represented by Strabo and Justin (Trogus), while the second is that of Arrian, which we find in the fragments of his *Parthica* preserved by the Byzantine authors Photius and Syncellus.⁴⁶ Assessing the impact of these traditions on the propaganda of the Augustan regime is difficult. We know that both Strabo

⁴¹ Mattern (1999) 59. See also Tozer (1897) 345 for discussion of Ptolemy’s errors and exaggerations.

⁴² Isaac (2004) 3; Dench (2005) 267. This is a theme I will return to in my next chapter.

⁴³ Drijvers (1998) 283. See also Cook (1985) 252; Grajetzki (2011) 9.

⁴⁴ Herodotus. *Hist* 7.66.

⁴⁵ Arr. 3.11.

⁴⁶ Wolski (1956-57) 35-39; Bivar (1983) 28; Musti (1984) 213-220; Lerner (1999) 19.

and Trogus composed their works during the early Principate, although we rely on Justin's abridgement for our knowledge of the latter.⁴⁷ Arrian, on the other hand, was writing in the Second Century, most likely during the reign of Hadrian.⁴⁸ It is possible that he drew upon earlier historical accounts as the basis for his assertions; however the lack of surviving material makes it virtually impossible to know whether these assertions were shared by Augustan writers, or whether they derived from a later historical tradition. When we compare the accounts of Strabo and Justin, we find a greater degree of commonality in their depiction of individuals and events. Nevertheless, as we shall see; there are dangers in assuming that they represent a homogenous 'Apollodorian' tradition.

Our primary Augustan sources for the events leading up to the establishment of the Parthian state are Strabo and Justin. Both authors describe the circumstances which led to the rise of Arsaces, the founder of the dynasty which bore his name, and whose members ruled Parthia from the third century BC until they were overthrown and replaced by the Sassanid Persians in 224AD. By examining their accounts in greater detail, we can attempt to piece together the sequence of events which ultimately led to the establishment of the Arsacid monarchy. By the middle of the third century BC, the Seleucid Empire was undergoing a period of increasing instability, which Justin tells us was caused by a dispute between Seleucus II and his brother Antiochus Hierax. As a result, the central government was less able to maintain control of the provinces. Diodotus, the satrap of Bactria, took advantage of this weakness and led a revolt against the Seleucids, establishing an independent kingdom.⁴⁹ It was at this point, we are told, that Arsaces invaded the province of Parthia, overthrew the satrap Andragoras, and proclaimed himself ruler. According to Justin, these events occurred concurrently with the First Punic War; 'when Lucius Manlius Vulso and Marcus Attilius Regulus were consuls'.⁵⁰ It is notable that Justin refers to the Punic Wars at this point. Rome's victory over the Carthaginians had resulted in the establishment of the first overseas province in Sicily, and the emergence of the Republic as a major

⁴⁷ Wieshofer (1996) 124.

⁴⁸ Wheeler (2010) 15. Cf. Bowie (1974) 180, who suggests that it was written under the dual Principate of Marcus Aurelius (161-80) and Lucius Verus (161-69), and was occasioned by Verus' campaigns in the East.

⁴⁹ Justin. 41.4 refers to the Bactrian satrap as Theodotus. Yet, as Lerner (1999) 15 has noted, surviving Graeco Bactrian coins from this period are inscribed with the name Diodotus, while Trogus himself in his 'Prologues' (xli) refers to a Diodotus in the same context.

⁵⁰ Justin. 41.4.

Mediterranean power, while the rise of Arsaces led to a period of Parthian expansion which transformed the kingdom into a powerful Eastern empire. By placing the two events alongside each other in this passage, it seems clear that Justin was attempting to 'harmonize chronologically' the rise of the two powers, a process which marked the ultimate division of East and West into separate power blocs.⁵¹

Strabo tells us that Arsaces was a Scythian, and that he invaded Parthia with a group of nomads who lived along the Ochus. He refers to as these nomads as Parni, (or Aparni) who were part of a larger confederation of emigrants known as the Däae.⁵² However, we then learn that this view was not altogether accepted by ancient scholars. Later in the same passage Strabo offers two conflicting accounts of the background of Arsaces, noting that; 'some say that he derives his origin from the Scythians, whereas others say that he was a Bactrian, and that when in flight from the enlarged power of Diodotus and his followers he caused Parthia to revolt'.⁵³ Unfortunately for modern readers, Strabo then states that he will omit any further discussion of the subject, as he does not want to repeat what he has already said about the Parthians in the sixth book of his *Historical Sketches* and in the second book of his *History*. Both of these works are lost to us; nevertheless it is clear from the passage that Strabo felt the account of Arsaces' Scythian origin to be the more reliable. Justin, in his *Epitome* of Trogus, adds further doubt by referring to Arsaces as being of 'uncertain origin', although he states that Arsaces was 'accustomed to live by plunder and depredation' and that he invaded Parthia with a band of marauders. He is also quite clear that the Parthians themselves were originally exiles from Scythia, noting that the Scythian word for exiles is *Parthi*.⁵⁴

As I noted earlier, scholars such as Nikonorov and Wolski have argued that both Trogus and Strabo must have been primarily influenced by the *Parthica* of Apollodorus of Artemita, and that they therefore represented a distinct historical tradition.⁵⁵ However we can ascertain clear differences and even contradictions between the two accounts that cast this assertion

⁵¹ Lerner (1999) 15.

⁵² Strabo. 11.9.2.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 11.9.3.

⁵⁴ Justin 41.1. He also notes (41.2) that the language of the Parthian race was 'something between those of the Scythians and Medes, being a compound of both'.

⁵⁵ Nikonorov (1998) 107; Wolski (1996).

in to doubt. Although both authors tell us that Arsaces exploited the Seleucids' preoccupation with their own troubles to invade Parthia, they seem to have different ideas about the causes of this conflict. Justin is quite clear that the dispute between Seleucus and Antiochus, the so called 'War of the Brothers' (ca.240/39 to ca.237 BC.) provided the impetus for the revolt.⁵⁶ However Strabo is much vaguer, stating that the Seleucids were 'busily engaged with other matters' (διά τὸ πρὸς ἄλλοις εἶναι).⁵⁷ Consequently, some modern scholars have argued that Strabo is in fact referring to the Third Syrian War, a conflict which took place between Seleucus II and Ptolemy III of Egypt from 246-241.⁵⁸ Wolski, in an attempt to reconcile the two accounts, has suggested a different reading of Strabo. According to his translation, Seleucus and Antiochus were 'busily engaged with one another', (διά τὸ πρὸς ἀλλήλοισ ἐῖναι). Therefore in his view, Strabo could also have been describing the Brothers War.⁵⁹ However we also find a passage in the *Historia Romana* of Appian which clearly presents the war between Ptolemy and the Seleucids as the catalyst for the Parthian Revolt.⁶⁰ It seems clear that there must have been two separate historical traditions which were available to Roman authors. Yet once again, the dearth of surviving written material, together with the fact that both the translations I have noted are open to interpretation, ensures that such a view remains conjecture.

Both authors devote considerable attention to the first Parthian monarch, attributing many great triumphs to his reign, and emphasising his historical importance as the founder of his nation. For instance, when recalling the death of Arsaces, Justin notes that the king had 'become no less memorable among the Parthians than Cyrus among the Persians, Alexander among the Macedonians, and Romulus among the Romans'.⁶¹ Consequently, some modern scholars have taken the view that Arsaces established his power over Parthia almost

⁵⁶ Brodersen (1986) 379 Justin. 41.5.

⁵⁷ Strabo. 11.9.2. As Drijvers (1998) 284 notes, πρὸς ἄλλοις is a conjectural reading by Tyrwhitt.

⁵⁸ Debevoise (1938) 12; Grajetzki (2011) 6.

⁵⁹ Drijvers (1998) 284 disputes Wolski's translation of the text. He notes that πρὸς with the dative of persons is generally only found in poetry. Moreover, he argues that Wolski's reading of διά τὸ πρὸς ἀλλήλοισ ἐῖναι 'makes no sense', and that a more accurate reading should be something closer to 'because they clung to one another'. If Drijvers' reading of the text is correct, this again would suggest that the two brothers were fighting together against an external threat, rather than against each other. Brodersen (1986) 380 takes a third view. Although he seems to accept that διά τὸ πρὸς ἄλλοις εἶναι is the correct translation, he suggests that these 'other matters' could easily be a reference to the War of the Brothers. Cf. Musti (1984) 175-200.

⁶⁰ Appian. 11.65 "He invaded Syria and advanced as far as Babylon. The Parthians now began their revolt, taking advantage of the confusion in the house of the Seleucids".

⁶¹ Justin. 41.5.

immediately following his invasion.⁶² Yet a closer reading of Strabo and Justin suggests that the two authors differ in their opinion of the strength of Arsaces' position. Justin, in his account, emphasises the military power of the Parthian king. His description of Arsaces' victory over Seleucus in battle suggests that this was a decisive encounter which the Parthians continue to commemorate 'as the date of the commencement of their liberty'.⁶³ Following his victory, we are told, Arsaces enjoyed a period of relative peace, during which time he established the foundations of the Parthian state, settling the government, fortifying towns and fortresses, and building a new city which he named Dara. All of this fits in with Justin's depiction of Arsaces as a great ruler who ranked alongside Romulus, Cyrus and Alexander. His account also reflects the tendency among ancient authors, when faced with a lack of historical information, to attribute great deeds, such as military victories and the creation of institutions, to a few 'heroic' figures.⁶⁴

Strabo, on the other hand seems much more cautious in his account. It is true that he tells us that Arsaces and his followers 'invaded Parthia and conquered it'. However as Drijvers has argued, it is not clear what Strabo means by Parthia, as the country had 'increased in extent during recent years'.⁶⁵ As I have noted, he had previously described the original Parthian heartland as small and poverty stricken. If this was the land which Arsaces conquered, then it can be argued that he would have been regarded by the Seleucid kings as a relatively minor threat. Moreover, Strabo then states that the Parthian monarch was weak at the outset of his reign, 'being continually at war with those who had been deprived by him of their territory'.⁶⁶ Indeed, in Book 8 he tells us that Arsaces fled from Seleucus Callinicus (Seleucus II) 'withdrawing into the country of the Apasiacae'.⁶⁷ He goes on to note that the successors of Arsaces continued these wars, later becoming so strong that they began to conquer neighbouring lands, until finally 'they established themselves as lords of

⁶² E.g. Tarn (1951); Walbank (1981).

⁶³ *Ibid.* 41.5. Although he does concede that Arsaces had raised a large army 'through fear' of Seleucus and Theodotus (Diodotus).

⁶⁴ Scullard (1980) 51. An example of this would be the accomplishments credited to the Seven Kings of Rome, which seem more like etiological stories than historical accounts. For example, Tullus Hostilius (*the hostile*) was the warlike king, while Servius Tullius was credited with implementing the constitution of the Roman government.

⁶⁵ Drijvers (1998) 284; Strabo. 11.9.2.

⁶⁶ Strabo. 11.9.2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 11.8.8.

the whole country inside the Euphrates'. Clearly, Strabo believed that the growth of Parthian power was a gradual process, one which occurred over the course of several generations, rather than during the reign of a single 'heroic' king.⁶⁸

In contrast to the accounts of Strabo and Justin is the version of events described by Arrian. As I have noted, both earlier authors were in agreement that Arsaces came from outside of Parthia. Yet according to the segment of Arrian's *Parthica* preserved by Photius, Arsaces and his brother Tiridates were natives of Parthia, and led an uprising against Pherecles, the satrap appointed by the Seleucid king.⁶⁹ The cause of the revolt, we are told, was an insult which Pherecles made against Tiridates. Furthermore, Arrian claims that Arsaces himself died after only two years on the Parthian throne, and that he was succeeded by Tiridates, who reigned for a further thirty seven years. This account is in direct contrast to what we have been told by Justin, who states that Arsaces in fact 'died at a mature old age', to be succeeded by his son, who was also named Arsaces.⁷⁰ Yet for the sake of caution, it is important to note that the name 'Arsaces' later became the dynastic name of all Parthian kings in the same way that 'Caesar' and 'Augustus' became official titles of the Roman emperors. This demonstrates the importance of the first Parthian king as founder of the dynasty, but can also cause difficulties for historians, as many Parthian kings are simply referred to as 'Arsaces' in official texts.⁷¹

Modern scholars such as Wiesehofer have argued that the existence of Tiridates, at least in this context is, historically doubtful.⁷² Certainly, there is no reference to such a figure in either Strabo or Justin. However, the theme of two brothers who avenged themselves against a tyrant has its antecedents in ancient legend. For a Roman audience, the most

⁶⁸ See Sherwin White/Kuhrt (1993) 90; Drijvers (1998) 284. Coinage dating from the early Arsacid period would seem to support this view, as they show that the Parthian kings 'did not invariably use the royal title, and wore satrapal headdress, albeit tied with a ribbon diadem'. Cf. Worth (1903) 1-2, nos. 1-2. Frye (1962) 182 and Neusner (1969) 16 goes so far as to describe Mithridates I (r.c. 171-138) as the 'real founder of the empire'.

⁶⁹ Syncellus, in his translation of Arrian (248 B in Roos 1967 ii: 225), also refers to the satrap as Agathocles. However coinage dating from this period which was discovered among the Oxus treasure confirms that Justin (41.4) was correct in naming him Andragoras. See Bellinger (1962) 66.

⁷⁰ Justin. 41.5.

⁷¹ See also Grajetzki (2011) 10.

⁷² Wiesehofer (1996) 131. However, one of the most important finds from the excavations of Parthian Nisa, Ostrakon no.2638, confirms not only that Arsaces I was a genuine historical figure, but that he may also have had a brother. "In the year 157 of King Arsaces, grandson of Priapatius (who was) son of the nephew of Arsaces". See also Lerner (1999) 26.

obvious parallel would be with Romulus and Remus, who overthrew the usurper Amulius and restored their grandfather Numitor to the throne of Alba Longa.⁷³ Furthermore, we can also detect in this account a subtle parallel between the histories of the Arsacid and Achaemenid Persian dynasties. Arrian tells us that Arsaces and Tiridates, together with ‘five fellow conspirators’ murdered Pherecles. Yet if we examine Herodotus’ account of the rise of Darius I of Persia, we are told that seven Persian nobles, including Darius himself, overthrew a false claimant to the Achaemenid throne and then decided to replace him with one of their own. Consequently Darius, by craft, ‘won the throne of Persia’.⁷⁴ Elsewhere in his work, Arrian is less subtle. In the fragments preserved by Syncellus, the author attempts to create a genealogical link between the Arsacids and the Achaemenid dynasty by claiming that Arsaces and Tiridates were allegedly descendants of the Persian Artaxerxes.⁷⁵ This is the only reference we find in our historical accounts for such a provenance. Indeed Strabo’s account explicitly states that, despite the attempts of Augustan propagandists to conflate the Parthians and the Persians, the two races were clearly distinct from one another.⁷⁶ As we shall see in my next chapter, the identification the Parthians with their Achaemenid predecessors was a central tenet of Roman propaganda from the Augustan era onwards. Therefore, in the absence of a clear source for Arrian’s assertion, it is highly likely that his conflation of the two dynasties was influenced by such propaganda and not vice versa.⁷⁷

1.3: Government

Our ancient sources also give us an indication of the extent of Roman knowledge with regards to the government of the Parthian Empire. Again, much of what was written on this subject has been lost to us. Nevertheless, it is still possible to obtain valuable information from the fragments which survive. It seems that Strabo discussed the structure of Parthian

⁷³ Livy. 1.6.

⁷⁴ Herodotus. 3.71.

⁷⁵ Syncellus p.539.

⁷⁶ Strabo. 15.3.3 *“For although the Persians are still under the rule of a king, having a king of their own, yet they are most deficient in power and are subject to the king of the Parthians”*.

⁷⁷ Yet, as Wieshofer (1996) 133, has noted, there is good reason to believe that later Parthian rulers themselves sought to establish an Arsacid/Achaemenid connection in order to create a sense of historical continuity. For example, Mithridates II was the first Parthian to use the Persian title ‘king of kings’. This is a point I will develop further in my next chapter.

government in both his *History* and his *Historical Sketches*. Therefore, as with the origins of Arsaces, he refrains from repeating what he has already written. However, he does tell us that there existed a Council of the Parthians, which was comprised of two groups, the kinsmen, who were most likely the leading nobles, along with members of the king's family, and the wise men and Magi. It was from both of these groups that the Parthian kings were appointed. Justin also refers to a Parthian Senate, which was evidently powerful enough to depose Mithridates III and banish him from the kingdom on account of this cruelty.⁷⁸ Yet he does not tell us which elements of Parthian society comprised the assembly. The general agreement among modern historians is that the Arsacid monarchy was a hereditary institution,⁷⁹ although one that does not seem to have followed the strict rule of primogeniture.⁸⁰ How then do we account for this seeming disparity? Several theories have been proposed. For example, Drijvers has argued that the Council's 'appointment' of the king was most likely a formal acclamation given to the hereditary ruler, and that they had no real influence on the succession. The role of the Magi, in this view, would be to emphasise the role of the new monarch as the inheritor of an ancient and sacred tradition, while the acclamation of his kinsmen would serve as an official expression of loyalty and goodwill.⁸¹

The difficulty with this theory is that Justin was quite explicit that the Parthian Senate *banished* Mithridates. Clearly he believed that the authority of the assembly went beyond mere formal acclamation. One way of reconciling these contrasting views is by examining slightly later accounts. As I have noted, Pliny tells us that the Parthian Empire was comprised of eighteen kingdoms, which suggests that it was not a unitary state in the way that Rome was, but rather a confederation of semi-autonomous regions, each with their own rulers, who were ultimately subject to the Arsacid king.⁸² It seems that the balance of power between these rulers was often unstable, and was in many cases dependent on the strength of the central government. We find evidence for this system of rule in the

⁷⁸ Justin. 42.4.

⁷⁹ See Wiesehofer (1996) 192-193; Widengren (1976) 237; Drijvers (1998) 287.

⁸⁰ Again, Ostrakon no.2638 can be used to support this view. Ogden (1999), also notes that non-primogeniture was the norm among the Hellenistic monarchies.

⁸¹ Drijvers (1998) 288.

⁸² See also Grajetzki (2011) 11, who argues that the Parthian Empire operated as 'a kind of federal state' with local vassal kings paying some form of tax to the Arsacid monarch as well as providing him with military assistance.

Antiquities of Josephus. For instance, in Book 20 he recounts how the Parthian king Artabanus III, 'perceiving that the governors of the provinces had framed a plot against him' sought refuge with one of his subject kings, Izates of Adiabenes, who was instrumental in restoring Artabanus to his throne.⁸³ It seems highly likely that these subject kings would have been among the kinsmen whom Strabo tells us comprised the Parthian council. Therefore, although the choice of king was determined by heredity, it is possible that when deposing a weak or unpopular ruler, these powerful kinsmen would have used the council/senate as a way of providing a veneer of legitimacy to their actions. Furthermore, Justin goes on to note that Mithridates, upon his deposition, was succeeded by his brother Orodes, who swiftly had him put to death. Justin does not explicitly link Orodes to Mithridates' removal from power; however this sudden act of fratricide does give the impression that some sort of palace coup has occurred, which the council/senate has given formal assent to. Although, once again, our lack of surviving evidence means that we cannot be certain whether this was the case, such a conclusion would explain how we can reconcile the passage of Justin with the general depiction of Arsacid monarchs as powerful hereditary rulers. Also, in a theme I will develop in my next chapter, it would also serve to emphasise the less civilized nature of Parthian society, with its seemingly arbitrary nature of government in stark contrast with what Strabo had described as the 'excellence' of the Roman form of government.⁸⁴

The purpose of this chapter was to determine what Roman historians actually knew of the geography, history, and government of the Parthian Empire, in order to assess the possible impact of their works among Augustan propagandists attempting to create an image of a Parthian *alter orbis*. Yet as we have seen, when exploring classical literature for insights into the world of the Parthians, it is striking to realise just how little Roman authors actually seemed to know of their Eastern neighbours. Also, there is a great deal of confusion and contradiction between our sources, which give an indication of their reliance on second hand written accounts. One reason for this was simply a lack of interest in understanding

⁸³ Josephus. 20.3.1.

⁸⁴ Strabo. 6.4.2.

the Parthians as a people. Although scholars such as Momigliano have argued that the Romans studied the Parthians seriously,⁸⁵ we can see from an account given by Lucian that many Romans found detailed historical and geographical accounts of foreign nations tiresome.⁸⁶ This is understandable, as the relationship between two empires was always underpinned by hostility. Furthermore, the Romans perceived themselves as a superior race to the Parthians, both morally and culturally.⁸⁷ Indeed, in each of the works we have discussed we can detect ideological biases which affect the reliability of these authors as genuine historical sources. In my next chapter, I shall explore this theme in greater detail, discussing how the Romans interpreted what they knew of the Parthians, and ascertain how the Augustan regime was able to create a coherent image of an *alter orbis* which could be set against the *orbis Romanus*.

⁸⁵ Momigliano (1975), 140.

⁸⁶ Lucian 19; “There is another distinguished artist in words—again rather more Thucydidean than Thucydides—, who gives, according to his own idea, the clearest, most convincing descriptions of every town, mountain, plain, or river. I wish my bitterest foe no worse fate than the reading of them”.

⁸⁷ For example, see Livy. 9.186.6.

Chapter 2

Interpretation

Having established in my previous chapter the extent of Roman knowledge in relation to Parthia, we must now consider how the Augustan regime interpreted what they knew in order to depict the *alter orbis* of their eastern rivals. As Fowler has noted, the evident lack of detailed information possessed by writers such as Strabo and Justin regarding the origins of the Arsacids ensured that they entered the historical consciousness of the Romans as a 'blank cheque' dynasty.⁸⁸ Consequently, the authors and poets of the early Principate were able to construct 'a highly fluid picture of Parthian culture and ideology'.⁸⁹

2.1: Parthians and other 'barbarians'

As scholars such as Dench have argued, the theme of 'moral and cultural transformation' resulting from contact with foreign races was a significant feature of Roman ethnographical writing.⁹⁰ There was always the fear that the Roman people, particularly those who served in the legions, would be 'contaminated' by exposure to the customs and environment of those whom they considered to be barbarians. We see this fear expressed time and again in ancient literature.⁹¹ According to our sources, races which existed in harsher climates were more likely to produce fearsome warriors.⁹² Conversely, as the Persian king Cyrus the Great was reported to have claimed; 'soft countries breed soft men'.⁹³ The contrast between the peoples of the East and West was not solely a Roman preoccupation. Indeed, it had also

⁸⁸ Fowler (2005) 133.

⁸⁹ *Ibid* 133.

⁹⁰ Dench (2005) 270.

⁹¹ For example; Pliny. 33.53; Florus. 47.7; Juvenal. 6.294-300. Shayegan (2011) 335 refers to this as a process of 'degeneration'.

⁹² For example; Caesar. *BG* 6.24.2-5; Cicero. *De Leg* 2.95; Polybius. 4.21; Seneca. *De Ira* 2.15.5; Tacitus. *Agric* 11.

⁹³ Herodotus. *Hist* 9.122. It is notable that Herodotus ascribes this comment to a Persian king, as the commonly held view is that the Persians were seen as corrupt and slavish Orientals. For example; Hunt (1998) 48f. As Isaac (2004) 266 has argued, the reality appears to have been more complex. This is a theme I will return to in the third section of this chapter.

been an important feature of philosophical discourse during the Greek and Hellenistic period, as we can see from the works of Aristotle.⁹⁴

If we are to consider how the Romans interpreted what they knew of the Parthians to create the image of an *alter orbis*, it is necessary to determine where they placed their eastern rivals on this scale of peoples. If, as Sonnabend has argued, the Romans saw the Parthians as ‘representatives of the Orient’, then we would expect the accounts of their behaviour and characteristics to conform to this stereotype.⁹⁵ However, as we shall see, an examination of the principal literary works of the late Republican and early Imperial period suggests that there existed a more complex view of the Arsacid kingdom and its inhabitants.

In his *Epitome* of Trogus, Justin gives us a detailed description of the character of the Parthian race as seen through Roman eyes.⁹⁶ Firstly, he describes them as ‘proud and quarrelsome’, stating that they were always restless for conflict.⁹⁷ These are not characteristics which Roman authors generally ascribed to eastern races. Livy, for example, in his account of the conflict between the Roman consul Titus Quinctius Flaminius and the Seleucid king Antiochus III in 192 BC, has the consul describe the Seleucid army as ‘all Syrians, far better fitted to be slaves, on account of their servile dispositions, than to be a race of warriors’.⁹⁸ On the contrary such behaviour seems to be more closely identified with northern peoples such as the Gauls and Germans. Seneca, for instance, refers to the Germans as a nation ‘eager for war’. They were also, along with the Scythians, ‘especially

⁹⁴ Aristotle. *Politics* 11327b. ‘For those races in cold places and around Europe are filled with spirit, but lacking in intelligence and skill, so that they continue to be rather free, but are private and thus unable for the most part to rule. Meanwhile those about Asia are intelligent and skilled, but without spirit, so that they continue to be ruled and enslaved’.

⁹⁵ Sonnabend (1986) 211-221.

⁹⁶ Justin. 41.3. See also Isaac (2004) 378. However, for the sake of caution we must once again note the debate regarding the extent of Justin’s contribution to Trogus’s *Historia*. If, as Syme (1988) 358–371 has argued, the *Epitome* can be dated to around AD 390, then, depending on the degree of autonomy in Justin’s work, it is possible that he was influenced by contemporary Roman attitudes towards the later Sassanid Persians.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 41.3.

⁹⁸ Livy. 36.17.4-5. It is interesting to note that Livy refers to the Medes as one of the ‘unheard of peoples’ who made up the Seleucid army. This was a name often used by Roman poets to describe the Parthians. However it is not clear whether the author is using the term in the same context here. As I noted in my previous chapter, the rise of Arsaces is generally attributed to the mid-third century BC, some half century or so before the conflict Livy is recalling.

prone to anger'.⁹⁹ Caesar attributes many of the same characteristics to the Gauls, whose lands he annexed in the campaigns of 58–50 BC.¹⁰⁰ He notes that the Gallic mentality was 'ready and eager to rush into wars', a mentality which we can see reflected in Strabo's description of the Parthians as favouring 'action over words'.¹⁰¹ However, in contrast to the Parthians, who shrouded 'both their successes and miscarriages in silence', Caesar tells us that the Gauls were 'very bad at enduring defeat'.

Justin also refers to the Parthians as a 'faithless and insolent' people, an accusation we find elsewhere in Roman literature. Horace, for instance, in his *Satires*, confesses to being 'as great a liar as the Parthians'.¹⁰² This appears to have been an accusation that was made against most barbarian races, regardless of their geographical origin. For example, the Gauls were described by Cicero as 'an arrogant and faithless people'.¹⁰³ Indeed, the obvious similarity with Justin's description of the Parthians gives the strong impression that this was a stock phrase to be used against foreigners. Strabo also describes the Germans in the same fashion, calling them a 'nation born to lie'.¹⁰⁴ However, as Isaac has argued, this may in fact have been a reaction to the recent Varian disaster of AD 9, with Roman authors explaining the treachery of Arminius as a characteristic of the whole German race.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Tacitus, writing in the following century, describes the Germans as a people 'without either natural or acquired cunning'.¹⁰⁶ By contrast, the faithlessness of the eastern races seems to have been viewed as a natural predisposition. For instance, Seneca, addressing Lucilius in his *Epistles*, warns his friend to avoid the temptations of pleasures, as they are 'like the robbers whom the Egyptians called lovers, who embrace us in order to strangle us'.¹⁰⁷ As Isaac has noted, this gives the reader the impression that Egyptian robbers were somehow more

⁹⁹ *QN* 6.7; *De Ira* 2.15. Note the reference to the Scythians sharing these characteristics with the Germans. As I stated in my previous chapter, Justin believed that the Parthians themselves were originally exiles from Scythia.

¹⁰⁰ Caesar. *BG* 3.19.6.

¹⁰¹ See also Strabo. 4.5 where the author describes the Gauls as 'war mad', but also notes their lack of tactical skill.

¹⁰² Horace. 2.1.112. See also Tacitus. *Ann* 6.29–32 for an account of the treacherous nature of the Parthian royal family.

¹⁰³ Cicero. *pro Font* 27.36. See also Polybius. 2.7.5, writing in the second century BC, who says that the Gauls, at that time still unconquered by Rome, would 'betray for gain'.

¹⁰⁴ Strabo. 7.1.4. See also Manilius. 1.896–903.

¹⁰⁵ Isaac (2004) 430.

¹⁰⁶ Tacitus. *Germ* 22.

¹⁰⁷ Seneca. *Ep* 51.13.

devious than those of other countries.¹⁰⁸ Ironically, the Greeks, who had formed the bulwark of resistance against Persian domination during the classical period, and who had written disparagingly of the servile races of the East, were now themselves imbued with many of these negative characteristics by the Romans.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, we find references to Greek faithlessness throughout the literature of the period. An example of this can be found in the writings of Pliny the Elder, who states that the Greeks told ‘monstrous lies’.¹¹⁰ Cicero, in a letter to his brother Quintus also refers to Greeks as treacherous; ‘trained by a long servitude to show excessive flattery’.¹¹¹ Clearly, therefore, we can discern in Justin’s accusation against the Parthians a general sense of distrust towards foreigners as a whole, an attitude which was particularly prevalent in accounts of the ‘Oriental’ East, but which could also be extended to the northern races, especially if they had defeated the Romans in battle.¹¹²

Justin also notes how the Parthians were slaves to an absolute ruler, whom they obeyed out of fear rather than humility or respect. In this sense they appear more stereotypically eastern in disposition. Cicero, for instance referred to the Syrians and Jews as ‘people born to be slaves’.¹¹³ We see an example of this servility in Posidonius’ account of a Parthian banquet attended by the king and his nobles. According to the author, those who held the title of ‘king’s friend’ did not eat at their monarch’s table, but instead were forced to sit on the ground, eating ‘like a dog’ what the king threw down to them.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, men were often ‘torn away’ from the feast and subjected to arbitrary punishment for ‘some trifling cause’. After being scourged with rods and whips, the unfortunate victim would throw himself to the floor and ‘adore the man who has punished him as his benefactor’. In contrast; the peoples of the North and West were noted for their freedom and resistance to

¹⁰⁸ Isaac (2004) 356. Yet, as he notes, attitudes towards the Egyptians reflected ‘a ragbag of stereotypes with few common features’. As with the Parthians, the Romans seem to have been wary of being too dismissive of the Egyptians. Although Egypt was not a military threat to Rome in the way that Parthia was, the country did have a vital economic role as one of the chief providers of grain to the city. See also Erdkamp (2005) 225.

¹⁰⁹ Dauge (1981) 546-554.

¹¹⁰ Pliny. *NH* 5.4. See also Juvenal *Satires* 10.174-75, who refers to ‘*all the lying tales of Greek history*’.

¹¹¹ Cicero. *ad Qf* 1.1.16. He makes a contrast, however, between ancient and contemporary Greeks, noting that few of the latter were worthy of their illustrious ancestors. This is a theme I will return to in the third section of my chapter.

¹¹² Isaac (2004) 430.

¹¹³ Cicero. *De Provinciis Consularibus* 5, 10.

¹¹⁴ Posidonius. *Athenaeus* 4.38 152f-153a. See Brosius (2006) 117, for a discussion of the hierarchical structure of this group.

such domination. Tacitus notes that among the German tribes, kings did not hold absolute or unrestricted power, while their commanders led by example 'rather than issuing orders'.¹¹⁵ Indeed, Posidonius himself provides a striking counterpoint to Parthian servility in his account of a Celtic banquet. Far from being seated 'dog like' on the ground, the leading Celtic warriors would all sit in a circle, with the bravest and most powerful of them seated in the middle. Even the spear bearers were permitted to 'feast in the same manner as their masters'.¹¹⁶ Also, while there was sometimes violence at these banquets, it was not caused by the whim of a cruel tyrant, as with the Parthian feasts, but the free will of warriors, who would challenge each other to single combat over matters of honour and bravery.

However, describing the personal characteristics of the Parthians, Justin refers to their 'roughness of behaviour', along with their 'taciturn' nature. This would seem to place the Parthians firmly alongside the Gauls and Germans in opposition to the 'effeminate' races of the East. Syrians, for example, were known for their love of luxury. According to Posidonius, they spent most of their day either in the baths; 'anointing themselves with very costly oils and perfumes', or in the *grammateia* (public banqueting-rooms); 'filling their bellies with meat and drink'.¹¹⁷ The contrast here with the 'frugal diet' of the Parthians is striking.¹¹⁸ As for the Roman attitude towards contemporary Greeks, this can perhaps be summed up most clearly in the words of Juvenal, who compares their effeminate lifestyle unfavourably to the rigour of the western and northern races.¹¹⁹ The Germans, by contrast, were seen as extreme in their roughness of behaviour. Manilius described them as 'fit only to breed with wild beasts', while Tacitus referred to their love of 'fighting, feasting and sleeping' and their hatred of peace.¹²⁰ Regarding their diet, Tacitus notes that they ate 'without elaborate

¹¹⁵ Tacitus. *Germ* 6.

¹¹⁶ Posidonius. *Athenaeus* 4.36 151e-152d. See also Tacitus. *Germ* 22 for a similar depiction of a German feast.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* 12.35 527.

¹¹⁸ Justin. 41.3.

¹¹⁹ Juvenal. *Satire* 8.116; 'Perhaps you despise the unwarlike Rhodians, and perfumed Corinth, and rightly so, what could a whole effeminate race of youths, from there, with their depilated legs, do to you? It's hairy Spain you should avoid, and the Gallic region, and the shores of Illyria'. See also Polybius. 39.1.

¹²⁰ Manilius. 4.794; Tacitus. *Germ* 14 15.1.

preparation or seasoning', although they were less restrained in their love of drink, a vice which the author believed could lead to their defeat as surely as through force of arms.¹²¹

As for the description of the Parthians as taciturn, this certainly does not reflect the typical Roman view of the East. The Egyptians, for example, seem to have been well known for their sharp tongues. Seneca, describing Egypt as a 'gossiping' province, tells us that the people were 'talkative and good at insulting its governors.'¹²² As for the Syrians, we are told by Lucian that they were often employed as wandering doctors and exorcists of evil spirits, roles which would hardly be suited to a naturally taciturn race.¹²³ The loquaciousness of the Greeks was also a recurrent theme in Roman literature. One extraordinary example of this can be found in Plutarch's account of Sulla's campaign against the Athenian tyrant Aristion in 86 BC. According to Plutarch, Aristion, with his city under siege by the Romans, sent out a delegation to seek terms with Sulla. However, rather than negotiate with the Roman general, they instead 'talked in lofty strains' about the past glories of Athens. Furthermore, we are told that Aristion himself, looking down upon the Romans from the city walls, heaped 'scurrilous abuse' upon Sulla, mocking his wife and his physical appearance.¹²⁴ However, while Justin's portrayal of the Parthians as a rough and taciturn people is more reminiscent of attitudes towards the Germans and the Celts, his account of their 'libidinous' appetites again seems to place them firmly alongside the eastern races as 'decadent' Orientals. The Germans, according to Tacitus, were praiseworthy in their sexual morals, living 'a life of sheltered chastity' in a society where adultery was rare and strictly punished.¹²⁵

We find examples elsewhere in Roman literature of authors attempting to 'soften' the image of the Parthians in order to fit the stereotypical view of the East. For example, Plutarch, describing the Parthian army which faced Crassus at Carrhae, notes that while the soldiers still dressed in the Scythian fashion 'to make themselves look formidable', their commander, a nobleman named Surena, was conspicuous in his 'effeminate beauty', with a

¹²¹ *Ibid* 23. Diodorus. 5.26.2-3 also makes the same observation with regards to the Celts. However he also notes that they were greedy (5.27.4).

¹²² Seneca. *De Consolatione ad Helviam Matrem*, *Dial.* 12 [11]. 19.6.

¹²³ Lucian. *Podagra* 265; *Philopseudes*. 16.

¹²⁴ Plu. *Sull* 13.1.

¹²⁵ Tacitus. *Germ* 18-19.

manner of dress that 'did not well correspond to his reputation for valour'.¹²⁶ Plutarch's account is fascinating, as it appears as though the author is consciously trying to reconcile two contrasting images of the Parthians. He acknowledges their Scythian origins, implying that this made them a formidable military foe.¹²⁷ Yet at the same time he must also acknowledge the popular representation of the Parthians as degenerate Orientals. In order to explain the disparity of these two opposing images, he seems to argue that they, or at least their governing class as represented by Surena, had been exposed to the same process of 'degeneration' I referred to earlier in this chapter. As Shayegan has argued, this was believed to have taken place 'once the Arsacids became the hegemon of the Orient and heirs of the Ancient Persians'.¹²⁸ If this was indeed the case, then the fate of the Parthians could have been seen as a warning to the Roman people. If they wished to conquer the lands of the Arsacid kingdom, then they too risked becoming 'degenerate'.¹²⁹

2.2: Images of Parthia in Roman Iconography.

Having compared Justin's description of the character of the Parthians with the various accounts of other 'barbarian' races which we find in Roman literature, it is clear that there was a great deal of confusion among the authors of the period as to how they should portray their eastern rivals. Were they effeminate Orientals or fearsome savages in the manner of the Germans and Celts? Echoing Isaac's comments regarding Roman attitudes towards Egypt, the image they developed of Parthia seems to have been formed from a 'ragbag of stereotypes'.¹³⁰ Yet for Livy, there seems to have been no doubt that the

¹²⁶ Plu. *Crass* 24.1.

¹²⁷ Strabo (11.9.2) also attributes their success against Rome to a way of life which is distinctly un-Oriental.

¹²⁸ Shayegan (2011) 335; See also Sonnabend (1986) 273-288.

¹²⁹ Indeed, Augustus himself had exploited such fears in his propaganda campaign against Mark Antony, which represented him as having been corrupted by the East. The enduring power of this image can be seen in Seneca's appraisal of Antony, written almost a century after his death. (*Epist. Mor.* 83.25) He notes that while Antony had been a man of great ability, he had been ruined by '*foreign habits and un-Roman vices*'.

¹³⁰ Isaac (2004) 356.

Parthians were to be ranked alongside the Syrians and Egyptians as ‘degenerate’ easterners, who would infect any races which came into contact with them.¹³¹

Of course, it is important to note that the views of the authors I have referred to were not necessarily those of the Roman state.¹³² If we wish to gain a clearer impression of the attitude of the Augustan regime towards the Parthians, then we must examine the various ways they were portrayed in the iconography of the period, in particular the public monuments and coinage of the early Principate. There are several reasons why such an examination is valuable. Firstly as Zanker has noted, visual imagery can give us a greater insight into the culture and values of a people ‘that often cannot be apprehended in literary sources’.¹³³ Secondly, although there is considerable debate among modern scholars as to the level of literacy among the Roman people, it is likely that a great number of the Empire’s inhabitants would have been unable to read, and that many others would have lacked the ability or inclination to follow the works of authors such as Tacitus or Strabo.¹³⁴ However, many more would have seen a coin or a statue bearing the image of a Parthian. They were produced for mass-circulation, and therefore would have spread imperial ideology far wider than the literary texts I have so far discussed.¹³⁵ Indeed, the messages they conveyed could be understood ‘with a bare minimum of visual literacy’.¹³⁶

When examining the iconography of the early Principate for depictions of the Parthian race, two images seem to stand out, those of the bearded Parthian and the handsome Oriental. The most notable example of the first image can be seen on the Prima Portia statue of Augustus (Fig. 1), which was discovered in the villa of his widow Livia. On the cuirass of the triumphal *princeps*, we see a Parthian appearing to present a legionary standard to a

¹³¹ Livy. 38.17. Syme (1939) 463-64 argued that Livy colluded with Augustus to promote the policies of the new regime, a view rejected by Walsh (1961) 10-14; and Petersen (1961) 440-452.

¹³² See Kennedy (1992) 26-59 for a discussion of ‘Augustan’ and ‘Anti-Augustan’ interpretations of classical texts. This is a theme I will return to in my third chapter.

¹³³ Zanker (1990) 3.

¹³⁴ Harris (1989) 331 and Favro (1996) 4 argue that literacy was low in the Roman world. However others, such as Horsfall (1991) and Franklin (1991) believe that this is an exaggeration. Franklin, for instance notes the surviving scraps of writing on the walls in Pompeii.

¹³⁵ See Galinsky (1996) 28-41 for a discussion of the extent to which Roman coinage ‘reaffirmed’ rather than created Augustan propaganda.

¹³⁶ Noreña (2011) 304.

uniformed Roman, whose hands are outstretched in readiness to receive it.¹³⁷ Clearly, this is a reference to the return of Crassus' standards in 20 BC. The depiction of the Parthian shows him with a long beard and curly hair, while he is clothed in a V-neck tunic with long sleeves, and trousers. The relationship between the Parthian and the Roman is difficult to discern. As Schneider has noted, the Roman has been carved somewhat larger than the Parthian, who in turn looks up towards the legionary eagle in a manner which could indicate his awe at the power of Rome.¹³⁸ However, it is also possible to read the image as a gesture of friendship.¹³⁹ It is notable, for instance, that the Parthian remains standing in the presence of the Roman. A much more obvious view of Roman triumphalism can be found in the coins which were issued in 19 BC (Fig. 2), in order to mark Augustus' 'victory' a year earlier. Once again, the Parthian is depicted with a long beard and curly hair, dressed in a tunic with long trousers. However on this occasion he is shown on his knees in a clear sign of submission.¹⁴⁰ The image of the bearded Parthian was evidently popular in Rome, and was still in circulation decades after the death of Augustus. We know this from the fragmentary remains of a monumental relief dated to around AD 60 (Fig. 3), which shows a Parthian warrior in combat with Roman soldiers. Although only the upper body of the Parthian is visible, we can nevertheless see that he wears the aforementioned V-Neck tunic, while the hair and beard also conform to the Augustan images. Furthermore, we know that the image depicted on these coins and statues is more or less identical to the way in which the Parthians portrayed themselves, as surviving monuments from the Arsacid kingdom itself attest. A bronze statue of a Parthian prince (Fig. 4), which was discovered at Shami in southwestern Iran, displays the same distinctive features, from the V-Neck tunic and long trousers to the beard (which, however, is much more neatly trimmed).¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ There has been considerable debate among scholars regarding the identity of the Roman figure. It has been argued variously that the figure represents Mars Ultor, the future emperor Tiberius, and even the Roman army itself. Rose (2005) 25-26 makes a strong case for the figure as a representation of Roma. See also Jucker (1977) 37; Schneider (2007) 54.

¹³⁸ Zanker (1990) 187; Schneider (2007) 55.

¹³⁹ We find various references in Augustan literature to such Parthian overtures of friendship. For example Strabo. 16.1.28. Augustus himself states in his *Res Gestae* (32.1) that Phraates asked for Roman friendship 'through pledging his children'. See also Rose (2005) 27, who argues that the Prima Portia image 'reflects a negotiated settlement in which war played no role'.

¹⁴⁰ Such focus on realism seems to have been characteristic of Roman art at this time. See Zanker (2010) 64. See also Gergel (2001) 191-213 for a discussion of the costumes of barbarians as a geographic indicator.

¹⁴¹ Zanker (1990) 187; Schneider (2007) 55.

At the same time, we also have the image of the Parthians as handsome Orientals.¹⁴² As with the earlier image, the handsome Oriental is typically dressed in a long sleeved tunic, with long trousers and soft shoes. However, in contrast to the bearded Parthian, he is depicted as clean shaven, with emphasis placed on his youth and physical beauty. The image of the handsome Oriental appears to have been dated to the period of Classical Athens, first appearing towards the end of the sixth century BC.¹⁴³ The association between this image and the Parthians can be seen in a depiction of two Orientals on a glass gem (Fig.5), which has been dated to the Augustan/early Tiberian period.¹⁴⁴ As we can see, the two Orientals are kneeling and looking up towards a representation of the Roman goddess Victory. In their hands are Roman standards, which they appear to be presenting to the goddess. The obvious similarity in pose between these figures and those on the Prima Portia statue and the Augustan coins strongly indicate that they are indeed representatives of the Arsacid kingdom.

Scholars such as Brosius have expressed curiosity at the fact that the Parthians appear to have been 'orientalised' at the same time as they were depicted as uncivilized.¹⁴⁵ However, depictions of the handsome Oriental in Roman imagery suggest that there existed a considerable degree of ambivalence in their attitudes towards the East. On the one hand, they represent servility. We see this in the various images of the Oriental cup-bearer which, as Schneider has noted, was a recurrent theme in Roman art. Indeed, a figure from Palmyra of a servant bearing a wine ladle and jug, which has been dated to the second century AD, is clearly dressed in Parthian costume (Fig.6).¹⁴⁶ Such images would appear to concur with the remarks of the Roman authors I referred to earlier, that is to say that the people of the East were 'effeminate' and 'fitted to be slaves'.¹⁴⁷ Yet, at the same time we have evidence to suggest that the Romans used strikingly similar imagery when depicting their own supposed Trojan descent. Indeed, it was during the Augustan period that the mythical connection

¹⁴² Schneider (2007) 60.

¹⁴³ *Ibid* 60 gives a date of approx 500 BC. See also Hall (1988) 15-18; Miller (1997); Barringer (2004) 13-25.

¹⁴⁴ Schneider (1986) 39-40; Schneider (1998) 104-105.

¹⁴⁵ Brosius (2006) 138.

¹⁴⁶ Tanabe (1986) 44pl. 448; Schneider (2007) 61; Brosius (2006) 136. See also Stoneman (1994) 53 and Smith (2013), who discuss the growing 'Romanization' of Palmyra. Both argue that this was a slow process, occurring over several centuries, although Stoneman maintains that 'it always remained an overlay'.

¹⁴⁷ Livy. 36.17.4-5.

between Rome and Troy was given its most famous presentation in Virgil's national epic, the *Aeneid*. In it, we find several references to the eastern dress of Aeneas.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, if we examine the Aeneas panel on the Ara Pacis monument (Fig. 7), we see a figure standing behind the eponymous hero, wearing the long sleeved tunic and possibly the long trousers (although this is not clear) of the East. Rose has argued that this figure probably represents Aeneas' companion Achates.¹⁴⁹ However it seems more likely that it is actually a representation of Aeneas' son Ascanius, who, according to Virgil, later took the surname Iulus and founded the city of Alba Longa, becoming one of founders of the Roman race.¹⁵⁰

A striking example of the complex role this image played in Roman iconography is the debate which is still taking place among modern scholars regarding the depiction on the Ara Pacis of two children, one on the north frieze, and the other on the south (Figs.8-9). They are shown alongside members of the imperial family taking part in a procession, possibly a *supplicatio*, such as the one which Dio tells us was given by Tiberius to mark Augustus' return to Rome in 13 BC.¹⁵¹ Some scholars argue that the two children are Gaius and Lucius Caesar, the grandchildren and adopted sons of Augustus. Their foreign dress has been explained as the costume worn at the *Iusus Troiae* (Game of Troy), an equestrian event held in Rome, in which boys from the Roman nobility took part in mock battles.¹⁵² However it has also been claimed that they in fact represent two Parthian princes. Indeed, we know from various accounts that the Parthian king Phraates sent several of his children to Rome as hostages for Augustus.¹⁵³ The appearance of the two boys contrasts strikingly with that of the other children who are depicted on the monument. Whilst the others are shown in the typical dress of young Romans, wearing the toga and *bullae*, their clothing appears distinctly foreign. For example, they are dressed in tunics rather than togas; the boy on the south

¹⁴⁸ For accounts of Aeneas wearing the Phrygian cap, see Virgil. *Aen* 4.215, 12.97-100.

¹⁴⁹ Rose (2005) 44. However he acknowledges that Ascanius begins to appear in eastern dress by 2 BC, as can be seen in the statues of Aeneas and his family which were dedicated in the new Forum of Augustus.

¹⁵⁰ The fact that the figure holds a shepherd's crook supports this argument. According to some versions of the legend, such as the Homeric hymn *To Aphrodite* (53), Aeneas' father Anchises had himself been a shepherd. Therefore it may be the case that Ascanius is carrying the crook in honour of his grandfather. See also Zanker (1990) 204; Rehak (2001) 192.

¹⁵¹ Dio. 54.27.1; Rose (2005) 38.

¹⁵² Suet. *Aug* 43.2; *Iul* 39.2; Rose (2005) 42; Ross (2007) 102. Although, as Ross has noted, some scholars doubt the connection between the *Iusus Troiae* and the city of Troy, the accounts of Suetonius suggest that the two were indeed linked. This is supported by Virgil's description of the funeral games held by Aeneas in honour of his father. (*Aen* 5.545-603).

¹⁵³ Strabo. 16.1.28.

frieze wears a garment which is loose fitting around the shoulders, while that of the boy on the north frieze is shorter, leaving his buttocks exposed to view. The two children also wear torques around their neck, and have longer hair than their Roman counterparts.

Schneider has argued that both interpretations of their nationality can stand.¹⁵⁴ However, I agree with Rose that the child on the south frieze is most likely a representation of a Parthian prince.¹⁵⁵ As he has argued, the hairstyle of the boy appears to closely resemble that of the Parthian we saw on the Arsacid statue found at Shami, as well as on the coin of a Parthian king which has been dated to around 57 BC (Fig.10). Furthermore, none of our ancient sources for the *lusus Troiae* describe Roman boys wearing foreign dress, (other than a golden torque, see Suet. *Aug*) or adopting foreign hairstyles.¹⁵⁶ As for the child on the north frieze, the details of his clothing suggest a Gallic, rather than eastern identity. One example of this is the bracelet on the upper arm, which was typically seen on statues of Gallic men. It is possible that he was intended to represent the conquest of Gaul by the deified Julius. If so, the presence of the other child dressed in eastern garb would suggest that Augustus wished to emphasise the fact that Parthia had been 'pacified' in the same manner.¹⁵⁷

However we choose to interpret the nationality of the two boys on the Ara Pacis, the fact that they can plausibly be regarded as either Roman or Parthian gives us an indication of just how complicated attitudes towards the Oriental East were in Augustan Rome, and the diverse ways in which the image was used. As Schneider has argued, the image of the handsome Oriental oscillated 'between Trojan friend, Oriental deity, and Parthian enemy'.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Schneider (2007) 76.

¹⁵⁵ Rose (2005) 44.

¹⁵⁶ Plutarch (*Ant* 54.4) notes how Antony had dressed his son Alexander Helios in 'Median garb', however it seems unlikely that Augustus would have wanted to emulate his example.

¹⁵⁷ Virgil, in his *Georgics* (3.16-33) expresses similar sentiments. See also Kuttner (1995) 101.

¹⁵⁸ Schneider (2007) 79.

2.3: Parthians as heirs to Achaemenid Persia

The context in which the Parthians were depicted as Orientals, as cup-bearers on table legs and bronze stands, clearly indicate their submission to the power of Rome.¹⁵⁹ Yet we have already seen how accusations of servility and decadence were a recurring theme in Roman accounts of the Oriental East. This alone does not explain why the Augustan regime believed that a *divisio orbis* between the two empires was necessary. After all, the Syrians had been portrayed as slavish and luxury loving, yet they had fallen under the dominion of Rome. In order to complete the construction of an *alter orbis*; it was necessary for the Roman government to provide an ideological and historical context for their opposition to Parthia.

As I noted in my previous chapter, the Romans were perfectly aware that the Parthians and the Persians were two distinct races. Yet, as the Arsacids now ruled over much of the land once held by the Achaemenids, a conflation of the two peoples was the most obvious way to achieve such a context. Also, as I stated in the opening section of this chapter, while the Romans were contemptuous of the Greeks of their own time, they seemed to have held their classical ancestors in a much higher regard.¹⁶⁰ In particular, they admired those Greeks who had successfully defended their country against the Persian Empire during the fifth century BC. By presenting the Parthians as the heirs to the Achaemenid Persians, the Romans were able to assume the mantle of classical Greece, and portray themselves as the defenders of western civilization.

From our surviving evidence, we can see that the equation of Arsacid Parthia with Achaemenid Persia was a common feature of Roman literature. We have evidence that this was already taking place during the late Republic.¹⁶¹ However, it seems to have become particularly widespread in the works of the poets of the early Principate. Here we can find many examples of the Parthians being referred to as either Persians or Medes.¹⁶² Of course,

¹⁵⁹ Brosius (2006) 136.

¹⁶⁰ For example; Livy. 22.57.5; Dionysius. *Ant* 10.51.5; 52.4; 54.3.

¹⁶¹ Cicero, for instance, had referred to the Parthians as *Persae* in his work *De Domo Sua* 60.

¹⁶² Of all the Roman poets, Horace seems to be the most consistent in this regard. For instance; Hor. *Carm* 1.2.22 (*Persians*); 1.2.51 (*prancing Medes*); 1.21.15 (*Persia*); 1.27.5 (*Median sabre*); 1.29.4 (*the Mede*); 1.38.1 (*Persian*); 2.1.31 (*Medes*); 2.9.21 (*Medus' flood*); 2.12.21 (*rich Achaemenes*); 2.16.5 (*the Mede*); 3.3.44 (*Media*); 3.5.9 (*Persians*) 3.9.4 (*the Persian king*); 4.15.23 (*Persia*); Hor. *Ep* 13.8 (*Achaemenid*). See also Ovid. *Ars* 1.225 (*Persia*); 1.226 (*Achaemeniis*); Ovid. *Fast* 1.385 (*Persia*); Ovid. *Met* 1.62 (*Persians*); Propertius. *Carm* 3.3.11 (*Medes*). Also Shayegan (2011) 336; Schneider (2007) 84 n.91.

the Romans never came into direct contact with the Achaemenid Empire, which had been conquered by Alexander the Great in 330 BC. At this time, the Roman Republic was still expanding its power in Italy, with the Second Samnite War only four years away.¹⁶³ As Rosivach has noted, the average Roman probably knew little of Persian history, but he would be aware of individual kings, such as Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes.¹⁶⁴ Their principal sources of information would have been the works of Greek historians such as Herodotus and Xenophon, who wrote of encounters between the Greeks and Persians in the fifth and fourth centuries BC respectively. They would also have had access to the now lost works of the Alexander historians.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, many of the accounts which conflate the Arsacids with the Achaemenids do so in a political and military context.¹⁶⁶ The poet Horace provided several examples of this. For instance in his *Odes*, he tells how the Parthian king Phraates 'had been restored to the throne of Cyrus.'¹⁶⁷

Was this however, merely an image created by the Romans? The question of the extent to which the legacy of Achaemenid Persia also played a role in Arsacid ideology has been the focus of considerable debate among scholars.¹⁶⁸ Wolski, for instance, has argued that the Parthians saw themselves quite clearly as the 'heirs of the Achaemenids'. The fact that literary remains from the Arsacid period are virtually non-existent makes this difficult to ascertain. Notably, the accounts I have referred to so far are all from Greco-Roman sources. Certainly, we know that the Parthian king Mithridates II began to use the Persian title 'king of kings', a title which does not appear to have been used by the monarchs of the Seleucid Empire.¹⁶⁹ However, the importance of this fact seems to have been overstated by Wolski.¹⁷⁰ Firstly, the title does not appear to have been used consistently by Mithridates' immediate successors. After his death, the Parthian monarchs seemed to have used the title

¹⁶³ Cary and Scullard (1976) 560.

¹⁶⁴ Rosivach (1984) 3.

¹⁶⁵ For example; *Deeds of Alexander* by Callisthenes; *History of Alexander* by Cleitarchus, *History of Alexander* by Timagenes; *Historiae Philippicae* by Trogus. The oldest surviving Greek source, the *Bibliotheca Historica* of Diodorus Siculus, was written in the late first century BC. See also Grant (1995) 101.

¹⁶⁶ As for their view of the character of the Persians as a race, this seems to have been limited to accounts of their wealth and love of luxury. For examples of this, see Sen. *Ep* 33.2; Hor. *Odes* 1.38.1 and 3.1.44.

¹⁶⁷ Hor. *Odes* 2.2.17.

¹⁶⁸ For detailed discussions of this question see Shayegan (2011) 39-331, who considers the criteria for assuming an Arsacid 'Achaemenid program'. See also Wolski (1966); (1976); (1983).

¹⁶⁹ Shayegan (2011) 42; Fowler (2005) 141- 143.

¹⁷⁰ Frye (1983) 228 also takes shares this view.

‘great king’ before the imperial title remerged under the brothers Mithridates III (r.c. 57–54 BC) and Orodes II (r.c. 57 to 38 BC). Secondly, the use of the title was not exclusive to the Parthians. As Fowler has noted, Pharnaces of Pontus also began using the title ‘Great King of Kings’,¹⁷¹ while Plutarch tells us that Antony proclaimed his sons by Cleopatra as ‘Kings of Kings’.¹⁷² The adoption of the imperial title by Mithridates II and his successors does not in itself prove that they were attempting to portray themselves as the direct heirs of the Achaemenids. Nevertheless, our sources suggest that the Parthians did adopt an Achaemenid heritage for their own ideological purposes,¹⁷³ although how much they made of this claim is debatable.¹⁷⁴ It is unclear, however, whether the Arsacid program pre-dated Roman attempts to equate them with the Achaemenids or vice-versa, or indeed to what extent the two sides were aware of each other’s policies at the time of Augustus’ reign.¹⁷⁵

The extent to which the Parthian/Persian connection was consciously promulgated by the Augustan regime can be seen in the accounts of a mock naval battle which was staged in a purpose-built arena by the Tiber in 2 BC. Augustus himself recalls the event in his *Res Gestae*.¹⁷⁶ He notes how thirty warships, ‘with three or two banks of oars, and even more of smaller size’, engaged in combat, while three thousand men fought beside the rowers. According to Dio Cassius, writing in the early third century, the combatants were depicted as Persians and Athenians, and that ‘on this occasion, as originally, the Athenians were the victors’.¹⁷⁷ Consequently, scholars have determined that the games were a recreation of the legendary Battle of Salamis (480 BC), one of the defining events of the Persian Wars, in

¹⁷¹ Fowler (2005) 143. Furthermore, he makes the point that the Arsacids never assumed the throne names of the Achaemenid kings.

¹⁷² Plu. *Ant* 54.

¹⁷³ See Fowler (2005) 143 for a discussion of the ‘seated Archer’ motif, which appears to have been an important image in both Arsacid and Achaemenid ideology. Also Shayegan (2011) 330, for the suggestion that the Parthians may have been influenced by Rome’s great rival Mithridates VI of Pontus, who our sources tell us claimed descent from Darius I of Persia. For example Tac. *Ann* 12.18; App. *Mith* 112.

¹⁷⁴ In contrast to Wolski, Bickerman (1983) believes that Parthia should be seen as a philhellene kingdom. Fowler (2005) accepts that the Persian heritage played a significant, but not central, role in Arsacid ideology.

¹⁷⁵ Spawforth (1994) 238 notes Gaius’ (Caligula) construction of a bridge of boats across the Bay of Naples in AD39 in this context. According to Suetonius (*Gaius* 19.2) and Dio (59.17.11), some believed that the bridge was designed to rival the Achaemenid king Xerxes, who had bridged the Hellespont in the same way. Furthermore, scholars such as Balsdon (1934) 50-54 have argued that Gaius arranged the spectacle to impress the hostages from Parthia who accompanied him, a view which Spawforth believes deserves ‘serious attention’. If this was the case, it would suggest that both sides understood the political meaning of the Persian reference.

¹⁷⁶ *RG* 23.

¹⁷⁷ Dio. 55.10.7.

which an Athenian-led Greek navy won a decisive victory over a much larger Persian fleet, forcing the Achaemenid king Xerxes to retreat to Asia with much of his army.¹⁷⁸ The timing of these games is notable. In the same year, Augustus' adopted son Gaius Caesar embarked on his mission to settle the Armenian succession, which had caused a dispute with the Parthian king Phraates V.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, Ovid, in his *Ars Amatoria*, makes an explicit connection between the two events.¹⁸⁰

It is notable that Augustus chose the Persian Wars of the fifth century BC as the basis for his propaganda, as we know from our ancient sources that both he and Caesar had been greatly influenced by the legacy of Alexander the Great.¹⁸¹ Indeed, Suetonius tells us that following his victory over Antony and Cleopatra, Augustus visited the sarcophagus of Alexander and showed his respect for the Macedonian king 'by placing upon it a golden crown and strewing it with flowers'.¹⁸² If the *princeps* had planned to engage in a war of conquest against the Parthians, then the conqueror of the Achaemenid Persians would appear to have been the most obvious figure to provide an historical context for such ambitions. Yet, as we have seen, this does not appear to have been the case. There are several reasons why Augustus should have wished to avoid comparisons with Alexander in this context.

Firstly, the idea of the Arsacid kingdom as an *alter orbis* depended on the notion that it was a 'degenerate' land, whose conquest was 'neither possible nor desirable'.¹⁸³ It is notable, then, that the legacy of Alexander appears to have been tainted by the accusation that he had been corrupted through his exposure to the 'decadent' East. For instance, Arrian, when he came to write of Alexander's campaigns in his *Anabasis Alexandri*, acknowledged that the Macedonian king had been 'carried away into imitation of Median and Persian opulence, and of the custom of barbarian kings not to countenance equality with subjects in their daily lives'.¹⁸⁴ This was hardly an image with which Augustus would have wanted to associate

¹⁷⁸ Hanson (2001) 12–60; Spawforth (1994) 238.

¹⁷⁹ Tac. *Ann* 2.4; Debevoise (1938) 147.

¹⁸⁰ Ovid. *Ars* 1.171–2.

¹⁸¹ It seems to have been a recurring theme in Roman literature, particularly in the late Republic, to compare leading political and military figures to Alexander. For example; Pompey (Plu. *Pomp* 2, 34, 46); Caesar (Plu. *Caes* 11; Suet. *Iul* 7; Dio. 37.52); Augustus (Suet. *Aug* 18, 50, 94).

¹⁸² Suet. *Aug* 18.1. Also *Iul* 7.1.

¹⁸³ Shayegan (2011) 335.

¹⁸⁴ Arr. 4.7.4.

himself. After all, in his propaganda campaign against Antony and Cleopatra, the *princeps* had presented himself as the champion of traditional Roman virtues, in opposition to their eastern decadence.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, it seems as though it was Antony who most clearly attempted to emulate Alexander. It was he who had launched an unsuccessful invasion of Parthia in 36 BC. In addition, he and Cleopatra had named their eldest son Alexander Helios in recognition of the child's Macedonian heritage. Moreover, according to Plutarch, they later named their son king of Armenia, Media, and Parthia, despite the fact that Parthia had clearly not been conquered.¹⁸⁶ As a consequence, Alexander seems to have become a figure whose fate should be avoided. Livy, speculating on a confrontation between Alexander and the early Roman Republic, writes disparagingly of the Macedonian king's chances of victory. He blames this on Alexander's exposure to the East, arguing that 'he would have entered Italy more like Darius than Alexander', commanding an army 'who had forgotten Macedonia, and were degenerating into the manners of the Persians'. Moreover, he seems to compare the 'degenerated' Alexander to the Parthians, whose military reputation he felt was undeserved.¹⁸⁷

Also, there is evidence to suggest that the Parthians saw themselves as the heirs to Alexander. This is the meaning which some modern scholars have derived from the threat made by the Arsacid king Artabanus II during the reign of Tiberius to 'seize the lands that Cyrus and Alexander ruled'.¹⁸⁸ Such claims do not seem to have been exclusive to the Parthians. Mithridates VI of Pontus, who had claimed paternal descent from the Persian kings, also claimed that his mother's lineage could be traced back to Alexander and Seleucus Nicator, as did Antiochus I of Commagene.¹⁸⁹ However, the Parthians themselves claimed no such Macedonian or Seleucid descent, nor do any of our Roman sources suggest so. It seems more likely that invoked the name of Alexander to legitimize their claim to rule over the lands of the old Seleucid kingdom, which of course had been one of the successor states of Alexander's empire.¹⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the fact that they were able to invoke the name of Alexander, when considered alongside the genealogical claims of Antiochus and

¹⁸⁵ See also Debevoise (1938) 134.

¹⁸⁶ Plu. *Ant* 54.4

¹⁸⁷ Livy. 9.18.6.

¹⁸⁸ Tac. *Ann* 6.31. See also Fowler (2005) 125-155; Spawforth (1994) 241.

¹⁸⁹ See Facella (2005) 88, who also discusses the establishment of Greco-Persian deities.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Fowler (2005) 152.

Mithridates, suggests that the fusion of cultures, which many scholars argue was one of Alexander's principal aims in the East, had created an image of the Macedonian king which was as much eastern as western.¹⁹¹ Whether the claims of the kings of Pontus and Commagene were the result of genuine belief or political strategy is debatable, although the fact that both kings claimed the same maternal and paternal descent suggests the latter. In either case, such an image would hardly have been appropriate for Augustus, whom Virgil had eulogized in his account of the Battle of Actium as the leader of the Italians and their gods, in contrast to Antony, who commanded the 'power of the East'.¹⁹²

Secondly, the Persian Wars provided a more suitable historical and ideological context for the foreign policy of Augustus. Following the defeat of Crassus in 53 BC, and the unsuccessful campaign of Antony 17 years later, the Romans were forced to acknowledge their inability to decisively subdue the Parthians. Indeed, despite that fact that the *princeps* had celebrated the recovery of the standards lost at Carrhae as a military victory, he later acknowledged in his own *Res Gestae* that the Parthians had in fact remained unconquered during his reign.¹⁹³ Moreover, although the Parthians lacked the military capacity to threaten Rome itself, they were 'able and willing to challenge Roman domination of the East'.¹⁹⁴ The Persian Wars parallel enabled the Augustan regime to maintain an essentially non-confrontational relationship with the Arsacid kingdom. It had been a defensive, rather than an expansionist war. Therefore, whereas a successful adoption of Alexander's legacy would have required an actual campaign of conquest against the Parthians, the *princeps*, by presenting himself as the heir of the fifth century Greeks, merely needed to preserve the status quo in the East as established in 20 BC to reinforce his position as a great military leader.¹⁹⁵ As Shayegan has argued, any threat to Roman suzerainty, such as the dispute over the Armenian succession, could be compared by Roman propagandists to the Achaemenid

¹⁹¹ Hammond (1980) 319; Cf. Bosworth (1980).

¹⁹² Virgil. *Aen* 8.915-930.

¹⁹³ *RG* 32.

¹⁹⁴ Frye (1984) 233.

¹⁹⁵ Indeed, such a strategy would seem to be in accord with Augustan foreign policy in general. Dio (54.9) notes how the *princeps* was not in favour of establishing direct rule over any new territories, although Campbell (1993) 223 suggests that this only applied to the East. Later (56.33) Dio tells us that a dying Augustus urged his successors not to expand the empire beyond its existing borders. Cf Brunt (1990) 105 who argues that Augustus could not attack Parthia due to a lack of 'leisure or resources'.

attempts to destroy the sovereignty of the Athenians.¹⁹⁶ Consequently, disputes which had been resolved peacefully, such as the return of Crassus' standards and the settlement of the Armenian succession, could be presented as triumphal re-assertions of Roman sovereignty, just as the Athenians and their allies had successfully preserved their independence in the victory over the Persians at Salamis.

The purpose of this chapter was to consider how the Augustan regime interpreted the limited knowledge they possessed of Parthian history and society in order to depict the *alter orbis* of the Arsacid kingdom. As we have seen, the image which they created of the Parthians demonstrates a sense of confusion as to how they should portray their eastern rivals. They were slaves to an absolute ruler, yet also proud and quarrelsome. They were rough and taciturn, yet also libidinous and faithless. As for their physical appearance, they were represented at various points by a bearded warrior and a handsome Oriental. Such conflicting accounts support Zanker's assertion that there was no such thing as a unified 'propaganda machine' at work in early Imperial Rome.¹⁹⁷

Yet did their need to be? As we saw in my previous chapter, the comments of Lucian suggest that the Roman people had little interest in gaining a better understanding of the Parthians as a race.¹⁹⁸ Also we must remember, as I noted in the opening of my first chapter, that the physical presence of the Parthians in Rome was probably quite limited. Therefore most Romans would not have had direct experience of their customs or appearance. Consequently, as Isaac has argued, the Parthians as an enemy 'were more abstract than real' in the perception of the city's inhabitants.¹⁹⁹ When we consider the literary accounts of the Parthian race discussed in section 1, and the iconographical representations which we saw in section 2, they all share a common theme; the Parthians were 'others', whose values and manners were antithetical to those of the Roman people. As for the foreign policy of Augustus, we have seen how the representation of the Arsacids as the heirs of the Achaemenid Persians provided a coherent ideological context for the

¹⁹⁶ Shayegan (2011) 339.

¹⁹⁷ Zanker (1990) 3.

¹⁹⁸ Lucian. 19. See Chapter 1 fn. 83 for full quote.

¹⁹⁹ Isaac (2004) 371.

divisio orbis between the two powers, enabling the *princeps* to maintain a diplomatic relationship with the Arsacid kingdom, while at the same time presenting himself as the heir to the deified Julius and the avenger of Crassus.

The success of Augustus' Parthian policy must have rested in large part on the support of the Roman people. Yet so far in this discussion, the extent to which they approved of his dealings with towards the Arsacid kingdom has not been clear. Therefore, in my next chapter, I shall attempt to uncover how wide-ranging their support was, the various ways in which it was expressed, and whether or not this support was unconditional. In doing so, I shall also consider how effectively the policy of the first *princeps* was communicated to the Roman public, and ultimately how successful he was in maintaining a *divisio orbis* between the two empires.

Chapter 3

Effect

So far, I have considered the extent of Roman knowledge in relation to Parthia, and the various ways in which the Augustan government and its supporters interpreted such knowledge to create an image of an eastern *alter orbis*. We have also seen how the *princeps* used the image of the Parthians as barbarian ‘others’, in particular through his use of the Achaemenid parallel, as an instrument of foreign policy. Dio, in his account of Augustus’ return to Rome following the recovery of the standards lost at Carrhae, makes it clear how the *princeps* wanted his achievements to be perceived.²⁰⁰ Yet, what is lacking in his account is any indication of how the Roman populace responded to this ‘victory’. By examining the literature of the period, in particular the works of the early imperial poets, we can attempt to gauge the extent of public support for Augustus’ policy towards the Arsacid kingdom.

3.1: The Senate and People

The obvious difficulty when trying to gauge the public response to Augustus’ Parthian policy is the lack of literary evidence for the views of the average citizen. As Knapp has noted, Roman literature provides ‘not windows, but peepholes through which historians get glances at the ordinary Romans’.²⁰¹ However, it is probable that the populace would have been grateful to Augustus for the restoration of order and stability following almost a century of foreign and civil conflict, and thankful for the growing number of public games, together with the distribution of money and grain.²⁰² Consequently, as Campbell has argued, it was ‘unlikely that they had strong opinions about war with Parthia’.²⁰³ However, he has also suggested that among the senatorial class there may have been some resentment towards Augustus’ use of diplomacy in his dealings with the Arsacids, either because of the lingering desire for revenge following the humiliation which Roman prestige

²⁰⁰ Dio 54.8.

²⁰¹ Knapp (2011) 317.

²⁰² Suet. *Aug* 41-43. See also Crook (1996) 130 for a discussion of Augustus’ views on public welfare.

²⁰³ Campbell (1993) 226.

had endured after Carrhae, or ‘because of the restriction of opportunities for senatorial military glory, prestige and aggrandizement’.²⁰⁴

Yet what opportunities would there have been for military glory and prestige if Augustan policy had been more confrontational? After all, our ancient sources suggest that the *princeps*, despite his claim to be merely the ‘first among equals’, was careful to ensure that military power was concentrated into his own hands.²⁰⁵ For instance, he effectively divided the empire into ‘imperial’ and ‘senatorial’ provinces by assuming proconsular *imperium* over those territories which possessed the greatest number of legions, including the provinces of Syria and Cappadocia, which bordered Parthia and Armenia.²⁰⁶ The governors of these provinces served merely as the legates of the proconsul Augustus; therefore it was he, not they, who would have received the acclamation for any military victories. They could not be acclaimed *imperator* or celebrate a triumph in their own right.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, it is clear from contemporary accounts that Augustus jealously guarded his right to distribute such honours. We see this in the affair of Marcus Licinius Crassus, grandson of the *triumvir* who perished at Carrhae, who was refused the traditional *spolia opima* from his victory over the Bastarnae, despite having killed their king with his own hands.²⁰⁸

However, there are good reasons to believe that the senatorial class would have welcomed Augustus’ Parthian policy. After all, they had suffered greatly throughout the years of civil war, with the noble families of Rome decimated, and in some cases wiped out entirely.²⁰⁹ The restoration of peace would have allowed them the chance to recover from such traumas. Also as Campbell notes, the fate of Crassus, and the failed campaign of Antony, would have served as powerful reminders that Parthia was a dangerous place to seek

²⁰⁴ *Ibid* 226.

²⁰⁵ Dio 53.12-16; Suet. *Aug* 47.1. See also Southern (1998) 138-164.

²⁰⁶ Suet. *Aug* 41-43. See also Edmondson (2009) 154; Östenberg (2009) 66; Millar (1989) 93-97. Also Luttwak (1976) 108; Isaac (1990) 34-38 for a discussion of the strategic importance of Syria and Cappadocia to Rome’s eastern frontier.

²⁰⁷ Rich (2009) 154; Rich (1998) 72.

²⁰⁸ Dio 51.23-25. See also Östenberg (2009) 67; Raaflaub and Samons (1990) 423. Also, the last triumph to be recorded in the *Fasti Triumphales* for a general who was not a member of the imperial family was that of Lucius Cornelius Balbus in 19BC. (However, as Beard (2009) 302 points out, none of our surviving ancient writers, such as Dio, explicitly state that this was the ‘last traditional triumph’.) See also Crook (1996) 91.

²⁰⁹ Stark (1966) 143.

military glory, 'despite romantic notions some may have had of emulating Alexander'.²¹⁰ Perhaps the clearest indication we have for aristocratic approval of Augustus' use of diplomacy is the account of Velleius Paterculus, who lived under Augustus and Tiberius. Describing the meeting in 2BC between Gaius Caesar and the Parthian king Phraates V, Velleius notes how the 'two eminent leaders not only of the empires they represented but also of mankind' met on an island in the Euphrates to discuss a peace treaty, and that it was 'truly a notable and a memorable sight'.²¹¹ The respectful manner in which Velleius refers to the Arsacid monarch, whom he calls 'a young man of distinguished presence', stands in clear contrast to the images of the kneeling Parthian we have seen on Roman coinage of the Augustan period. His comments further suggest that, despite the public representations of the Parthians as an enemy to be conquered, the governing classes now recognized, as Strabo had acknowledged, that the Parthian Empire in many ways rivalled their own, and had to be treated with the appropriate respect when the two powers met to confer.²¹² Clearly, diplomatic relations had come a long way since Sulla had behaved so loftily towards Orobasus.

How then, did the Senate show their approval of Augustus' Parthian policy? It is clear that the Roman elite had attached great importance to the defeat of Parthia, even before the establishment of the Augustan Principate. For instance, Suetonius tells us that after Caesar had announced, in 44BC, his intention to make war on the Parthians, a rumour spread that his uncle, Lucius Cotta, would announce on behalf of the College of Fifteen (*quindecimviri sacris faciundis*), that 'inasmuch as it was written in the books of fate that the Parthians could be conquered only by a king, Caesar (who at this time was *Dictator Perpetuus*) should be given that title'.²¹³ Although it is unlikely that Augustus would ever have allowed such a claim to be made on his behalf, our evidence indicates that despite the fact the Parthians had remained unconquered, the Senate nevertheless sought to venerate him as a great Roman hero. As we have seen, Dio's account of Augustus' return to Rome states that the *princeps* himself commanded that a temple to Mars Ultor was to be built on the Capitol to

²¹⁰ Campbell (1993) 226.

²¹¹ Vell. Pat 2.101.

²¹² Strabo. 11.9.1.

²¹³ Suet. *Iul* 79.2. Indeed, he tells us that it was the fear that such a proposal would be passed that led Brutus and his fellow conspirators 'to hasten in carrying out their designs'.

house the standards recovered from Parthia.²¹⁴ Yet, as Rich has argued, Dio was mistaken in attributing the decree to Augustus, possibly due to his cynical view of the *princeps*' self-aggrandizement, coupled with a misreading of his various sources. The decree in 20BC was actually issued by the Senate in a display of 'senatorial sycophancy', a gesture which the *princeps* apparently chose to decline.²¹⁵

Furthermore, Dio's claim that the shrine was to be built to imitate the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius gives us a clear indication of how the Senate wished to emphasise the importance of Augustus' settlement with the Parthians.²¹⁶ The temple of Jupiter Feretrius had of course been founded by Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, who had been the first to deposit his *spolia opima* there.²¹⁷ Following in the tradition of Romulus, all later Roman commanders dedicated the spoils of their victories in the great temple.²¹⁸ By ordering the construction of a new temple, which imitated that of the principal Roman god, to house the spoils of the Parthian 'victory', the Senate seemed to have been consciously placing Augustus on a par with Romulus.²¹⁹ In doing so, they appear to have been suggesting that the ascendancy of the *princeps* marked a new beginning in Roman history, as significant as the founding of the city over seven hundred years before.²²⁰

²¹⁴ Dio 54.8. However, as scholars such as Simpson (1977) and Rich (1998) 79-97 have argued, there is no evidence to show that this temple was ever built. The temple of Mars Ultor in which the standards were ultimately deposited was constructed much later in 2BC, and was situated in the new Forum of Augustus, rather than the Capitol. See also Cooley (2008) 245.

²¹⁵ Rich (1998) 90. As further evidence of Dio's inconsistency, Rich notes how the author claimed that Augustus '*rode into the city on horseback*', suggesting that a triumph or an ovation was held. Yet we know that the *princeps* celebrated only three triumphs, held over three consecutive days, in 29BC (*RG* 4.1; Livy. *Per* 133). He also celebrated two ovations, however these were held in 40BC (alongside Antony to commemorate the signing of the Treaty of Brundisium), and 36BC (to celebrate his victory over Sextus Pompey). (*RG* 4.1; *Fasti Triumphales Capitolini: Inscr. Ital.* XIII.i 87 = EJ p.33-34). Furthermore, Dio himself later notes (54.10.4) that Augustus '*entered the city by night*'. See also Cooley (2008) 121.

²¹⁶ Dio 54.8.

²¹⁷ The origins of Jupiter Feretrius seems to have been unclear to the Romans of the first century AD, as we can see from Plu. *Marc* 8.1.

²¹⁸ Liv. 4.20.3; Plu. *Rom* 16; Dionys. 2.34; Serv. *ad Aen* 6.859.

²¹⁹ Indeed, several of our ancient sources tell us that Octavian had considered adopting the title Romulus before settling on Augustus. For example; Suet. *Aug* 7.1; Florus. 2.34; Dio 53.16. Servius (*ad Aen*. 1.292) claims that Octavian had been offered the title Quirinus, the war-god who, by the end of the first century BC, had been firmly assimilated to Romulus. See also Barchiesi (1997) 114; Scott (1925) 89-90.

²²⁰ See also Dio 51.20.1; '*When the letter came about the Parthians, they included him in the hymns equally with the gods*'.

3.2: The Poets; Patriotism and cynicism.

Perhaps the clearest indication we have of how Augustus' Parthian settlement was received in Rome can be found in the works of the poets of the early Principate. As we shall see, their references to Parthia demonstrate a wide range of opinions, from ardent patriotism to cynicism and even subversion. Horace, for instance, whom Merriam refers to as a staunch supporter of Augustus and his aims, is clear in his view that the Parthians were powerful enough to represent a threat to Latium itself.²²¹ In several of his works, Horace presents the Parthians as a deadly menace who are kept at bay only through the 'saving presence of Augustus.'²²² In the same way, he laments the civil strife which tore the Republic apart in previous years, not only because of the trauma inflicted upon the Roman people, but because of the opportunity it provided for the Parthians to exploit Roman weakness.²²³ Indeed, he argues that the restoration of Rome's ascendancy over the Parthians was a principal cause of the revival of 'faith and peace, honour, and ancient modesty', along with 'neglected virtue'.²²⁴ The idea that the Parthian army would be able to penetrate so deeply into the Italian heartland as Latium seems somewhat far-fetched when we consider how their invasion of Roman Syria, a territory on the borders of the Arsacid kingdom itself, had been decisively repulsed in 38BC.²²⁵ Yet by placing such emphasis on the danger of a Parthian invasion, Horace, like the senators who had decreed the temple to Mars Ultor, was able to magnify the achievements of Augustus in such a way that would earn him the right to be placed alongside Romulus in the pantheon of great Roman heroes.²²⁶

Another poet who took a decidedly patriotic view of Augustus' Parthian policy was Virgil. In his *Georgics*, Virgil imagines the shrine he would build to honour the *princeps*, along with his patron Maecenas. Among the triumphant images which would adorn such a monument, he adds the Nile, the 'vanquished' cities of Asia, and 'the Parthian foe, who trusts in flight and backward-volleying darts'.²²⁷ Also, at several points in the *Aeneid*, Virgil compares the threat

²²¹ Hor. *Carm* 1.12.49-54; Merriam (2004) 59.

²²² Merriam (2004) 60; Hor. *Odes*. 4.5.25-27.

²²³ Hor. *Epod.* 7.9. Also *Odes*. 1.2.

²²⁴ Hor. *Carm* 57.60. See also Putnam (1990) 215.

²²⁵ Debevoise (1938) 96-120.

²²⁶ Hor. *Odes* 3.3. Such a view would also be consistent with the Persian War parallel discussed in my previous chapter.

²²⁷ *Georg.* 3.30-33.

which he believed the Parthians represented to Augustan Rome, to the dangers faced by Aeneas and his companions after their flight from Troy. For instance in Book 12, the poet highlights the terrifying appearance of the Dirae, the three netherworld goddesses of vengeance, by telling his readers that one of them flew 'like an arrow sent through the cloud from its string, which a Parthian has sent'.²²⁸ For a Roman audience of the period, who were already aware of the formidable reputation of the Parthian cavalry, such an image would have had a powerful effect, especially as they had just been given a description of the nature of the Dirae 'which is frightening in itself'.²²⁹

Furthermore, the poet suggests that victory over the Parthians will be one of the future glories of the Roman people. For example, in Book 7, he notes how it later became the custom in Rome, as it had once been in Latium, to open the twin gates of the Temple of Janus 'when the fathers' judgement holds for war'.²³⁰ One such occasion was the campaign to recover the captured Parthian standards. The reference to the Parthians here is significant. In this passage, Virgil is recalling how King Latinus was forced to declare war on the Trojans against his own judgement. When the time came to open the gates of war, the king 'fled and hid himself away from such a foul deed in the blind shadows'.²³¹ As Merriam has argued, Virgil is implying that by comparison, the causes which necessitated the opening of the gates of the Roman temple, such as the recovery of the Parthian standards, were just and honourable causes.²³²

In contrast to the ardent patriotism of Horace and Virgil, some modern scholars have seen in the works of the love elegists a degree of cynicism towards Augustus' Parthian policy, and in some cases an outright rejection of his aims and values.²³³ The two poets of the early

²²⁸ *Aen.* 12.855-59. See also Merriam (2004) 61. Also Farrokh (2007) 140-142 for a discussion of the impact of the Parthian cavalry on the Roman frontiers.

²²⁹ Merriam (2004) 61; *Aen.* 12.845-52.

²³⁰ *Aen.* 7.606-636.

²³¹ *Ibid.* 7.606-636.

²³² Merriam (2004) 62. The extent to which Virgil's *Aeneid* can be seen as Augustan propaganda has been the focus of considerable debate among scholars. Otis (1963) 389 argues that Virgil was a 'convinced Augustan'. Sforza (1935) 97-128, on the other hand suggests that the *Aeneid* was a work of covert opposition to Augustus, a view strongly rejected by Horsfall (2000) 193. Harrison (1990); Horsfall (2000) 192-216 and Tarrant (1997) 186 discuss the ambiguity of the *Aeneid*. Powell (1992) 143 argues that the *Aeneid* was not mere propaganda, but was intended to function as 'a complex set of arguments' demonstrating that Augustus and his settlement would last.

²³³ *Ibid.* (2004) 61.

Principate who have received the most attention in this regard are Propertius and Ovid. Certainly, we can find passages in their works which suggest that they were not as enthusiastic in their support for the regime as Horace and Virgil. Sometimes, this appears in the form of a comically subversive witticism, such as when Propertius describes his romantic 'conquest' of Cynthia as 'a greater victory than the conquest of Parthia'.²³⁴ Ovid too, alludes to the Parthians in a manner which Little has described as cavalier.²³⁵ For instance, in his *Ars Amatoria*, he advises that one should 'make war with the Parthians, peace with a civilised friend, and laughter, and whatever engenders love'.²³⁶ Both authors also imagine the triumphs that will be celebrated when Augustus finally humbles the Arsacid kingdom in battle. However, despite the grandiose praise they lavish on the *princeps* and his family, it soon becomes clear that their reasons for looking forward to such spectacles are somewhat less than patriotic. Triumphs, they claim, were ideal venues for seducing women, whom they could impress with their knowledge of the various countries represented in the procession.²³⁷

The evidence for Ovid's subversion suggests light-hearted irreverence rather than genuine hostility to the imperial government. When he does refer to the Parthians, they are generally presented as stock villains, or 'bogeymen', that his readers would all agree in hating.²³⁸ Propertius, on the other hand, occasionally seems to adopt a more serious and direct tone. This has led some modern scholars to view him not only as a critic of Augustan militarism 'but of Augustan ideology generally'.²³⁹ A notable, and much discussed example of this is elegy 2.7, in which the poet appears to be openly challenging Augustus by mounting a passionate defence of personal freedom, in response to the moral legislation

²³⁴ Prop. 2.14.

²³⁵ Little (1982) 324.

²³⁶ Ov. *Ars* 2.3.

²³⁷ *Ibid* 1.177-228; Prop. 3.4.1-18

²³⁸ Little (1982) 324.

²³⁹ Cloud (1993) 117. As the author notes, Lyne (1980) 77; and Stahl (1985) are firm proponents of this view. Cairns (1975) 185-204 takes the opposite view, arguing that by presenting himself as 'morally tainted individual' Propertius is deliberately undercutting his own arguments, demonstrating that he was actually a supporter of Augustus' aims. Baker (1968) 322-49 detects a sense of conflict in Propertius between his own desires and sense of duty. Cloud (1993) 113-138 on the other hand argues that the *personae* adopted by the elegists in their works may not reflect their true selves. As Gale (1997) 77-91 has noted, the heavy sense of irony in Propertius' work makes it difficult to define him as either 'pro-Augustan' or 'anti-Augustan'.

which the *princeps* was attempting to enforce.²⁴⁰ In the process, he also seems to reject the necessity for war with Parthia, stating that he will not 'offer sons for Parthian triumphs'.²⁴¹ Furthermore, as both Little and Merriam have argued, the phrase 'Parthian triumphs' could be interpreted as a victory won by the Parthians rather than a victory over them; the implication being that Propertius was raising the possibility of a second Carrhae, only this time with Augustus himself as the ill-fated commander.²⁴²

However, we must treat the claim that Propertius' works demonstrate his 'anti-Augustanism' with caution. Indeed, as Cloud has noted, for a supposedly subversive poet, Propertius does not seem to have been a controversial figure.²⁴³ For instance, Ovid, in a poem addressed to Augustus himself, refers to Propertius as someone who 'was not grazed by the slightest slur', while we can see from the letters of Pliny the Younger that Propertius was renowned by later generations as being as important to elegy as Horace was to lyric.²⁴⁴ Also, we know from our sources that the *princeps* allowed the authors and poets of his reign a degree of independence, to the extent that they were able to speak approvingly of the former enemies of his family. For example, we are told by Tacitus that Cremutius Cordus, on trial during Tiberius's reign for praising Brutus and Cassius, argued that Livy had 'lavished such eulogies on Pompey that Augustus styled him 'the Pompeian', yet it was without prejudice to their friendship'.²⁴⁵

As for Propertius' apparent condemnation of Augustan militarism, this is countered in elegy 4.6, where the poet appears to renounce his earlier hostility and adopt a line which is far more supportive of the *princeps*' aims. Significantly, he now argues that vengeance for Crassus is a worthy motive for war against the Parthians, in stark contrast to his earlier accusation in Book 3 that the primary incentive for undertaking military campaigns in the East was a greedy desire for spoils and riches.²⁴⁶ Scholars who take the view that Propertius

²⁴⁰ For references to Augustus having the power to supervise morals, see Suet. *Aug* 27.5; Dio 53.17.7.

²⁴¹ Prop. 2.7; (Trans. W.G Shepherd) The reading of *Parthis* in the text is a conjecture of Ruhnken accepted by Barber (1960). However, as Cloud (1993) 120 has noted, 'the MS reading *patriis* (my country's triumphs) may well be correct'.

²⁴² Little (1982) 300; Merriam (2004) 65.

²⁴³ Cloud (1993) 118.

²⁴⁴ Ov. *Tr* 2.463-466; Plin. *Ep* 9.22.1-2.

²⁴⁵ Tac. *Ann* 4.34.

²⁴⁶ Prop. 4.6.83-84. Cf. 3.12.1-8.

was in some way 'anti-Augustan' have suggested various reasons for this sudden demonstration of loyalty to the Augustan regime. Little, for instance, concedes that elegy 4.6 was 'undiluted Augustan propaganda'.²⁴⁷ However he believes that Propertius' endorsement of the *princeps'* Parthian policy many have been one of the few occasions when he publicly stated views which he did not privately support. Merriam, on the other hand, argues that the apparent praise Propertius offers is in fact further proof of his subversion. As an example of this, she notes how Propertius' claim that the Parthians will soon be forced to give up their own standards does not reflect historical reality, citing Suetonius and the *Res Gestae*.²⁴⁸

However, I do not see how such a claim could be seen to denigrate Augustus' efforts in the way that Merriam suggests. The fact that the passage does not tell us anything of the real events of the *princeps'* dealings with Parthians is not in itself evidence of subversion.²⁴⁹ After all, we have already seen how the coinage of the period depicted the Parthians on their knees as they handed over the standards of Crassus, an image which also seems to run counter to Augustus' statement that the Parthians remained unconquered. Also, the Persian War parallel, which we saw enacted in the mock recreation of the Battle of Salamis staged prior to Gaius' conference with Phraates V, suggested a potential military confrontation between the two powers, when we know from the account of Velleius that the conference was amicable and respectful.²⁵⁰ As for Merriam's view that 'it is interesting that Horace calls the Parthians Persians and Medes, but Propertius never does',²⁵¹ this seems less significant when we recall that Ovid, who is placed alongside Propertius as a cynical dissenter, often referred to the Arsacids in such a manner.²⁵²

3.3: Consequences.

Of course, we cannot know for certain what poets such as Propertius and Ovid truly thought of Augustus' policy towards the Parthians. As Cloud has pointed out, it is naïve to assume that Roman elegies were a means for the speaker to pour out 'streams of autobiographical

²⁴⁷ Little (1982) 304.

²⁴⁸ Merriam (2004) 61; *Aen.* 12.845-52.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid* 67.

²⁵⁰ Vell. Pat 2.101. See section 3.1.

²⁵¹ Merriam (2004) 65

²⁵² See Chapter 2.3, f.n

material'.²⁵³ Nevertheless, by gauging the level of support which the early imperial poets gave to the *princeps*, we can get an indication of how effectively his Parthian policy was communicated to the Roman people. Many of Horace's exhortations, such as his claim that Augustus will be considered a god among the Romans 'because of the Britons and the formidable Persians added to our empire' seem to suggest that many believed the *princeps* was planning to embark on great campaigns of conquest, possibly to fulfil the legacy of his adopted father, the deified Julius.²⁵⁴ The same can be said of Ovid's apparent belief that Gaius' mission in the East was a war of conquest against the Arsacids, rather than a peaceful conference, a belief which may have been encouraged by the recent staging of the mock Battle of Salamis.²⁵⁵

However the writers and poets of the period appear to have adapted to the shifting priorities of the regime in such a way that did not question the wisdom of the imperial government. For example, Strabo, in contrast to Horace, remarked that while the Romans could have conquered Britain, 'they scorned to do so, because they saw that there was nothing at all to fear from the Britons', while at the same time 'no corresponding advantage was to be gained by taking and holding their country'.²⁵⁶ As Cornell has argued, the clearest explanation for this reversal in attitude is that there had been a change in the political atmosphere, and that Strabo was writing at a time when plans for the invasion of Britain had been abandoned 'or at least postponed'.²⁵⁷ In the same way, attitudes towards war with Parthia appear to have shifted over time. Propertius, for instance, suggests that the settlement of 20BC, and the return of the standards, was merely a precursor to a future campaign against the Parthians, which would see Crassus fully avenged and the Arsacids forced to give up their own trophies. If Augustus himself had decided to 'spare the Eastern quivers for a while', it was merely because he had decided to 'leave those trophies for his

²⁵³ Cloud (1993) 113.

²⁵⁴ It is notable in this context that Horace refers to the Britons and the Parthians, as we know that Caesar had planned to launch a campaign against Parthia before his assassination, while he had actually invaded Britain in 55BC, but left before the island had been decisively subdued.

²⁵⁵ *Ov. Ars* 1.177-180. Campbell (1993) 227 also suggests that Ovid may have been aware of the nature of Gaius' mission, but used the language of conquest to flatter Augustus. Cf. Merriam (2004) 68, who sees it as further evidence of Ovid's subversiveness.

²⁵⁶ Strabo 2.5.115.

²⁵⁷ Cornell (1993) 147.

grandsons to win'.²⁵⁸ If we accept, as I have argued, that the passage was not intended to be subversive, then Propertius' comments suggest that while many believed war with Parthia was inevitable in the future, they also believed that Augustus, satisfied with the scale of his own achievements, would not initiate such a conflict as he did not want to rob his heirs of the opportunity for future glory.

The success of Augustus' Parthian policy can ultimately be seen in the fact that the *divisio orbis* between the two empires held for so long. Although there were certainly tensions, such as the disputes over the Armenian succession which occurred during the reigns of Tiberius and Nero, these were always resolved without recourse to full-scale warfare.²⁵⁹ Indeed, the *status quo* was more or less maintained until the reign of Trajan, when the *princeps* decided that the time was right to launch an invasion of Parthia.²⁶⁰

It is notable that it contrast to the Persian Wars parallel developed by Augustus, Trajan appears to have re-invoked the legacy of Alexander as justification for his aggressive foreign policy.²⁶¹ In doing so, it can be argued that he was consciously rejecting the Augustan strategy and choosing instead to imitate the great generals of the late Republic, in particular Pompey, Crassus and Caesar. Ultimately, like Alexander, Trajan's eastern conquests proved unsustainable, and were abandoned by his successor Hadrian.²⁶² However, by the end of the second century, rulers such as Severus and his son Caracalla were launching new raids into the Arsacid kingdom, perhaps having seen Trajan's earlier successes as proof of Parthian weakness.²⁶³ Yet, as Campbell has noted, this reliance on aggression over diplomacy may have made it more difficult for the Parthians to control the rebellious Sassanid Persians, who finally overthrew the Arsacid dynasty in AD 226.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, it may have demonstrated to the Sassanids that negotiation with Rome was futile, and would only lead them to suffer the same humiliations as their despised predecessors. If so, then

²⁵⁸ Prop. 4.6.83-84.

²⁵⁹ For the dispute in AD 36 when the Parthian king Artabanus III attempted to place his son, Arsaces, on the Armenian throne, see Josephus. *Ant* 18-20; Tac. *Ann* 6.31-37. For the dispute in AD 58 when the Parthian king Vologases I forcibly installed his brother Tiridates on the throne, see Suet. Nero 57.1;

²⁶⁰ Dio. 68.17.1

²⁶¹ *Ibid.* 68.30.1

²⁶² Eutrop. *Brev* 8.6.2; Hist. *Aug. Hadr* 21.10; Spart. *Hadr* 5.3, 9.1.

²⁶³ For Severus; Dio. 76.9. For Caracalla; 78.19.

²⁶⁴ Campbell (1993) 234.

the far more numerous and violent conflicts of the third century, which culminated in AD 260 with the capture of the Emperor Valerian²⁶⁵ must have demonstrated to later generations the wisdom of Augustus' reliance on careful and pragmatic diplomacy.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ For the defeat and capture of Valerian, see Zosimus. 1.36; Lactantius. *De Mort. Pers.* 5; Frye (1983) 126.

²⁶⁶ Indeed, the comments of Fronto (2.212-14) imply that there was some disapproval of the break with Augustan policy as early as Trajan's reign.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine how the image of Parthia as an *alter orbis* was defined, both in the literature and iconography of the Augustan Principate, and the extent to which we could ascertain the impact of this policy on the mind-set of the Roman people. As Said noted, the way a society is interpreted depends predominantly on ‘who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is in interpreting, and at what historical moment the interpretation takes place’.²⁶⁷

With this in mind, I chose to focus on the Augustan period as it represented a genuine historical turning point in Rome’s relationship with the Arsacid kingdom. As we saw in Plutarch’s comments, the Romans had originally viewed the Arsacids as simply another weak eastern kingdom, one which would prove an easy target for plunder. Yet, following the defeat of Crassus at Carrhae, and the failed eastern campaign of Antony, their perception of the Parthians changed dramatically. We have seen how, under Augustus, a new foreign policy emerged which sought instead to create a *divisio orbis* between the two powers. This was exemplified by the return of Crassus’ standards in 20 BC; a feat achieved not by the force of arms, but through careful and pragmatic diplomacy. Consequently, it is through the prism of political reality that we must judge the various interpretations of the Parthian race, both visual and literary, which began to appear in the years that followed Augustus’ settlement with Phraates IV.

For instance, in my first chapter, I discussed the extent of Roman knowledge with regard to the history, geography, and government of the Arsacid kingdom. In doing so, it became clear that there was a great deal of confusion and contradiction between our sources, suggesting that they relied heavily upon second hand accounts for their knowledge. This indicates that there was a lack of genuine interest among many Romans in gaining a detailed understanding of foreign races, particularly those to whom the Romans felt themselves morally and culturally superior, such as the Parthians.²⁶⁸ Furthermore, we can also detect aspects of ideological bias in the works of our Greco-Roman authors, which affect their

²⁶⁷ Said (1981) 162.

²⁶⁸ Lucian. 19. See Chapter 1 fn. 83 for full quote. See also Livy. 9.186.6.

reliability as genuine historical sources. As an example of this, I noted the way authors such as Strabo emphasised the smallness and inhospitableness of the Parthian heartland, which may have been a way of diminishing the Arsacid kingdom, as well as emphasising the 'otherness' and barbarity of its inhabitants.

The consequences of Rome's lack of genuine knowledge of Parthian history and society, coupled with their hostility towards the Arsacid kingdom, can be seen clearly in my second chapter, in which I discussed the various ways in which the Augustan regime interpreted what they knew in order to depict the *alter orbis* of their eastern rivals. When we consider the various references to the Parthians in the works of authors such as Justin and Posidonius, we are presented with a somewhat confused image of their character and beliefs. The way they described the Parthian attitude to war, for example, was strikingly similar to their depiction of northern tribes such as the Gauls and the Germans. Yet at the same time, they were also given characteristics which were more reminiscent of the stereotypical view of the 'Oriental' East, such as a slavish attitude towards their rulers. This contradiction can also be seen in the visual representations of the Parthians which appeared on coins and statues of the Augustan period.

Yet ultimately, such contradictions did not seem to have mattered to the Romans. Indeed, seen through the prism of political reality, they are understandable. That the Parthians were formidable in warfare could be attributed to their Scythian origins. However, once they became the 'hegemony of the Orient and heirs of the Ancient Persians', they had 'degenerated'.²⁶⁹ The Roman people, remembering the fate of Antony, and the accusations that he had been ruined by 'foreign habits', may have seen this as further proof that conquest of the East was undesirable.²⁷⁰ Furthermore, the identification of the Arsacids with the Achaemenid Persians provided an ideological and historical context for the *divisio orbis*. As we have seen, the adoption of the Persian Wars parallel, which we saw exemplified in the Salamis naumachia, ensured that Augustus merely needed to preserve the *status quo* in the East in order to reinforce his position as a great military leader in the manner of the heroic Greeks of the classical period.

²⁶⁹ Shayegan (2011) 335.

²⁷⁰ Sen. *Ep* 83.25.

The attitude of the Roman people to Augustus' Parthian policy, which I discussed in my third chapter, demonstrated a wide range of support for the *princeps*. Although Augustus had not defeated the Arsacids in battle, the response of the senators suggests that they publicly endorsed the settlement of 20 BC. Furthermore, Dio's account of the decree of a temple to Mars Ultor implies that as a consequence of the settlement, there was an attempt to create a parallel between Augustus and Romulus. If this was true, it gives us a powerful indication of the importance of Parthia in the Roman mindset at this time. This patriotic mindset was exemplified in the works of poets such as Horace and Virgil, who exaggerated the threat posed by the Arsacid kingdom, and in doing so, lauded the achievements of Augustus as the saviour of Rome. While there have been attempts to find opposition to the *princeps* and his policy in the works of elegists such as Propertius and Ovid, I have argued that there is not enough evidence for this view to be any more than conjecture.

The importance of Parthia in Roman imperial history is undeniable. By the reign of Augustus the Arsacids controlled the largest unified state on the Empire's borders. Moreover, they had inflicted several damaging defeats on the Roman legions. Yet, as I noted in my introduction, they have left us virtually no surviving written evidence of their society and customs, meaning that the image which we have of them is steeped in Graeco-Roman bias. Consequently, my goal has been to explain how this image was created, and the purpose it was intended to serve. In doing so, we have seen how Augustus' policy was able to maintain a relatively peaceful *divisio orbis* between the two powers, and the violent consequences of its abandonment in the Second and Third Centuries.

Word Count 20,315

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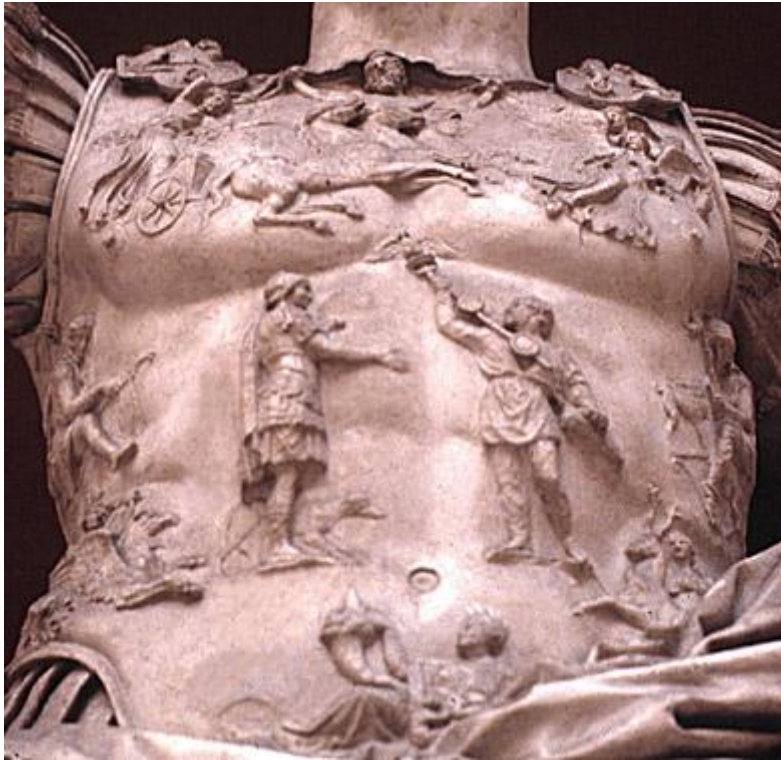


Fig 1, Image of Parthian returning standard on Prima Portia Statue of Augustus.

<http://courses.washington.edu/rome250/gallery/augustanimages/primaportadet.jpg>



Fig 2, Roman coin from 19 BC showing a Parthian returning the standards captured at Carrhae in 53 BC

(http://www.livius.org/a/1/legio/xii_fulminata/coin_19bc.jpg)



Fig 3, Parthian in battle against Rome.

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fragment_of_relief_of_battle_with_parthian_warrior_-_Mostra_di_Nerone_-_Palatin_hill.jpg



Fig 4, Statue of Parthian found at Shami

[.http://www.scribd.com/doc/51591087/ageofagath](http://www.scribd.com/doc/51591087/ageofagath)



Fig 5, Kneeling 'Oriental' Parthians <http://www.scribd.com/doc/51591087/ageofagathians>



Fig 6, 'Parthian' Cup-bearers from Palmyra (top) and Pompeii (bottom).

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/51591087/ageofagathians>

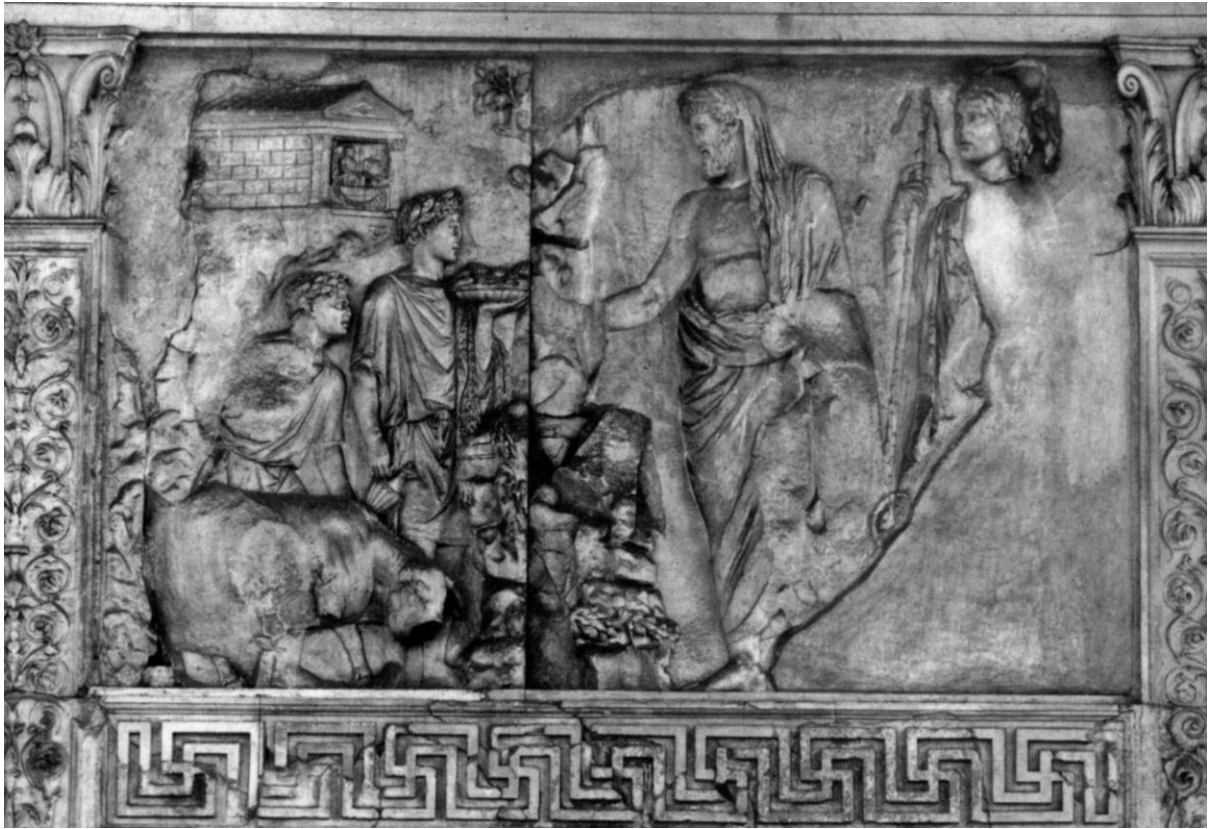


Fig 7, Aeneas on the Ara Pacis. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025>



Fig 8, North Frieze of Ara Pacis. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025103>.



Fig 9, South Frieze of the Ara Pacis. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025103>.



Fig 10, Coin of a Parthian king, before 57BC. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40025103>.