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*Cover:* Statue base honouring M. Vettulenus Civica Barbarus (see p. 175, n. 208).  
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# The Eastern Roman Provinces till Diocletian A Rapid Survey\*

Bengt E. Thomasson

## Prologue

The word *provincia*, in the beginning, signified and geographically (or politically) limited the sphere of action (especially bellic action) of a consul or a praetor. Livy gives us many instances of this use of the word. He also tells us — as early as the fourth century B. C. (Liv. 8, 26, 7) — that a consul's or a praetor's *imperium* could be prolonged, by *prorogatio imperii*, if the normal year of office was not enough; in this case he was styled proconsul or propraeor. But when, after the first and the second Punic wars, formal provinciae in our sense of the word were established, Sardinia, Sicily and the two Hispaniae, then special provincial praetors were elected (two since 227 B. C., another two since 197 B. C.).

We are now reaching the period in which Rome's ambitions went across the Adriatic, first with Flamininus, then with Paullus, at last with Mummius. The result was the creation of the province of Macedonia in 148 B. C., of which Greece proper, or Achaia, became a part after the rebellion of the Achaian league in 147 and the sack of Corinth in 146 B. C. The governors of Macedonia had to fight the tribes to the North and East of the province; so M. Cosconius held command there in 135 B. C. as praetor and continued in command as propraeor in at least 134, possibly even 133 and 132. Another praetor, Pompeius, was killed in battle in 119, one Cato was defeated as governor during his consulship in 114, two other consuls, M. Livius Drusus and M. Minicius Rufus, were better off in 112 and 110 respectively. Even in the following period Macedonia with its troubled borders was entrusted, with few exceptions, to consuls and proconsuls, until the situation changed under Augustus, as we shall see.

Now we must go back a little in time and cross the Aegean Sea. King Attalos III of Pergamon, a man (and a kingdom) of proverbial wealth, died unexpectedly and childless in 133 B. C., in his will leaving land and treasures to the Roman People. After the rebellion of one Aristonikos, the kingdom was organized as a Roman province in 129, by one of that year's consuls, Manius Aquillius, and a commission of ten senators: the cities were made autonomous, freed from tribute and indeed assigned territory for revenue; the royal lands became the property of the Roman People, and Rome drew rents from the leases of these lands; some cities became even allies of Rome, e. g. Pergamum, Ephesus, Aphrodisias.

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\* Not knowing very much about the audience to whom the original paper was to be read, I worked it out as a sketch of the administrative frame-work within which the inhabitants of Rome's oriental provinces led their daily life, and of the historical development that determined the growth and organisation of those provinces. I had chosen to limit my task chronologically and geographically: chronologically by speaking only of the period of the Principate (with a long prologue on the development during the last century of the Republic), geographically by omitting the provinces of the Balkans to the North of Macedonia and to the South of the Mediterranean. The reasons for these limits are still valid. — The splendid volumes IX and X of the *Cambridge Ancient History* (CAH, 2nd ed., with papers by J.G.F. Hind, A. Lintott, J. Richardson and A.N. Sherwin-White, to mention only those quoted in my notes) and the rich book of Maurice Sartre, *L'Orient romain. Provinces et sociétés provinciales en Méditerranée orientale d'Auguste aux Sévères (31 avant J.-C. – 235 après J.-C.)*, Paris 1991, have spared me much waste of time by providing a succinct choice of facts. Only occasionally I have paid due tribute to that help.

I think we may look upon Manius Aquillius as the first governor of the new province, of Asia. Consul in 129, he was to remain in Asia till 126. A few years later, however, in 120, a praetor was assigned Asia, and in the sequel we meet with governors of varying rank, especially after Sulla's reforms, when most provincial governors were ex-magistrates, proconsuls or propraeors, but, if styled *proconsules*, very often only with the rank of ex-praeors, of which category the most renowned instance is, of course, Cicero's brother Quintus in 61–58 (he had been praetor in 62 and was never to become consul). It ought to be mentioned that in the years of war against Mithridates, the consul of 74 B. C., Lucullus, was consular and proconsular governor of Asia, with a *provincia* (in the old sense of the word) extended also to Bithynia, Pontus and Cilicia; thereafter most governors of Asia seem to have been ex-praeors with the title of proconsul, some however, in the years 64 to 62 and 51 to 50, also styled *pro praetore*.<sup>1</sup>

These changes may seem unimportant but they will be illuminating for the future.

Also the closest assistants to the republican governors are interesting as forerunners to those of the later epochs, the *quaestor* and the *legati*, the legates. The former was himself a magistrate of the Roman people, holding office by virtue of his election; his specific *provincia* was decided by lot following a decree of the Senate or even through a direct senatorial decree; his main responsibilities were financial and he was to account to the treasury of Rome at the end of his period, which usually coincided with the governor's. Also the legates, mostly of senatorial rank as well, were assigned to the governor by the senate, but here the governor's own choice was generally respected, although he would often take members of his own family and other friends and associates; Cicero, for instance, had with him in Cilicia his brother Quintus, another Tullius and two others as well.<sup>2</sup> The legates are in most cases known as military men, but we have also instances of legates who assisted their superior in more civil duties, not always in a civilized way, however, as shown in the story of Verres' misconduct in Sicily.<sup>3</sup>

For judicial purposes the province was subdivided into *conventus* (or *dioeceses*) named after their central city; we know of more than a dozen in the province of Asia, most important among them Ephesus, the new Roman capital, further Pergamum, Sardes and Smyrna. The governor would travel round these *conventus* to administer justice, but even members of his staff, the quaestor and the legates, could be used for this activity.<sup>4</sup> As for the collection of taxes, we hear of a division of Asia into 44 districts, the collection being conducted by the notorious publicans.<sup>5</sup>

In the beginning the province of Asia did not comprise the whole of the kingdom of Attalos III: parts of it went to Pontus, some to Bithynia, so it seems. Even in the South there were changes, especially owing to difficulties with the Cilician pirates; indeed Cilicia was named as the *provincia* of Marcus Antonius in 102, and a few decades later, following the final defeat of the pirates, Cilicia was organized as a province.<sup>6</sup> That it was still not quite pacified is shown not only through Cicero's activity there, but also by the fact that all

<sup>1</sup> All these dates are easily found in T. R. S. Broughton, *The magistrates of the Roman Republic*. I–III. (The American philological association. Philological monographs XV: 1–3), Haverford, Pe. 1952–53 (I–II), Atlanta, Ge. 1986 (III, Suppl.).

<sup>2</sup> For details cf. B. E. Thomasson, *Legatus. Beiträge zur römischen Verwaltungsgeschichte* (Acta Instituti Romani Regni Sueciae, series in-8°, 18), Stockholm 1991, pp. 15; 18 f.; 24.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Legatus* (see the preceding note), pp. 16 f.; 19–22; 24 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. also J. Richardson, in *CAH IX*<sup>2</sup>, p. 590.

<sup>5</sup> J. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, 2nd ed., Vol. I, Leipzig 1881, p. 339.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. Lintott, in *CAH IX*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 34–36.

known governors of the province seem to have been proconsuls of consular rank, not a single *propraetor* (or *ex-praetor*) is known from 67 to 50 B. C., a period that of course includes the Great Command of Pompey.<sup>7</sup>

Imitating Attalos of Pergamum, Nikomedes IV of Bithynia, at his death in 75 (or 74?) B. C. left his kingdom to the Roman people, which led to the third Mithridatic war and to Bithynia being declared the *provincia* of M. Aurelius Cotta, one of the consuls of 74, whose *imperium* was prorogated in the following year.<sup>8</sup> After the final victory, the result of the campaigns of Lucullus and Pompey in the east, Western Pontus was added to Bithynia, and the double-province of Bithynia-Pontus was organized, with two capitals, Nicomedia in the west, Amastris in the east.<sup>9</sup>

Pompey's wars finally extended as far as Syria, which was occupied because the last Seleucids were considered too weak to resist the threat from the east, a danger that was to occupy Roman minds for the rest of Roman history. Northern Syria was organized as a province, Antioch-on-the-Orontes becoming its capital;<sup>10</sup> it is symptomatic that all the governors of this frontier province were consular proconsuls. In southern Syria a number of small principalities became client states to the Romans. Some small kingdoms in the north were likewise acknowledged as client states, most important among them Commagene.

### Principate

The period of civil wars added no new provinces to the Roman Empire, as was to be expected; instead, as soon as peace was restored in the interior, a hectic period of reorganization began, and now we must look especially at the Augustan scheme of provincial organization, which, according to Dio Cassius and Strabo, was introduced in 27 B. C.,<sup>11</sup> and how it affected the Eastern provinces. We, thus, have to distinguish between the provinces of the Roman people and those of the Emperor, which we conventionally call senatorial and imperial provinces,<sup>12</sup> in Dio's words (and Cary's): "He restored to the Senate the weaker provinces, on the ground that they were peaceful and free from war, while he retained the more powerful, alleging that they were insecure and precarious and either had enemies on their borders or were able on their own account to begin a serious revolt." Both in the senatorial and in the imperial provinces we can distinguish two classes of rank, consular provinces and praetorian provinces, the former entrusted to ex-consuls, the latter to ex-praetors. All governors of senatorial provinces were called proconsuls, whether they were ex-consuls or ex-praetors, and the governors of imperial provinces (except some very small ones) were called legates, *legati Augusti pro praetore*, whatever rank they had. We should add that the period in office was limited to one year for the proconsuls, but unlimited for the legates (yet usually 2-3 years). In the figure below, the first scheme presents these different classes of governors. Later on we shall see how it worked out for the provinces at different times (parts two and three of the same figure).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the material offered by Broughton, *op. cit.* (n. 1).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, in *CAH IX*<sup>2</sup>, pp. 233 f.

<sup>9</sup> Marquardt, *op. cit.* (n. 5), p. 355.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A.N. Sherwin-White, in *CAH IX*<sup>2</sup>, p. 259.

<sup>11</sup> Dio 53.12.2 ff.; Strabo 17.3.25 (840 C).

<sup>12</sup> But cf. F. Millar, 'Senatorial provinces. An institutionalized ghost', *AncW* 20 (1989) 93-97.

Scheme of principle

Senatorial ( <i>proconsul</i> )		Imperial ( <i>legatus Augusti pro praetore</i> )		Equestrian governors ( <i>procurator, praefectus</i> )
Consular	Praetorian	Consular	Praetorian	

Governors' rank in the Augustan reorganization of the Republican provinces

Senatorial ( <i>proconsul</i> )		Imperial ( <i>legatus Augusti pro praetore</i> )		Equestrian governors ( <i>procurator, praefectus</i> )
Consular	Praetorian	Consular	Praetorian	
Asia	Macedonia	Syria	(Cilicia)	Iudaea (until AD 72)
	Bithynia-Pontus			Cappadocia (until c. AD 70)
	(Achaia)			

Governors' rank during the later principate

Senatorial ( <i>proconsul</i> )		Imperial ( <i>legatus Augusti pro praetore</i> )		Equestrian governors ( <i>procurator, praefectus</i> )
Consular	Praetorian	Consular	Praetorian	
Asia	Macedonia	Syria (Coele)	[Syria Phoenice]	Iudaea (until A.D. 72)
	Achaia	Cappadocia	Galatia	Cappadocia (until c. A.D. 70)
	Bithynia-Pontus	(Bithynia-Pontus)	Lycia-Pamphylia	Epirus
	Cyprus	Syria Palaestina	Cilicia	Mesopotamia
	Lycia-Pamphylia		Arabia	

We have seen that during the last century of the Republic a certain province would be governed sometimes by an ex-consul, sometimes by an ex-praetor, and that an ex-praetor would be styled sometimes *pro praetore*, sometimes *pro consule*: it was, indeed, up to the Senate to decide on the rank of the province and its governor, and that, in turn, depended on what military forces were needed in the province. In all this we see the gradual evolution of the conception of *provincia*: from "field of action" to "annexed area", i. e. province. Let us again sum up the situation during the decades before the crossing of the Rubicon, including also some Western provinces and relying on Broughton's *Magistrates* (see n. 1; his years within brackets). Spain only on rare occasions *propraetorian* (69, 62, 51), in most cases *proconsular* but more than once the *proconsul* was an ex-praetor; the same holds good for Asia (*propraetorian* only in 64-62, 51-50, as we saw), and Macedonia (*propraetorian* only in 63 and 58), whereas Cilicia and Syria were constantly governed by *proconsuls* of consular rank, Sicily on the other hand constantly by *propraetors*. But again: even in this period it is difficult to distinguish between "field of action" and province.

To all this Augustus put an end, deciding that every governor of a senatorial province should be called *proconsul*, a governor of an imperial province (with few, procuratorial, exceptions) *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, and deciding explicitly on the rank of every province. So let us put the Eastern provinces hitherto dealt with into the scheme (see the second part of the figure).

The names within brackets call for short comment: (1) Greece proper, which had been part of Macedonia, now forms a province of its own, called Achaia, its capital being Corinth, whereas Thessalonica remained capital of the reduced Macedonia. (2) Large parts of Cilicia were given to adjacent client kings and provinces, remaining parts (if any) were administered by a *procurator Augusti*, until Vespasian reorganized the province in 72, with Tarsus as its capital, under a praetorian *legatus Augusti pro praetore*.<sup>13</sup>

Before we look at further additions to the number of Eastern provinces, it seems appropriate to examine the organization of Asia, which was and remained the richest of them all in every respect, economic, social, cultural.

Like the republican governors of Asia, even the proconsuls of the Empire had a staff, whose most important members were the quaestor and the legates, whereas the procurators responsible for the collection of the revenues of the province were called *procuratores Augusti*, thus being imperial officials. The duties of the quaestor did not differ very much from those of his republican counterpart, but as for the legates we notice a strong preponderance for civil duties. Asia was, in fact, one of the so called *provinciae inermes*, i. e. without legionary forces, and the legates seem to have had nothing to do with the few auxiliary units of the province.<sup>14</sup> Instead, the legates, who were now invariably numbered three in Asia, had their most important duties as assistants to the proconsul in the administration of justice, in the words of Christian Habicht "the most noble and the most important duty of any governor."<sup>15</sup>

We have already dwelt on the *conventus iuridici* or *dioeceses*. Some twenty years ago Chr. Habicht could even publish an inscription with a list of five such *conventus* from the first century A. D., namely Sardis, Miletus, Pergamum, Halicarnassus and Apamea,<sup>16</sup> which together with other inscriptions<sup>17</sup> and Pliny's list in his Natural History, book 5,<sup>18</sup> gives a total of fourteen.<sup>19</sup> It is obvious that the proconsul alone, besides all his other duties, could not visit all these *conventus* in one year but had to be assisted by his legates, and for this we have also literary and epigraphic evidence, for which I can refer to a paper by G. P. Burton.<sup>20</sup> It will even seem that the proconsul in the second century A. D. could entrust the judicial administration of a *conventus* more permanently to one legate, witness

<sup>13</sup> See R. Haensch, *Capita provinciarum. Statthaltersitze und Provinzialverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Mainz 1997, pp. 322ff. (Achaia), 104ff. (Macedonia), 267ff. (Cilicia), with discussion.

<sup>14</sup> There surely were troops, for we have, since a few of years ago, a military diploma issued A. D. 148 (AE 1981: 845), for soldiers in a unit *quae est in Asia sub Flavio Tertullo praefecto Flavio Iuliano*, which makes clear that the *praefecti*, not the legates, were responsible for these units.

<sup>15</sup> JRS 65 (1975) 67.

<sup>16</sup> Chr. Habicht, 'New evidence on the province of Asia', JRS 65 (1975) 64–91.

<sup>17</sup> E. g. R. K. Sherck, *Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus consulta and epistulae to the age of Augustus*, Baltimore 1969, no. 52.

<sup>18</sup> Plin. n. h. 5, 105–126.

<sup>19</sup> A summary of this evidence is given by Habicht, op. cit. (n. 16) 70.

<sup>20</sup> JRS 65 (1975) 92–106.

the title *legatus dioeceseos Ephesiaca*e and similar in a couple of inscriptions from Ephesus.<sup>21</sup>

The extension of the province of Asia in different periods during the four centuries dealt with here, cannot be described in detail in this contribution (something will be touched on when neighbour provinces are treated). Only two details should be emphasized:

(1) We have epigraphic testimonies for two special imperial legates of the Cycladic Islands, who were at the same time legates of the proconsul of Asia, both around A. D. 160,<sup>22</sup> the former even called *legatus Augusti ad ordinandos status insularum Cycladum*; very probably the difficulties that called for settling, were of economic nature, but confer the Diocletianic *Insularum provincia*, which may find an early precursor here.

(2) Of a later date is the formation of Caria-Phrygia as a separate province; it will seem that this happened about the middle of the third century, when inscriptions from Aphrodisias and other sites name imperial legates of this new double-province.<sup>23</sup> It is significant that the two provinces re-emerge in the list of Diocletianic provinces as well.

As for seceding or detached provinces, there is yet another instance of the third century: Pontus, where we find equestrian *praesides perfectissimi* as early as the reign of Maximinus (about A. D. 236),<sup>24</sup> or even a little earlier,<sup>25</sup> although D. H. French has dated the secession still earlier, under Septimius Severus,<sup>26</sup> listing some *legati Augusti pro praetore* who are mentioned on milestones of Pontus as governors of Pontus alone; with Christol and Lorient (n. 25) I think there is no sufficient reason for this.

Very little is to be said about Macedonia and Achaia: the two provinces led a quiet life, sheltered by the legions of the newly organized province of Moesia, with which they were even connected for thirty years (A. D. 15–44) in a great provincial complex governed by the two consular legates Poppaeus Sabinus and Memmius Regulus; nor is much ink to be wasted on the Neronian "liberation" of Greece, i. e. Achaia, to which a quick end was put by the firm hand of Vespasian.

Interesting and much discussed in its details is also the temporary transition of Bithynia-Pontus from senatorial to imperial administration during a few years under Trajan (about A. D. 110–114); through the tenth book of Pliny's correspondence we know that the Emperor was worried about the financial difficulties troubling that double-province.

Up to now we have touched on regions that had come to Rome during the Republic. Now we turn to some of the client kingdoms that were doomed to be provincialized,<sup>27</sup> first of all Galatia, the kingdom of Amyntas, which became a Roman province in A. D. 25, governed by an imperial legate, who resided at Ancyra and sometimes may have been of consular rank, because warfare needed a strong legionary army. Most of them, however, were ex-praetors, and that is where we put them in our

<sup>21</sup> See, e. g., my *Legatus* (n. 2), pp. 67–70.

<sup>22</sup> C. Vettius Sabinianus Iulius Hospes, *AE* 1920: 45 = *ILA* 281; L. Saevinius Proculus, *AE* 1971: 462; *AE* 1924: 77 = *Inscr. v. Ephesos* VII: 1, 3037; cf. *Legatus* (n. 2), pp. 83f.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Charlotte Roueché – D. H. French, *ZPE* 49 (1982) 159f.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. X. Lorient, *BSAF* 1976: 57ff.

<sup>25</sup> M. Christol – X. Lorient, 'Le Pontus et ses gouverneurs dans le second tiers du III<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Recherches épigraphiques* (Centre Jean-Palmerie. Mémoires VII, 1986), pp. 13–40.

<sup>26</sup> *ZPE* 43 (1981) 160.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J.G.F. Hind, in *CAH* IX<sup>2</sup>, 152f.

figure (see above). The province was soon expanded to the North by incorporating Paphlagonia and Pontus Galaticus, but on the other hand diminished to the South in that Lycaonia and Rough Cilicia were given to the king of Cappadocia. Only a few decades later, at the death of old king Archelaos, even Cappadocia was annexed to the Empire and put under provincial (procuratorial) administration, except Rough Cilicia, which was left to a son of the deceased king. In one of the first years of Vespasian's reign, Cappadocia and Galatia were joined to form a vast consular province to which also Armenia Minor was attached. The two provinces were separated only late in Trajan's reign (about A. D. 112); Cappadocia alone continued to be the Roman bulwark to the northeast, governed by an imperial legate of consular rank, who commanded an army of two legions (garrisoned at Melitene and Samosata on the Upper Euphrates) and auxiliary troops.

But let us pass to more cultivated regions. Since the Hellenistic period Lycia on the south coast of Anatolia had formed a *koinon* or league of independent cities, rich and beautiful, such as Xanthos and Patara; in A. D. 43 the region was made a Roman province together with Pamphylia to the East, which was detached from Galatia. The new province of Lycia-Pamphylia, under an imperial legate of praetorian rank, was to be one of the pearls of Anatolia, whose splendour is now unearthed also in Side and Attalea, Perge and Phaselis.

For some time in the first century, it is true, Pamphylia was again detached from Lycia and annexed to Galatia, and sometime after the mid-second century Lycia-Pamphylia was transferred from imperial to senatorial administration (under a proconsul of praetorian rank), and at about the same time Bithynia-Pontus was transferred in the opposite direction to be governed by an imperial legate of consular rank, but – in spite of this high rank – with no legionary forces under his command.

We must leave Anatolia, although there would be much more to say about this exciting peninsula. But the region which we are approaching, Syria, is no less exciting. How Syria came under Roman rule through Pompey's victories in the East in the sixties B. C. has been reported above, albeit very briefly. During the following civil wars it was always very important for the fighting dynasts to control the province. Moreover, in the provincial organization of 27 B. C. it had a very important role as a guardian on the Euphrates south of Cappadocia and Commagene, with no less than three legions (possibly four), each of them commanded by a legionary legate (details are lacking for the Augustan period). With such huge forces the governor could only be of consular rank. Under Tiberius, Commagene was annexed to Syria, and so Cappadocia, a procuratorial province from the same time (cf. above), and Syria shared total responsibility for the Euphrates frontier. (It is, however, worth mentioning that Commagene was, at least twice, returned to client kings, but only for short periods.)

It would be impossible to even outline the history of the small kingdoms (or principalities) of Southern Syria in a short paper like this, and I must limit myself to the most important country, namely Judaea. When Herod the Great died in 4 B. C., his kingdom was divided between his sons and a daughter, Judaea with Samaria and Idumaea falling to Archelaos, whose brutal reign ended with his exile to Vienna in far Gaul; his domain was annexed to Syria and administered, under the supervision of the imperial legate of Syria, by a *praefectus* of equestrian rank, the most famous of whom is, of course, Pontius Pilate, whose exact title is known to us since the 1960s.<sup>28</sup> Soon after, there was a short period of royal authority, but from A. D. 44 the whole of Judaea was again annexed to Syria and administered by equestrian officials called *procuratores Augusti*. Thanks to Flavius Josephus and to Tacitus we have the whole series of procurators down to the rebellion, after which Judaea was totally emancipated from Syria and its consular legate, in that one of the legionary legates (the one of the X Fretensis) was given *imperium* of his own (he became a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*) and brought his legion with him to

<sup>28</sup> AE 1964: 39; cf. G. Alföldy, 'Pontius Pilatus und das Tiberieum von Caesarea Maritima', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 18 (1999) 85-108.

Jerusalem (where it may have been before, also); the legion was of course only the nucleus of the forces that were necessary to keep a tight rein on the Jews.

This was, incidentally, the first one-legion province formed by emancipation, others were to come, in different parts of the Empire.<sup>29</sup> We shall soon see another instance. But first we must call attention to the fact that one legion was not enough to keep the Jews in check: after the great Jewish rebellions in North Africa, from Egypt to Mauretania, in A. D. 115–117, a second legion was garrisoned at Caparcotna in lower Galilee, and the rank of the imperial legate was accordingly raised to consular status. More legions than that were needed to check the terrible Bar Kochba-rebellion of A. D. 132–135, they were fetched in from Syria and Egypt, and after the war the province, from now on called (Syria) Palaestina, not Judaea, remained a two-legion province through-out the principate as far as is known.

To the south or southeast of the kingdom of Herod the Great there was another kingdom called the Nabataean, a client kingdom as well, its capital being Petra. This desert state (more or less) had not been suited for Roman administration, but facing a war of conquest with the Parthians Trajan thought it suitable as an armed base; so, when the Nabataean king died in A. D. 106, he sent the governor of Syria, Cornelius Palma, to occupy the country; one of the Syrian legions (we do not know for sure which one) remained in the new province, and its commander obtained *imperium* of his own as *legatus Augusti pro praetore*. The first (as far as we know) of these praetorian legates of the province of Arabia was Claudius Severus, who was to stay there until A. D. 115, being *consul suffectus* in his absence, A. D. 112. The capital of the province was transferred to Bostra, and the legion garrisoned there as well.

Let us go back to Syria for a while but also make a jump forward in time, to the fatal year of 193, when Pescennius Niger, the consular legate of Syria with his three legions rose against Septimius Severus, who had been proclaimed emperor by the Pannonian and German legions. Within a year or so Severus had crushed his enemy – and learned a lesson: he divided the powerful Syrian province with its three legions: Northern Syria or Syria Coele with two legions, capital Laodicea (at least for some time), and Syria Phoenice with one legion and Tyrus as its capital. The detached one-legion province was of course only of praetorian rank (cf. Judaea A. D. 72 and Arabia in 106). To minimize the danger, Severus also transferred the southernmost parts of Syria to the province of Arabia.

I have found it wiser to neglect the very temporary occupation and provincialization of Assyria and Mesopotamia in the last years of Trajan. Instead some words must be said on the last provinces to come to the Roman Empire more permanently: Mesopotamia and Osrhoene. This was the result of the Parthian campaigns of Severus in the last years of the second century; Osrhoene became an equestrian procuratorial province, capital Edessa, as early as A. D. 195, Mesopotamia was organized as a province, capital Nisibis, a few years later (199), likewise an equestrian province, but governed by *praefecti* of the same high rank as those prefects who had governed Egypt for more than 200 years; like these the prefects of Mesopotamia were supreme commanders of two legions, I et III Parthica, which had been raised by Septimius Severus for his Parthian campaigns; the commanders of these legions, that were garrisoned outside the capital (at Singara and Resaina respectively), were likewise of equestrian rank, called *praefecti legionis* (as in Egypt).

The military provinces on the borders of the eternal enemy in the East, which we have just treated, were of course subjected to the well-known edict of Gallienus that excluded men of senatorial rank from military command. How this affected the individual

<sup>29</sup> I treated this theme in English in *Op. Rom.* 9 (1973) 61–66, in German in *Legatus* (n. 18), pp. 46–53.

provinces is, however, difficult to say, given the scarcity of relevant inscriptions, especially career inscriptions, in the second half of the third century.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. the not very satisfactory treatment by H. Petersen, *JRS* 45 (1955) 47–57; further B. Malcus, 'Notes sur la révolution du système administratif romain au III<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Op. Rom.* 7 (1969) 213–237; H. Thylander, 'Senatum militia vetuit et adire exercitum', *Op. Rom.* 9 (1973) 67–71 (in French); H.-G. Pflaum, 'Zur Reform des Kaisers Gallienus', *Historia* 25 (1976) 109–117; and, especially, M. Christol, *Essai sur l'évolution des carrières sénatoriales dans la moitié du III<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J. C.* (Études prosopographiques VI), Paris 1986, pp. 39–54.