

**EXTRAIT**

**COLLECTION LATOMUS**

Fondée par M. RENARD en 1939

Dirigée par C. DEROUX et J. DUMORTIER-BIBAUW

VOLUME 315 – 2008

**Studies in Latin Literature  
and Roman History  
XIV**

**Edited by Carl DEROUX**



**ÉDITIONS LATOMUS – BRUXELLES**

## **Dellius, the Parthian Campaign, and the Image of Mark Antony (\*)**

It has often been said that the Parthian campaign of 36 BC was a turning-point in the history of the triumviral period, thanks to the damage it caused to Mark Antony's image and resources (1). This view has naturally provoked curiosity about the precise details of the disaster. In turn, this raises a question of source criticism. Various ancient accounts of the campaign still exist, all of them secondary (2). But just how good was the information to which the authors of these accounts had access? This paper attempts to address this source problem.

(\*) A version of this paper was delivered at the ASCS XXVII Conference in Hobart in January 2006. I thank those who commented on the paper on that occasion. I also thank K. E. Welch, D. H. Kelly, H. M. Lindsay, and A. G. Hug, each of whom was kind enough to read versions of the paper and to offer me invaluable advice. All remaining errors are my own.

(1) For general discussions of the importance of the campaign, see H. BENGSTON, *Zum Partherfeldzug des Antonius*, Munich, 1974 (Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte, 1974, No. 1), p. 46-48; C. B. R. PELLING, *The Triumviral Period* in *C.A.H.* X<sup>2</sup>, 1996, p. 34; and J. OBER, *Not by a Nose. The Triumph of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium, 31 B.C.* in R. COWLEY (ed.), *More What If? Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*, London, 2003, p. 42-44 (aimed at a general audience). For specific discussion of the damage to Antony's image caused by the Parthian fiasco, see V. GARDTHAUSEN, *Augustus und seine Zeit*, I, Leipzig, 1891 [Stuttgart, 1964], p. 305; H. BENGSTON, *Marcus Antonius. Triumvir und Herrscher des Orients*, Munich, 1977, p. 298; E. HUZAR, *The Literary Efforts of Mark Antony* in *ANRW* II, 30.1, 1982, p. 653. For discussions of the damage to his resources, see W. W. TARN, *The War of the East Against the West* in *C.A.H.* X<sup>1</sup>, 1934, p. 75. Various scholars have also seen the campaign as an important turning point in Rome's eastern policy: GARDTHAUSEN, *ibid.*, I, p. 305; A. S. SCHIEBER, *Antony and Parthia* in *Rivista storica dell'antichità* 9, 1979, p. 105-124 at 105; 120-121; M. REINHOLD, *From Republic to Principate. An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History Books 49-52 (36-29 B.C.)*, Atlanta, 1988 (American Philological Association Monograph Series, 34), p. 62.

(2) STR. 11,13,3-4; 14,9; LIVY, *Per.* 130; VELL.PAT. 2,82,1-3; JOSEPH. *BJ* 1,362-363; FRONTIN, *Str.* 2,3,15; 2,13,7; 4,1,37; PLUT., *Ant.* 37-51; ARR., *Parth.* Frags. 25-30 (ed. ROOS); FLOR. 2,20; DIO CASS. 49,24-31; JUST., *Epit.* 41,2,6; 42,5,3; FESTUS, *Breviarium* 18,2; EUTR., 7,6; OROS. 6,19,1; *de uir. ill.* 85.4.

that certain basic facts about the campaign are mentioned in most accounts and are not contradicted in accounts that do not mention them. Antony attacks Media Atropatene via Armenia late in the campaigning season of 36<sup>(19)</sup>. He besieges an important position in Media, but with no success<sup>(20)</sup>. Meanwhile, the detachment carrying baggage and siege equipment, which Antony had left behind under the command of Oppius Stavianus, is wiped out by the Parthians, led by their king, Phraates<sup>(21)</sup>. The siege itself drags on, and eventually Antony abandons it<sup>(22)</sup>, and begins the retreat to Armenia, during which his forces are constantly harassed by the Parthians<sup>(23)</sup>. Crossing into Armenia frees the Roman army from Parthian attack, but inclement weather then kills still more men on the march back to the Mediterranean coast<sup>(24)</sup>. There is a postscript to the campaign in 34, when Antony captures the king of Armenia, Artavasdes, and takes control of Armenia for a time. Artavasdes of Armenia's offence was deserting the Romans after initially supporting them in 36<sup>(25)</sup>. This much, then, emerges from the sources without ambiguity. But it is difficult to know just what this basic agreement proves. As Millar has observed, one of the fundamental problems with *Quellenforschung* is that it is hard to determine what is proved by the two ancient historians' recording of the same basic fact. Historians writing about the same period can be expected to agree on some matters of fact. This need not prove reliance on each other or a common source<sup>(26)</sup>. These doubts surely apply in the case of the accounts of the Parthian and Armenian campaigns.

Moreover, if all the extant accounts come from a single prototype, then there is a remarkable amount of variation in matters of detail. For instance, the extant sources vary on the simple factual questions of the strength of Antony's legionary forces at the commencement of the campaign and the extent of the legionary losses during its course<sup>(27)</sup>. Livy claims that Antony began with 18 legions, and lost two legions in action and 8,000 men (i.e., two to three legions) in storms. Velleius says that Antony started with 13 legions, with a quarter of his legionaries being lost. Florus and Justin number the legions at 16, with Florus

(19) LIVY, *Per.* 130 ; VELL. PAT. 2,82,1 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 38,1 ; DIO CASS. 49,25,1.

(20) STR. 11,13,3 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 38,2 ; DIO CASS. 49,25,3.

(21) VELL. PAT. 2,82,2 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 38,2-3 ; DIO CASS. 49,25,4-5.

(22) PLUT., *Ant.* 39,6-40,5 ; ARR., *Parth.* Frag. 29 ; DIO CASS. 49,26,3-28,1.

(23) LIVY, *Per.* 130 ; FLOR. 2,20,5-9 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 41,1-49,4 ; DIO CASS. 49,28,2-31,1 ; JUST., *Epit.* 42,5,3 ; EUTR. 7,6 ; OROS. 6,19,1.

(24) LIVY, *Per.* 130 ; FLOR. 2,20,9 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 49,4 ; 51,1 ; DIO CASS. 49,31,1-4.

(25) STR. 11,13,4 ; 11,14,15 ; 16,1,28 ; LIVY, *Per.* 130 ; VELL. PAT. 2,82,3 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 50,2-4 ; TAC., *Ann.* 2,3,1 ; DIO CASS. 49,33,1-3 ; 49,39,2-40,1.

(26) F. G. B. MILLAR, *A Study of Cassius Dio*, Oxford, 1964, p. 34.

(27) Cf. PELLING, *Antony* [n. 5], p. 239, who suggests that the casualty statistics in the various accounts probably derive from Dellius.

claiming that two-thirds of these legions were lost, including two legions in a single day<sup>(28)</sup>. The author of *de uiris illustribus* gives the initial number of legions as 15, and claims that scarcely a third survived<sup>(29)</sup>. Plutarch gives a figure of 60,000 Roman infantrymen, which could represent anything between 12 and 16 legions, depending on the strength of the legions<sup>(30)</sup>. He claims that 20,000 infantrymen<sup>(31)</sup> were lost during the campaign and 8,000 men in storms during the retreat<sup>(32)</sup>. The latter figure is the same as Livy's figure, and must have come from the same tradition; but Plutarch's figure of 20,000 is much higher than Livy's two legions. At different points in his *Life of Antony*, Plutarch also gives different figures for the size of the Armenian cavalry contribution: in §37 he claims that King Artavasdes contributed 6 000 cavalry, and at §50 he claims that Artavasdes provided 16 000.

One might explain these discrepancies by reference to an extraordinary sequence of authorial and scribal mistakes, were it not for a series of more fundamental discrepancies. For instance, as will be discussed below, Strabo's account differs quite sharply from that of Plutarch, both in its description of the target of the major siege of the campaign and on the question of the responsibility of King Artavasdes of Armenia for the failure of the campaign. Furthermore, Plutarch and Dio Cassius give rather different versions of the rout of Stadianus' forces. Dio claims that everyone in the Roman force was killed, except King Polemon of Pontus, who was captured and ransomed. Plutarch, in contrast, states that the Parthians took many captives in the engagement<sup>(33)</sup>. In their accounts of the withdrawal of Antony's force from Media, both Plutarch and Dio record that the Roman infantry used the *testudo* manoeuvre. Dio, however, says explicitly that it was used once, and thereafter the Parthians stopped following Antony's force, which suffered no further harm from enemy action<sup>(34)</sup>. Plutarch claims

(28) LIVY, *Per.* 130; VELL. PAT. 2,82,1; JUST., *Epit.* 42,5,3; FLOR. 2,20,10.

(29) *De uir. ill.* 85,4.

(30) PLUT., *Ant.* 37,3. For attempts to decide which is the correct figure, see: J. KROMAYER, *Die Vorgeschichte des Kriegs von Actium* in *Hermes* 33, 1898, p. 23, n. 2; RICE HOLMES, *Architect* [n. 3], p. 223; W. W. TARN, *Antony's Legions* in *CQ* 26, 1932, p. 76; P. A. BRUNT, *Italian Manpower*, Oxford, 1971, p. 503-504; BENGTSON, *Antonius* [n. 1], p. 184; SHERWIN-WHITE, *Foreign Policy* [n. 6], p. 311, n. 37. Kromayer argues that at least three traditions lie behind the disparate numbers.

(31) This number must be meant to refer to Roman infantry: Plutarch calls them *πεζοί* at §50,1; at §37.3 he distinguishes between the Roman *πεζοί* and the *ψιλοί* provided by allied nations. Artavasdes of Armenia is also said to have provided *πεζοί*, however, these had been withdrawn by the time of the review of troops mentioned in §50 (cf. §39,1).

(32) PLUT., *Ant.* 51,1.

(33) DIO CASS. 49,25,4; PLUT., *Ant.* 38,3.

(34) DIO CASS. 49,29,2-31,1. At 29,4 Dio describes the result of the first use of the *testudo* in the following terms: ὥστε τοὺς λοιποὺς πάντας παραχρῆμα ἀποχωρήσαι καὶ

that the Parthians continued to attack the Romans for some days after the tactic was first used, and that the Romans had recourse to it repeatedly <sup>(35)</sup>. Some of the minor sources contain different details as well. Florus mentions an engagement in which Antony was drawn into a Parthian trap, with the loss of two legions <sup>(36)</sup>. This incident does not appear in Plutarch or Dio, yet we would expect them to mention such a major defeat if they knew about it. Florus also claims that the blazing heat (*ardores*) of Armenia, and the change to the snows of Cappadocia caused casualties to Antony's men, while Plutarch and Dio say that it was the snow and ice of Armenia that caused casualties <sup>(37)</sup>. Plutarch also stresses the loyalty of the army to Antony during the retreat, while Orosius (and to a lesser extent Dio) stress the high level of Roman desertions <sup>(38)</sup>.

There is even evidence within Plutarch's own account of the campaign to suggest that he had access to multiple traditions. Plutarch certainly claims repeatedly to be aware of various different accounts of the campaign <sup>(39)</sup>. In one case, he says that the different accounts gave different details about the nature of Cleopatra's contributions to the army when it finally reached the coast of the Mediterranean after the long retreat <sup>(40)</sup>. At various other points, Plutarch seems to show evidence of access to multiple traditions, even if he does not mention this explicitly. In §40 of the *Life of Antony* Parthian soldiers begin fraternizing with the Roman forces, and claiming that Phraates will assure them safe passage if they withdraw from Media. In §41, when Antony and his army are on the point of setting off across a treeless plain, a certain man of the Mardian race appears and warns them of a Parthian trap, offering to lead them to Armenia via an alternative route. The alternative route is not entirely successful, since the Romans are still attacked repeatedly by the Parthians (§§41,4-45,3) and their hunger leads them to start eating a poisonous plant (§45,4-6). In §§46-49, a strikingly similar set of events is narrated. The Parthians again fraternize with the Romans, guaranteeing them safe passage to Armenia. Antony accepts the Parthian assurances, and makes to march across the plains. At this point a certain Mithridates appears with a suggestion for a different route, a suggestion that Antony follows. Never-

μηκέτι μηδέν ἀντοῖς ἐπακολουθήσαι, making it clear that the first use of the manoeuvre was the last engagement with the Parthian army (cf. too 31,1).

(35) PLUT., *Ant.* 45-49, esp. 45,3 & 49,1.

(36) FLOR. 2,20,3. This incident cannot be the rout of Statianus, since Antony is depicted as being in command, and Florus implies that at least by the next day, if not earlier, plans for the retreat from Media were being made.

(37) FLOR. 2,20,9 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 51,1 ; DIO CASS. 49,31,1-3.

(38) OROS. 6,19,1 ; DIO CASS. 49,29,1 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 43,2.

(39) PLUT., *Ant.* 42,3 : φασί, 45,6 : ἰστοροῦσιν, 51,2 : εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ λέγοντες, 52,1 : ὧς φασιν.

(40) PLUT., *Ant.* 51,2.

theless, the Parthians still attack the Romans, and the Romans take to drinking poisonous water. The structural similarity of the two sets of events suggests that Plutarch has in fact narrated the same set of events twice over. The most likely explanation for this is that he (or a source) absorbed two different traditions regarding the same set of events, without recognizing that the same events lay behind both<sup>(41)</sup>.

Plutarch shows awareness of two contradictory explanations for the failure of the campaign. At §§37.4-38.1 Plutarch says that "we are told" that Antony squandered his chances of success in the campaign by refusing to winter in Armenia. Instead he pressed on into Media late in the campaigning season in the hope that he could return from the expedition in time to spend the winter of 36-35 with Cleopatra. This same analysis of the failure of the campaign apparently appeared in Livy<sup>(42)</sup>. In §50 of the *Antony* Plutarch mentions a totally different reason for the Romans' failure. It was Artavasdes of Armenia, he says, who robbed Antony of the ability to defeat the Parthians decisively. By withdrawing his cavalry at a critical moment, Artavasdes denied Antony the ability to pursue the fleeing Parthians on the many occasions when the Romans defeated them in skirmishes. This suggests that Plutarch was drawing on two separate explanations for the failure of the campaign, one of which was highly hostile to Antony, and the other of which attempted to shift the blame away from him. It is highly unlikely that he found both of these explanations in the same source.

2. *Strabo, Plutarch and Dellius*. — A more specific argument has been raised to support the notion that at least Plutarch and Strabo were heavily reliant on Dellius' account. The argument is that certain passages in Plutarch share a common source with Strabo, who is known to have used Dellius as a source. Four passages in Plutarch are commonly said to be paralleled in Book 11 of Strabo closely enough to suggest a common source. Since Strabo says in one of the passages that his source was Dellius, the assumption is that his source was Dellius in the other three<sup>(43)</sup>. The initial difficulty with this argument lies in the assumption that Strabo would only have used one source for the campaign. Exa-

(41) Thus PELLING, *Antony* [n. 5], p. 235-236, cf. 32; C. B. R. PELLING, *Plutarch's Method of Work in the Roman Lives* in *JHS* 99, 1979, p. 88, n. 98 = B. SCARDIGLI (ed.), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, Oxford, 1995, p. 294 n. 98. The reappearance of the Mardian in 47,1 and 47,3 looks like a half-hearted attempt to harmonize the two traditions. Pelling also tentatively suggests that there could be two more sets of doublets (45,3 and 49,1; 47,3-4 and 49,4): *Plutarch's Method of Work*, p. 88, n. 98 = p. 294 n. 98.

(42) LIVY, *Per.* 130.

(43) See, for instance, NICOLAI, *Strabone e la campagna partica* [n. 6], p. 97-99; PELLING, *Plutarch's Method* [n. 41], p. 88 = SCARDIGLI, *Essays* [n. 41], p. 294; H. PETER, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, II, Stuttgart, 1906, p. LXVIII.

minations of other parts of the *Geography* have thrown doubt on the notion that Strabo tended to follow slavishly a single source for information pertaining to a particular region<sup>(44)</sup>. This observation pertains equally to information concerning the military history of a region: for instance, in Book 11, Strabo shows knowledge of multiple sources concerning both the campaigns of Alexander<sup>(45)</sup> and the Mithridatic Wars<sup>(46)</sup>. Further, Strabo tells us that he dealt with Parthian affairs extensively in his lost *Historical Sketches* and in his *History*<sup>(47)</sup>. The latter work began where Polybius finished, extended into the 30s BC, and seems to have dealt with at least some of Antony's activities in the east<sup>(48)</sup>. In view of this, it is unconvincing to assume that Strabo would have relied entirely on a single source when discussing Antony's Parthian campaign in the *Geography*. He may well have consulted a number of sources in the course of researching his historical works.

The other difficulty involved with seeing a common source standing behind Plutarch and Strabo is that the four parallel passages are not close enough to be decisive. First, both Strabo and Plutarch mention Antony's conducting a siege in Media Atropatene<sup>(49)</sup>. Strabo says the target of the siege was a strong fortress (φρούριον ἑρμυμόν) called Vera. The crucial sentence in Strabo is corrupt in the manuscript tradition, and a number of emendations have been suggested, but there is broad agreement that, whatever Strabo wrote, he described the fortress as a royal residence<sup>(50)</sup>. Plutarch also says that Antony besieged a place in which the wives and children of Artavasdes of Media were resident, which tends to suggest that the same incident is being described, although strictly the presence of the royal family might not mean that this was the regular royal residence. In any case, the rest of Plutarch's account is divergent. Antony is said to have besieged a great city (μεγάλη πόλις) called Phraata. There has been much inconclusive discussion attempting to harmonize these two accounts, and to place Vera inside or near Phraata<sup>(51)</sup>. The problem may in truth be insoluble. Whatever the case,

(44) See, for instance, A. DIRKZWAGER, *Strabo über Gallia Narbonensis*, Leiden, 1975 (Studies of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society, 4), p. 5-11 for a demolition of the view that Book 4 of the *Geography* is heavily derivative from Posidonius alone, and p. 11-13 with p. 5, n. 12 and literature cited there for general doubts about the applicability of the "one source hypothesis" to Strabo. See too NICOLAI, *Strabone e la campagna partica* [n. 6], p. 99-107; 112-126 for an outline of the range of sources employed in Book 11.

(45) STR. 11,6,4; 11,14,12.

(46) STR. 11,2,14.

(47) STR. 11,9,3.

(48) STR. 11,9,3; JOSEPH., *AJ* 15,9 (= *FGrH* 91 F18).

(49) PLUT., *Ant.* 38,3-4; STR. 11,13,3, quoted above, p. 212.

(50) BENGSTON, *Partherfeldzug* [n. 1], p. 24-26 and literature cited there, to which add SYME, *Anatolica* [n. 6], p. 82.

the fact that such elaborate harmonization is necessary makes it clear that these passages cannot be used as evidence for Plutarch and Strabo's use of a common source. Indeed, the differences in the name and description of the place besieged could reasonably be taken as positive evidence for their having used different sources at this point.

The second pair of passages that have been seen as evidence for a common source concern the role of Artavasdes of Armenia in the expedition<sup>(52)</sup>. Strabo claims that Antony rashly (εἰκῆ) made Artavasdes of Armenia his counsellor and put him in charge of decisions concerning the war<sup>(53)</sup>. The implication is that during the time that he held this position as Antony's confidant, Artavasdes used this position in a deliberately malicious way and took steps to damage the Roman cause. There is implicit censure of Antony as well as Artavasdes in the passage. Plutarch's discussion of Artavasdes is rather different. He claims that Artavasdes' withdrawal of support was the reason for Antony's inability to finish the war decisively : it meant that Antony lacked the cavalry to follow up infantry victories. This is at odds with the assumption lying behind Strabo's passage that Artavasdes had damaged the Roman cause with malicious advice. Plutarch also seems to present Artavasdes' motivations in a rather different light. He calls the withdrawal a betrayal (προδοσία)<sup>(54)</sup>, but says that the king withdrew his cavalry having despaired of the Roman cause<sup>(55)</sup>, which is rather different from Strabo's allegations of deliberately malicious advice. Plutarch's version also lacks the implicit criticism of Antony that the Strabo passage contains.

A third pair of passages would appear to contain more impressive evidence of a shared source : both Strabo and Plutarch give 8000 stades as a distance<sup>(56)</sup>. They are not in precise agreement about what exactly the figure represents : Strabo claims that this was the distance of the Roman army's march from Zeugma to the border between Armenia and Media Atropatene. Plutarch has it as the distance from the starting point of the Roman march on the Mediterranean coast to the place in Armenia where Antony marshalled the Roman and allied contingents of his army. One could put this down to faulty memory on Plutarch's part, although having to resort to this should cause some unease. There is a deeper difficulty, however. The figure of 8000 stades occurs in quite different contexts

(51) See BENGSTON, *Partherfeldzug* [n. 1], p. 27-30 and literature there for a discussion of the problem.

(52) PLUT., *Ant.* 50,2 ; STR. 11,13,4.

(53) STR. 11,13,4. The conjecture of εἰκῆ for the εἰκός contained in most of the MSS is Meineke's : A. MEINEKE, *Strabonis Geographica*, II, Leipzig, 1866 [Graz, 1969], p. 736 ; cf. p. x.

(54) PLUT., *Ant.* 50,3 ; cf. PLUT., *Comp. Ant. et Demetr.* 5,2 : προεδόθη.

(55) PLUT., *Ant.* 39,1.

(56) PLUT., *Ant.* 38,1 ; STR. 11,13,4.

in Strabo and Plutarch. Strabo, in blaming a nameless guide for leading the Roman army to Media Atropatene via a roundabout route, claims that the distance of the march was 8000 stades. Plutarch mentions this distance in the context of a passage criticizing Antony for his failure to winter his troops in Armenia, saying that men who had marched 8000 stades ought to have been rested. Still, the appearance of the figure of 8000 stades would appear to be a striking coincidence – until one considers that this figure is equal to 1000 Roman miles<sup>(57)</sup>. Both authors evidently found the figure in the context of rhetorical, invective-laden passages in their sources. It is therefore entirely possible that these sources were separate Latin sources that had independently seized upon the appropriately round figure of 1000 miles in making their point<sup>(58)</sup>. The coincidence between the figures need not prove anything at all, in this case.

Finally, it has been suggested that a common source lies behind the reports in Strabo and Plutarch that Artavasdes of Armenia presented Antony with 6000 cavalrymen at the marshalling of troops in Armenia<sup>(59)</sup>. This is perhaps the most impressive congruence, but it is not without its problems either. Plutarch describes Artavasdes' contribution simply as ἵππεις; Strabo, on the other hand, writes: Ἀρταουάσδης δὲ Ἀντωνίῳ χωρὶς τῆς ἄλλης ἱππείας αὐτὴν τὴν κατάφρακτον ἑξακισχιλίαν ἵππων ἐκτάξας ἐπέδειξεν. It is not clear whether χωρὶς τῆς ἄλλης ἱππείας is meant to suggest that this force of cataphracts was additional to the rest of the Armenian contribution (presumably of light-armed cavalry), or whether it was additional to the rest of the cavalry in Antony's army. Moreover, Plutarch's reckoning is complicated by the fact that later on he claims that Artavasdes led 16,000 cavalry back to Armenia when he withdrew from the campaign<sup>(60)</sup>. One could perhaps suggest that Artavasdes had 6,000 troops when the troops were marshalled in Armenia, with another 10,000 troops joining him later in the campaign, although introducing a separate and unattested force of 10,000 Armenian cavalry into the equation is hardly an elegant solution to the discrepancies. Moreover, there is also the fact that in the *Life of Crassus*, Plutarch has Artavasdes present Crassus with 6,000 cavalry and promise another 10,000 later<sup>(61)</sup>. This raises the possibility that Plutarch did not actually have a source for the Armenian cavalry numbers in 36 at all, but instead simply extrapolated from the numbers offered in 53.

(57) The usual conversion rate was 8 stades to every Roman mile: STR. 7,7,4; cf. S. POTHECARY, *Strabo, Polybios, and the Stade in Phoenix* 49,1, 1995, p. 49-67.

(58) OLD sv. *mille* 1b for references to such vague, rhetorical uses of the word *mille*.

(59) PLUT., *Ant.* 37,3; STR. 11,14,9.

(60) PLUT., *Ant.* 50,2; cf. BENGSTON, *Partherfeldzug* [n. 1], p. 38.

(61) PLUT., *Crass.* 19,1.

3. *The Parthian Campaign and the Image of Mark Antony.* — The arguments for seeing Delliuss as the fountainhead for much of our information about the Parthian campaign are therefore inconclusive. Even the arguments in favour of his being the source used by Plutarch and Strabo are unsatisfactory. Attempting to identify specific sources behind our extant historical texts is often a difficult enterprise in which only highly tentative arguments are possible. Another angle of approach suggests itself, however. Having presented his account of the Parthian expedition, Cassius Dio continues :

...οἱ δὲ δὴ οἴκοι Ῥωμαῖοι ἠγνόουν μὲν οὐδὲν τῶν γεγονότων, οὐχ ὅτι τάλιθές ἐκεῖνος [sc. Ἀντώνιος] ἐπέστειλέ σφισι (πάντα γὰρ δὴ τὰ δυσχεροῦ συνέκρουπτε, καὶ ἔστιν ἅ γε αὐτῶν καὶ ἐς τὸ ἐναντιώτατον, ὡς καὶ εὐπραγῶν, ἔγραφεν), ἀλλ' ὅτι ἢ τε φήμη τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐσήγγελλε, καὶ ὁ Καίσαρ οἱ τε ἄλλοι οἱ συνόντες αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπολυπραγμόνουν ἀκριβῶς αὐτὰ καὶ διεθρύλουν, οὐ μόντοι καὶ ἐν τῷ κοινῷ διήλεγχον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐβουθύτουν καὶ ἐώρταζον· τοῦ γὰρ Καίσαρος πρὸς τὸν Σέξτον ἔτι καὶ τότε προσπαλιόντος οὔτε εὐπρεπῆς οὔτε ἐπίκαιρος ὁ ἔλεγχος αὐτῶν γίγνεσθαι ἐδύνατο <sup>(62)</sup>.

This passage tends to confirm what one would expect *a priori* : that both Antony and Octavian recognized the potential the Parthian fiasco had to damage the image of Antony. Antony sought to diffuse this potential for damage. Octavian and his supporters later exploited it when they spread around (διεθρύλουν) their version of the campaign <sup>(63)</sup>. Furthermore, Dio claims that in 34 after Antony's capture of Artavasdes and occupation of Armenia, Octavian prevented the publication of Antony's dispatches concerning this success <sup>(64)</sup>. Later in his triumviral narrative, Dio purports to describe one occasion in which Octavian supposedly gave his version of the Parthian campaign. Dio puts a speech into Octavian's mouth just before Actium which, *inter alia* accuses Antony of luxury and effeminacy, and cites as proof of this the heavy casualties and disgraceful retreat which characterized the Parthian campaign <sup>(65)</sup>. He also attacks his faithlessness to his allies, and cites his deception and imprisonment of Artavasdes of Armenia <sup>(66)</sup>. So, at least according to Dio, by the late 30s the failed Parthian campaign and the conduct of the Armenian campaign of 34 had become part of the war of images between Antony and Octavian <sup>(67)</sup>. Moreover,

(62) DIO CASS. 49,32,1-2.

(63) Cf. Plutarch's report of a subsequent thinly veiled sneer by Octavian in the senate at Antony's claims of success in the Parthian war : PLUT., *Ant.* 55,2.

(64) DIO CASS. 49,41,5.

(65) DIO CASS. 50,27,5.

(66) DIO CASS. 50,27,7 ; cf. 50,1,4.

(67) Cf. K. SCOTT, *The Political Propaganda of 44-30 B. C.* in *MAAR* 11, 1933, p. 7-49 at 36-37. Note too Augustus' mention in the *Res Gestae* of his recovery of the spoils and standards lost to the Parthians by three Roman armies – one of which was Antony's

Dio implies that all manner of rumours surrounded the campaign, rumours which were not necessarily controlled directly by one side or the other. Appian also mentions rumours concerning the extent of Antony's defeat <sup>(68)</sup>.

The claims of Dio and Appian are intrinsically probable, given that the behaviour of Antony (and also Octavian) in the battles and campaigns of the triumviral period was often an issue which provoked rumour and partisan allegations. Antony apparently alleged that Octavian fled during the battle at Forum Gallorum and that he spent the battle of Naulochus lying on his back in a stupor <sup>(69)</sup>. A certain Aquilius Niger, who was possibly a friend of Antony, claimed that Octavian killed Hirtius during the battle of Mutina <sup>(70)</sup>. It has also been suggested that Octavian might have been accused of living luxuriously during the Mutina campaign, and his lifestyle contrasted with the hardships faced by Antony during the retreat from Mutina <sup>(71)</sup>. There were also allegations that Octavian had fled his camp at the first battle of Philippi, and Octavian and his sympathizers apparently tried to justify his absence, and to claim that Antony was also absent <sup>(72)</sup>.

All of this raises the question of the extent to which our extant versions of the Parthian campaign reflect not so much a truthful eyewitness account, but rather these competing versions of the campaign, versions which had their origins in partisan invective and rumour. It is well recognized that many fragments of the partisan discourse of the triumviral period were absorbed into extant works of history and biography. Often the authors of such works treat allegations drawn from such discourse as fact <sup>(73)</sup>. In what follows it will be suggested that parts of the extant accounts of the Parthian expedition show clear signs of having originated in such an atmosphere and then perhaps having been naively absorbed with little change by our extant authors (or their sources) <sup>(74)</sup>. If the Parthian campaign

army in 36. This suggests that, even later in his reign, the emperor was still capable of making political capital out of Antony's defeat: *Mon. Anc.* 29,2, cf. P. A. BRUNT & J. M. MOORE, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti. The Achievements of the Divine Augustus*, Oxford, 1967, p. 73.

(68) APP., *B Ciu.* 5,133.

(69) SUET., *Aug.* 10,4 ; 16,2 ; cf. DIO CASS. 46,38,1 ; CIC., *Phil.* 14,28.

(70) AQUILIUS NIGER, Frag. 1 (ed. PETER, *HRRel.*) = SUET., *Aug.* 11 ; cf. PLUT., *Ant.* 53,2.

(71) SUET., *Aug.* 77 with PLUT., *Ant.* 17,3 and J. GEIGER, *An Overlooked Item of the War of Propaganda between Octavian and Antony in Historia* 29,1, 1980, p. 112-114.

(72) For Octavian's absence, see VELL. PAT. 2,70,1 ; APP., *B Ciu.* 4,110 ; SUET., *Aug.* 91,1 ; PLUT., *Ant.* 22,2, *Brut.* 41,1 ; 42,3 ; DIO CASS. 47,41,3-4 ; PLIN., *HN* 7,148 ; FLOR. 2,17,10. For allegations of Antony's absence, see PLUT., *Ant.* 22,3, *Brut.* 42,3. ; FLOR. 2,17,10.

(73) HUZAR, *Literary Efforts* [n. 1 ], p. 654 ; BENGTON, *Antonius* [n. 1 ], p. 289 ; 292.

(74) Statements have occasionally been made about certain pieces of information or certain authors' accounts reflecting contemporary propaganda. There has, however, been

was enlisted in the battle of images of the late 30s, then we would expect that it was used primarily to debate the character and capabilities of Antony himself. One must therefore focus on the presentation of Antony in the extant accounts of the campaign. Care is needed, of course, in conducting such an exercise. An author such as Plutarch was perfectly capable of elaborating details to conform with a general theme. In what follows, then, special attention will be given to images of Antony contained in several accounts of the Parthian campaign. When Antony is portrayed in a similar way in sources that are not directly reliant on each other, then there is a very good chance that the portrait goes back to an early stage of the traditions about the campaign.

First, however, it is necessary to highlight a few of the salient features of the various images of Antony which were created during the triumviral period, and sustained during the reign of Augustus. The subject has been heavily studied<sup>(75)</sup>, so it suffices to present these features in summary form. During the period in question Antony's opponents hurled many of the standard slurs and allegations of Roman invective against him. Some of these essentially functioned in isolation. For instance, in Cicero's *Philippics* and later, he is repeatedly accused of acting with dishonesty and deception<sup>(76)</sup>. Often, though, these slurs and allegations were not simply used in isolation. Rather, they were combined with other charges, so as to build an overarching – and very negative – image of Antony. Two such images are very relevant in analyzing the extant accounts of the Parthian expedition: the image of Antony the tyrant; and the image of Antony as *miles gloriosus*.

The first and most sustained portrait of Antony as stereotypical tyrant occurs in the *Philippics*. Antony is repeatedly called a tyrant by Cicero<sup>(77)</sup>, and the Roman people are said to risk slavery under his tyranny<sup>(78)</sup>. Like the stereotypical tyrant, Antony is said to have lacked restraint over his desires (*libidines*)<sup>(79)</sup>, and there is frequent reference to his tendency toward luxury, inebriation, sexu-

no sustained argument to support this insight. See VON GUTSCHMID, *Geschichte Irans* [n. 5], p. 97 n. 3; REINHOLD, *Republic to Principate* [n. 1], p. 18-19; SHERWIN-WHITE, *Foreign Policy* [n. 6], p. 309; BENGSTON, *Partherfeldzug* [n. 1], p. 12; SCARDIGLI, *Römerbiographien* [n. 6], p. 147.

(75) See, for instance, K. SCOTT, *Political Propaganda* [n. 67], p. 7-49; K. SCOTT, *Octavian's Propaganda and Antony's de sua ebrietate* in *CPh.* 24, 1929, p. 133-141; P. ZANKER, *Augustus und die Macht der Bilder*, Munich, 1987, p. 65-73.

(76) *Cic.*, *Phil.* 2,93-100; 109; 3,30; 4,14; 5,11-12; cf. 2,8. *Cic.*, *Ad Fam.* 12,23 (= SB 347), 2. For allegations of Antony's deceitfulness in later sources, see *Nic. Dam.* 123; 128; *App.*, *B Ciu.* 3,39.

(77) *Cic.*, *Phil.* 3,8-9; 29; 34; 5,44; 8,12; 13,18.

(78) *Cic.*, *Phil.* 3,12; 29; 33-35; 4,11; 6,19; 8,12; 10,18-20; 11,25; 14,37.

(79) *Cic.*, *Phil.* 2,15; 71; 104; 115; 3,28; 6,4; 13,10.

al excess, and gluttony<sup>(80)</sup>. Cicero also portrays Antony as a man of tyrannical violence and cruelty<sup>(81)</sup>, whose *ira* and bestial *furor* often lead him to violence<sup>(82)</sup>: for instance he depicts Antony's decimation of his army at Brundisium in 44 as an act of savagery prompted by rage<sup>(83)</sup>. Cicero, speaking metaphorically of course, even says that Antony has an appetite for the blood of citizens (a metaphor often used of tyrants)<sup>(84)</sup>. And, in the true fashion of a tyrant<sup>(85)</sup>, when in Rome, the Antony of the *Philippics* is accompanied by a bodyguard of foreigners<sup>(86)</sup>. Finally, the tyrannical Antony in the *Philippics* is a *contemptor deum*, who ignores the auspices and treats temples with disrespect<sup>(87)</sup>.

The *Philippics* present the most sustained portrait of Antony the tyrant; however, many of these allegations were repeated during the triumviral and early Augustan periods. For instance, his excessive inebriation was repeated as a charge to the point that he felt compelled to write a pamphlet *de ebrietate sua*, apparently defending his drinking habits<sup>(88)</sup>. Octavian apparently symbolically condemned these drinking habits and the luxury and carousing that went with them: we are told that, when he took Alexandria in 30, he melted down all the *uasa aurea assiduissimi usus* in the palace<sup>(89)</sup>. M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus,

(80) CIC., *Phil.* 2,6; 44-47; 63; 66-69; 76-77; 101; 104-105; 3,12; 15; 20; 31; 35; 6,4; 12,26; 13,4; 11; 24; 31; CIC., *Fam.* 12,25 [= SB 373],4. For the *libidines* of the stereotypical tyrant, and his resulting gluttony, inebriation, and sexual excess, see M. LEIGH, *Varius Rufus, Thyestes and the Appetites of Antony* in *PCPhS* 42, 1996, p. 171-197 at 174; S. TREGGIARI, *Leges sine moribus* in *AHB* 8,3, 1994, p. 86-98 at 92.

(81) CIC., *Phil.* 2,62; 99; 115; 3,7; 23; 28; 30; 33-34; 4,4; 11-15; 5,6; 10; 16; 20-21; 25; 42; 6,3; 7; 7,15; 27; 8,10; 24; 11,6; 12,9; 19; 26; 13,4-5; 19; 21; 26; 42; 47; 14,8-9; 25. For the stereotypical tyrant's cruelty and violence, see J. R. DUNKLE, *The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic* in *TAPA* 98, 1967, p. 151-171 at 151; 168; J. R. DUNKLE, *The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus* in *CW* 65, 1971, p. 12-20 at 12-15; E. RAWSON, *Caesar's Heritage: Hellenistic Kings and their Roman Equals* in *JRS* 65, 1975, p. 148-159 at 148-149.

(82) CIC., *Phil.* 1,27; 2,1; 80; 3,3-6; 3,28; 30; 4,3; 11; 5,19; 37; 42-43; 6,4; 7; 10,21; 12,26.

(83) CIC., *Phil.* 3,4; 31; 4,4; 5,22; 12,12; 13,18; cf. APP., *B Ciu.* 3,43-44; DIO CASS. 45,13,2.

(84) CIC., *Phil.* 2,59; 71; cf. LEIGH, *Varius Rufus* [n. 80], p. 176-178; PL., *Resp.* 565C-566A.

(85) Cf. ARIST., *Pol.* 1285a; 1311a; HERODOTUS 1,59,5-6.

(86) CIC., *Phil.* 1,27; 34; 2,6; 15-16; 100; 112; 3,9; 30; 5,17-18; 13,18.

(87) CIC., *Phil.* 2,6; 48; 64-65; 68; 72; 75; 80-84; 3,1; 9; 11; 5,7-8; 15; 24; 6,3; 8,8; 10; 12,12. For the stereotypical tyrant as *contemptor deum*, see VERG., *Aen.* 7,648; 8,7; cf. 8,481-495; DUNKLE, *Greek Tyrant* [n. 81], p. 153 and references there.

(88) PLIN., *HN* 14,148; cf. SCOTT, *Octavian's Propaganda* [n. 75].

(89) SUET., *Aug.* 71,1: *...cum et Alexandria capta nihil sibi praeter unum murrinum calicem ex instrumento retinuerit et mox uasa aurea assiduissimi usus conflauerit*

presumably after switching into Octavian's camp, even accused Antony of using *uasa aurea* as chamber pots<sup>(90)</sup>. Varius Rufus also composed a work *De morte Caesaris* in which he attacked Antony for his behaviour in the proscriptions in 43, and for his carousing with gold cups<sup>(91)</sup>. Varius perhaps continued his attack on Antony in his *Thyestes*, performed in 29 during the Actian Games. Leigh has suggested that this tragedy subtly equated Antony with the tyrant Atreus, since the Thyestean banquet which must have featured in the play would have echoed Cicero's metaphor of Antony's appetite for blood<sup>(92)</sup>.

A second image of Antony is also relevant to analyzing the accounts of the Parthian campaign: that of Antony as *miles gloriosus*, a stock character in Greek and Roman Comedy. Sussman has suggested that Cicero tried to apply this stereotype to Antony in the *Second Philippic*<sup>(93)</sup>. Moreover, many of the individual vices of the *miles* are mentioned in the other *Philippics*. Antony is said by Cicero to be boastful about his military exploits and his standing with Caesar<sup>(94)</sup>, but Cicero intimates that, like the stock *miles gloriosus*<sup>(95)</sup>, Antony at times showed cowardice and a reluctance to face physical danger<sup>(96)</sup>. He is also attacked by Cicero for his stupidity, and, like the braggart soldier, he is repeatedly said to have been under the influence of and tricked by others, including L. Antonius, Fulvia and Caesar<sup>(97)</sup>. And of course, as seen above, Antony was constantly portrayed as having a powerful appetite for sex and lavish and inebriated banquets<sup>(98)</sup>, another trait of the *nouveau riche* (and hence tasteless) *miles*<sup>(99)</sup>. Many of these allegations leveled against Antony by Cicero were repeated in the 30s and 20s by others, even when they were not attempting necessarily to build

*omnia*. Note that allegations flew both ways about expensive furniture and household vessels: Octavian was accused of a taste for both in the late 40s: Suet., *Aug.* 70,2.

(90) MESSALLA CORVINUS, *Frag.* 17 (ed. MALCOVATI, *ORF*<sup>2</sup>) = *Frag.* 10 (ed. PETER, *HRRel.*) = PLIN., *HN* 33,50. See too PLIN., *HN* 34,6 for Antony's alleged coveting Verres' Corinthian bronzes (whether these were statues or drinking vessels is unclear).

(91) MACROB., *Sat.* 6,1,39-40 (= VARIUS RUFUS, *Frag.* 1-2 (ed. COURTNEY)).

(92) LEIGH, *Varius Rufus* [n. 80], *passim*.

(93) L. A. SUSSMAN, *Antony as a miles gloriosus in Cicero's Second Philippic in Scholia* n.s. 3, 1994, p. 53-83.

(94) Cic., *Phil.* 2,5 ; 72 ; SUSSMAN, *Antony* [n. 93], p. 64-66.

(95) Cf. TER., *Eun.* 781-782 ; PLAUT., *Mil.* 1394-1427 ; SUSSMAN, *Antony* [n. 93], p. 66.

(96) Cic., *Phil.* 2,71 ; 74-75 ; SUSSMAN, *Antony* [n. 93], p. 66-67.

(97) Cic., *Phil.* 1,8 ; 33 ; 2,45 ; 82 ; 85-86 ; 95 ; 3,12 ; 5,11 ; 29-30 ; 6,4 ; 9-11 ; 7,16.

See SUSSMAN, *Antony* [n. 93], p. 68 ; 73-74 for the submissive and easily tricked nature of the *miles* and T. W. HILLARD, *Republican Politics, Woman, and the Evidence in Helios* 16,2, 1989, p. 165-182 for the role of accusations of feminine influence in Republican invective.

(98) Above, p. 224-225.

(99) SUSSMAN, *Antony* [n. 93], p. 76-81.

a coherent stereotype of the braggart soldier. For instance, Antony was alleged to have been subservient to others, especially Cleopatra<sup>(100)</sup>. Octavian/Augustus and his supporters also later played down Antony's personal role in the victories he claimed in the late 40s. This contributed to an image of an Antony who overstated his military achievements<sup>(101)</sup>.

When one reads the accounts of the Parthian campaign with these contemporary images of Antony in mind, it is immediately apparent that many parts of these accounts are shaped by such images. This is perhaps most evident in the discussions of Antony's relations with others during – and immediately before and after – the expedition. Like the *miles gloriosus*, Antony is depicted as being under the influence of a remarkable variety of people. Very often these people trick him, or damage his interests in other ways. He is said by both Plutarch and Livy to have been so infatuated with Cleopatra that, in his rush to return to the Mediterranean coast to see her, he refused to winter in Armenia in 36-35, and instead attacked Media too late in the campaigning season of 36<sup>(102)</sup>. Plutarch describes Cleopatra's influence over Antony as being like drugs or magic, an analogy that was much used at the time. In Plutarch's account, when Antony finally arrives back at the Mediterranean coast after his retreat from Media, he is literally not able to sit still for more than a minute in his anticipation of the arrival of the queen<sup>(103)</sup>.

In accounts of the campaign itself, he is repeatedly portrayed as being under the influence of others when making tactical and strategic decisions. Strabo mentions a guide who made the march into Media Atropatene twice as long as it needed to be, and also implicitly criticizes Antony for rashly making Artavasdes his advisor in all his decisions concerning the war when the latter was plotting against him, and for only punishing the king when it was too late<sup>(104)</sup>. Furthermore, as mentioned above, in Plutarch, at the beginning of the retreat, Antony is approached by a mysterious "Mardian" who gives him advice about his route of retreat. The advice turns out to be of dubious worth, since the Roman army marches into an ambush<sup>(105)</sup>. The story of the mysterious advisor clearly goes back to well before Plutarch, since his account seems to contain a doublet of the same incident, as argued above. Velleius and Florus also give accounts of the same incident, although they claim that the adviser was a survivor of Crassus'

(100) SCOTT, *Political Propaganda* [n. 67], p. 43-45 for references.

(101) *Mon. Anc.* 2; A. M. GOWING, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio*, Ann Arbor, 1992, p. 112-113.

(102) PLUT., *Ant.* 37,4-38,2; LIVY, *Per.* 130.

(103) PLUT., *Ant.* 51,2.

(104) STR. 11,13,4; cf. 16,1,28.

(105) PLUT., *Ant.* 41.

campaign and actually say that his advice was all that saved Antony (106). In Plutarch, men from within Antony's army also do some of his thinking for him during the retreat. Five days into the retreat a certain Flavius Gallus convinces Antony to give him troops with which to launch an attack, the result of which is a catastrophe in which three thousand Romans die and five thousand are wounded. In the same action, Plutarch also mentions Canidius, whom he describes as ἀνὴρ παρὰ Ἀντωνίῳ δυνάμενος μέγιστον (107). And, at one point, just before the retreat begins, Antony's friends even influence him into changing the colour of his robe before delivering an *adlocutio* (108).

It is not just Antony's friends who regularly sway his will, but also his enemies. In both Dio and Plutarch, Phraates promises to allow Antony to withdraw unmolested from Media if he gives up the siege at Phraata/Phraaspa. Antony takes the bait, and then the Parthian army proceeds to harass the Romans all the way to the Armenian border. Plutarch and Dio Cassius both stress that Antony was tricked: Plutarch calls Phraates' plan a δόλος, and Dio has Antony realize that he had been deceived (ἐμαθεν ὅτι ἠπάτηται) (109). Dio's version even contains a scene in which Antony's envoys receive an audience with Phraates, who sits on a golden throne and twangs a bowstring. Arrian's *Parthica* seems to have contained the same incident, since one finds the king twanging a bow in a fragment attributed to that work (110). The message behind these details is clear: Antony should never have trusted a tyrant with an army of archers (archers who caused enormous casualties to the retreating army) (111). In Plutarch's version, Antony almost falls for the same Parthian trick a second time, as Parthian soldiers gain his confidence and convince him to march across the plains, before a second mysterious adviser alerts him to the danger (112). This is part of the doublet discussed above, which suggests that stories of Antony's gullibility existed

(106) VELL. PAT. 2,82,2; cf. FLOR. 2,20,4. W. W. TARN, *War of the East* [n. 1], p. 74 n. 1 suggests that at an early stage *Marsus* and *Mardus* were confused, and that from *Marsus* it was deduced that the man was a survivor of Crassus' defeat, since some of his men were Marsii (HOR., *Carm.* 3,5,9). Others have suggested that Plutarch's Μάρδος should be emended to Μάρσος, for discussion and references, see A. J. WOODMAN, *Velleius Paterculus. The Caesarian and Augustan Narrative (2,41-93)*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 210-211.

(107) PLUT., *Ant.* 42,4.

(108) PLUT., *Ant.* 44,2.

(109) PLUT., *Ant.* 40,2-3; DIO CASS. 49,28,2; cf. 49,27,3-5.

(110) ARR., *Parth.* Frag. 27 (ed. Roos).

(111) For archers, cf. DIO CASS. 49,29,1; PLUT., *Ant.* 41,5; 43,1. Notice too that the unstrung bow is treated by the Parthians as a symbol of non-aggression: PLUT., *Ant.* 46,1; 49,2.

(112) PLUT., *Ant.* 46,2.

in several of Plutarch's sources. Florus also reports an additional story, in which the Parthians flee before the Romans, deliberately tricking Antony into following them. The Parthians then ambush him and overwhelm two legions. The story does not have a close parallel in any other text, but in any case it is cited by Florus as an example of the trickery of the Parthians, and hence the gullibility of Antony <sup>(113)</sup>.

Like any braggart soldier, Antony in Parthia is presented not just as easily influenced and tricked, but also as vain and self-deluded about his military achievements. Florus attributes the entire Parthian campaign to Antony's *uanitas* and his desire to have new titles inscribed under his statues <sup>(114)</sup>. Florus finishes his narrative of the disaster with the claim that Antony, thanks to some sort of mental derangement, became more arrogant after the campaign, as if he considered the mere act of escaping the Parthians to amount to victory <sup>(115)</sup>. Velleius makes the same claim that Antony called the campaign a victory because he escaped with his life <sup>(116)</sup>. These statements are paralleled by Dio's claim that Antony represented his defeat as a victory in his letters to the senate, and suggest that these disingenuous attempts to conceal his failure became a cause for reproach <sup>(117)</sup>.

Antony was apparently accused not just of the idiotic fraudulence of the *miles gloriosus*, but also of rather more sinister acts of deception in connection with the Parthian campaign. He is said to have tried to deceive Phraates by sending a refugee Parthian aristocrat, Monaeses, back to him with a false offer of peace <sup>(118)</sup>. Florus even has Antony conclude a peace treaty with Phraates, whom he then attacks <sup>(119)</sup>. Antony's eventual capture of Artavasdes also provided grounds for allegations of deception and fraud. In his narrative, Dio claims that Antony schemed to deceive Artavasdes (ἐξαπατήσαι ἐπεβούλευσε) with a plot (ἐπιβουλή) <sup>(120)</sup>. The *Epitome* of Livy hints that Livy saw Antony's behaviour as a breach of *fides*, and Velleius describes Artavasdes as *fraude deceptus* <sup>(121)</sup>. Tacitus uses even stronger words about Antony's capture of Artavasdes, saying that Artavasdes was lured to Antony under the appearance of friendship (*specie amicitiae inlectus*), and calls the deed a *scelus* <sup>(122)</sup>. The charge can be reasonably

(113) FLOR. 2,20,3.

(114) FLOR. 2,20,2.

(115) FLOR. 2,20,10.

(116) VELL. PAT. 2,82,3.

(117) Above, p. 221.

(118) PLUT., *Ant.* 37,2 ; DIO CASS. 49,24,4-5.

(119) FLOR. 2,20,2.

(120) DIO CASS. 49,33,2-3 ; 49,39,2-6.

(121) LIVY, *Per.* 131 ; VELL. PAT. 2,82,3.

(122) TAC., *Ann.* 2,3,1.

assumed to have originated with Octavian, since Dio says that one of his stated pretexts for going to war with Antony was that his deceiving (ἐξαπατήσας) and arresting of the Armenian king had brought disrepute to the Roman people<sup>(123)</sup>. It would have remained in Augustus' interests during the 20s to condemn Antony's actions, since he continued to support Artavasdes' dynasty. He acquiesced to the reign of his eldest son, Artaxias (in spite of the latter's massacre of some Roman soldiers)<sup>(124)</sup>. Augustus then installed a succession of other members of Artavasdes' family on the throne, beginning with Tigranes, his youngest son<sup>(125)</sup>. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus makes a virtue of his installment of Tigranes<sup>(126)</sup>.

Our sources for the Parthian campaign also contain elements of another common image of Antony, that of Antony the tyrant. For one thing, he shows clear signs of the tyrant's anger and cruelty. He is found decimating some of his men, just as he decimated another of his armies at Brundisium. In Plutarch, those decimated are said to have acted with cowardice, but in the manner of the tyrant he deals out this punishment in anger<sup>(127)</sup>. Antony also has the tyrant's fondness for luxury. Plutarch's account has a supply of gold drinking cups on hand with which to reward "Mithridates", one of his mysterious advisers during his retreat<sup>(128)</sup>. Immediately after this incident, Plutarch has another story about a stereotypical "night of terror", in which the soldiers start robbing each other of their gold and silver. Finally, Antony's own baggage-carriers are attacked and his drinking cups and expensive tables are dismembered and distributed amongst the army<sup>(129)</sup>. Thus Antony travels in the style of the tyrant, and his luxury destroys the discipline of his men. Florus apparently preserves a variant on this story in more compressed form, saying that he at last reached Syria *cum argentum eius passim dolabris concideretur*<sup>(130)</sup>. In his version of this incident, Plutarch says that Antony thought that the Parthians were upon them, and hence made arrangements for one of his attendants to put him to death. The attendant is described as one of the freedmen of his bodyguard, and is given the distinctly non-Roman

(123) DIO CASS. 50,1,4. See F. R. D. GOODYEAR, *The Annals of Tacitus. Books 1-6*, II, Cambridge, 1981, p. 194.

(124) DIO CASS. 51,16,2.

(125) DIO CASS. 54,9,5 ; TAC., *Ann.* 2,3 ; VELL. PAT. 2,94,4 ; SUET., *Tib.* 9,1 ; cf. M.-L. CHAUMONT, *L'Arménie entre Rome et l'Iran. I. De l'avènement d'Auguste à l'avènement de Dioclétien* in ANRW II, 9,1, 1976, p. 71-194 at 73-84.

(126) *Mon. Anc.* 27,2.

(127) PLUT., *Ant.* 39,7 ; cf. DIO CASS. 49,26,4-27,1.

(128) PLUT., *Ant.* 48,1.

(129) PLUT., *Ant.* 48,2 ; cf. PELLING, *Antony* [n. 5], p. 237-238 and references there for the *topos* of the "night of terror".

(130) FLOR. 2,20,10.

name of Rhamnus, a name which is appropriately reminiscent of the town of Rhamnus in Attica, famed as a centre of the cult of Nemesis. Festus repeats the same story, saying that he asked his *gladiator* to kill him to prevent his falling into enemy hands<sup>(131)</sup>. Florus seems to reflect this story when he says that Antony repeatedly begged his *gladiator* to put him to death, although he does not provide the reasons for Antony's demand<sup>(132)</sup>. Florus' account might stand behind that of Festus, or they might have shared a source<sup>(133)</sup>. Thus Antony, in the manner of the tyrant, travels through Parthia attended by a bodyguard either of foreign freedmen, or at least of gladiators (whom a Roman reader might have assumed to have foreign and servile origins).

There is also evidence to suggest that Octavian/Augustus and his supporters accused Antony of sacrilegious behaviour (another tyrannical trait). An *Ode* of Horace from the 20s claims that the Parthian repulse of Antony's army was divine retribution for the fact that the Parthian campaign was begun against the auspices<sup>(134)</sup>. The Elder Pliny also preserves an anecdote concerning a solid gold statue of the goddess Anaitis which was allegedly plundered by Antony during his Parthian campaigns from the region of Anaitis in Armenia. The anecdote has Augustus himself characterizing this act as a violation of the goddess<sup>(135)</sup>. Another passage may also be relevant to the statue of Anaitis. M. Valerius Massalla Corvinus produced a pamphlet *de Antonii statuis*, probably after he had defected to Octavian's camp. Presumably the work generally discussed the temple ornaments which Antony allegedly plundered from temples in Asia<sup>(136)</sup>. The one extant fragment of Corvinus' work reads: *Armenii regis spolia gausa-*

(131) FESTUS, *Breviarium* 18,2.

(132) FLOR. 2,20,10.

(133) J. W. EADIE, *The Breviarium of Festus. A Critical Edition with Historical Commentary*, London, 1967, p. 135; R. SCUDERI, *Commento a Plutarco, Vita di Antonio*, Florence, 1984, p. 88.

(134) HOR., *Carm.* 3,6,7-12. R. G. M. NISBET & N. RUDD, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book III*, Oxford, 2004, p. 103, point out that the mention of Monaesus in line 9 is probably a reference to Antony's campaign of 36, given that this important Parthian aristocrat had returned to the side of Phraates by the time the campaign started and presumably held a command position (cf. PLUT., *Ant.* 37,1-2; 46,2-3). Nisbet and Rudd date this *Ode* to c. 28 BC, although West suggests that it might have been published as late as 23 BC: D. WEST, *Horace Odes III. Dulce Periculum*, Oxford, 2002, p. 64-65.

(135) PLIN., *HN* 33,82-83. For the location of this region on the Armenian bank of the Euphrates, see PLIN., *HN* 5,83.

(136) For which, see *Mon. Anc.* 24,1; R. K. SHERK, *Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus*, Baltimore, 1969, p. 313-320, no. 61; cf. BRUNT & MOORE, *Res Gestae* [n. 67], p. 66.

*pae* <sup>(137)</sup>. The context would tend to suggest that Corvinus' work criticized Antony's taking of spoils from Armenia after he turned on King Artavasdes. It may be, then, that the statues of the title included the plundered statue of Anaitis. (In any case, Corvinus' fragment is another instance of the criticism leveled at Antony by Octavian's partisans for his treatment of Artavasdes.) The accusation of impiety in connection with the Parthian campaign appears to shape various of the narrative histories. Livy's apparent claim that the capture of Artavasdes was a breach of *fides* had a religious dimension, since breaches of *fides* were commonly seen as offences against the gods <sup>(138)</sup>. Florus claims that Antony both began the Parthian campaign without a proper declaration of war or a *causa*, and in spite of the fact that he had made a treaty with the Parthian king <sup>(139)</sup>. The first allegation amounts to a claim that the campaign lacked the proper endorsement of the fetial ceremony, which ensured that the commencement of the war was not against divine will <sup>(140)</sup>. A war without a *causa* was often considered to be an *iniustum bellum*, as was a war started in breach of a treaty. Breaking treaties and starting unjust wars were, of course, seen as angering the gods and provoking their retribution <sup>(141)</sup>. Florus' allegations look distinctly like they might have originated in the late triumviral period or the reign of Augustus, given Octavian's careful use of the fetial ceremony to legitimate the Actium campaign <sup>(142)</sup>, and the insistence that his subsequent wars were engaged in justly <sup>(143)</sup>.

Of course, Antony would not be expected to sit idly by while Octavian and his partisans used the Parthian disaster against him. Just as at so many other points during the triumviral period, in the wake of the Parthian campaign allegation seems to have been followed by defence and counter-claim. This is perhaps clearest with Artavasdes, who is portrayed in a number of sources as being to blame for Antony's defeat and deserving his eventual fate. Plutarch finishes the main part of his Parthian narrative by claiming that during the retreat Antony defeated the Parthians in 18 battles, a claim that looks suspiciously like it might have had its origins in Antony's inflated claims to the senate. Plutarch goes on to

(137) MESSALLA CORVINUS, Frag. 18 (ed. MALCOVATI, *ORF*<sup>2</sup>) = CHARISIUS, *Gramm.* p. 133 (ed. BARWICK).

(138) LIVY, *Per.* 131; cf. J. H. W. G. LIEBESCHUETZ, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion*, Oxford, 1979, p. 41-42 and references there.

(139) FLORUS 2,20,2.

(140) DION. HAL. 2,72,9; LIVY 1,32,7-10.

(141) S. WEINSTOCK, *Divus Julius*, Oxford, 1971, p. 243-245 and LIEBESCHUETZ, *Continuity and Change* [n. 138], p. 42 and references there.

(142) For which, see R. A. KEARSLEY, *Octavian in the Year 32 BC: The S.C. de Aphrodisiensibus and the genera militiae in RhM* 142,1, 1999, p. 52-67 at 58-60; 66-67 and references there.

(143) *Mon. Anc.* 26,3; Suet., *Aug.* 21,2.

say that Artavasdes, by withdrawing his cavalry, stripped Antony of his power to make one of these battles decisive. Moreover, in Plutarch's version, the initial impulse to punish Artavasdes comes not from Antony but from his soldiers. The deception that Antony used to do this eventually is swiftly glossed over, and certainly not condemned<sup>(144)</sup>. It seems likely, then, that Plutarch here reflected a version of the demise of Artavasdes derived from sources sympathetic to Antony. In one passage Strabo seems to do likewise, saying flatly that Artavasdes betrayed Antony to the Parthians and later paid the penalty for this betrayal<sup>(145)</sup>. Dio also states that Octavian had been in secret communication with Artavasdes to hurt Antony's interests, which possibly reflects an attempt by Antony or his supporters to lay the blame for Artavasdes' erratic behaviour at Octavian's feet<sup>(146)</sup>.

Various parts of the extant accounts of the Parthian campaign also seem to be consistent with the attempts by Antony and his supporters to build a positive image for the triumvir. One image that they were especially eager to promote was that of the good general, who was present in the thick of the action in battle<sup>(147)</sup>, and who shared the hardships of his men<sup>(148)</sup>. In the fashion of various Roman generals of the late Republic, he apparently compared himself with Alexander the Great<sup>(149)</sup>. This stress on Antony the general unsurprisingly seems to shape some of the parts of the accounts of the Parthian campaign that are more sympathetic to him. There are various references to Xenophon's *Anabasis* in Plutarch's account<sup>(150)</sup>, and Plutarch says that "they recount" that during the campaign Antony specifically likened his retreat to that of the Ten Thousand<sup>(151)</sup>. This conjures up the image of the greatest display of generalship in retreat in classical literature. Further, in Plutarch's account, we find Antony personally in

(144) PLUT., *Ant.* 50,2-4.

(145) STR. 11,14,15. This passage lacks the condemnation of Antony's trusting attitude toward the King visible in 11,13,4 and 16,1,28, and seems to originate from a source rather more sympathetic toward Antony.

(146) DIO CASS. 49,41,5.

(147) Note Antony's allegations about Octavian's absence from, or inactivity during battles, above, p. 222.

(148) See PLUT. *Ant.* 17,3, and also the apparent attempts to defend Octavian/Augustus against charges that he lived luxuriously during the Mutina campaign, above p. 222 n. 71.

(149) BENGSTON, *Antonius* [n. 1], p. 294 ; 297-298 ; D. MICHEL, *Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Marcus Antonius*, Brussels, 1967 (Collection Latomus, Vol. 94), p. 109-132 ; D. SPENCER, *The Roman Alexander. Reading a Cultural Myth*, Exeter, 2002, p. 26 ; 132 ; 193-195.

(150) Cf. PELLING, *Antony* [n. 1], p. 221-222 ; 229-231 ; 239.

(151) PLUT., *Ant.* 45,6. *Pace* Pelling, this allusion to the *Anabasis* is less likely to be Plutarch's invention, given Plutarch tries to attribute it to others : PELLING, *Antony* [n. 5], p. 221.

the thick of battle, leading a counterattack to free one of his men, Gallus, who had been cut off from the main body of the Roman forces <sup>(152)</sup>. He also shows concern for his men, shedding tears when they are wounded, discouraging them from drinking poisonous water, and pitching tents to shade them <sup>(153)</sup>. And Plutarch asserts that he shared in the soldiers' toils and sufferings during the retreat from Media <sup>(154)</sup>. Given that the generalship of Antony and Octavian was hotly debated in the late-40s and 30s, it seems that this section of narrative might well go back to attempts by Antony and his sympathizers to make some capital out of the retreat from Media by turning it into a model of his good generalship <sup>(155)</sup>.

4. *Conclusions.* — Attempting to ascertain which particular sources stand behind our extant accounts of the Parthian campaign is an inconclusive exercise. These accounts are, in fact, sufficiently diverse to suggest that there was not a single prototype standing behind them. Dellius is said to be the source of one passage in Strabo, but there is no secure argument for identifying him as the source of the rest of Strabo's information about the campaign, let alone most of Plutarch's. Even if there were, it is unclear just what such an identification would mean for our assessment of the information in those accounts. We simply do not know enough about Dellius the man and his writings to guess whether they were objective, or sympathetic or hostile to Antony.

It is therefore more promising to abandon the search for the influence of particular lost authors and instead examine the possible ideological contexts of pieces of information and passages in our extant accounts. What such an approach reveals is that much of our information about the campaign conforms suspiciously well to the images of Antony current in the triumviral period and reign of Augustus. At times the Antony of the Parthian campaign is portrayed (even by Plutarch) <sup>(157)</sup> as an angry tyrant who takes his collection of gold cups and expensive tables on campaign, who is surrounded by foreign bodyguards,

(152) PLUT., *Ant.* 42,4.

(153) PLUT., *Ant.* 43,1 ; 47,4.

(154) PLUT., *Ant.* 43,3.

(155) PLUT., *Ant.* 43,1-2 ; cf. 40,5.

(156) Cf. FLOR. 2,20,2 for an explicit mention of how the campaign revealed Antony's qualities as a general. The art of generalship (*ars ducis*), argues Florus, does not involve attacking by stealth as Antony did.

(157) This provides a serious challenge to the notion that Plutarch's portrayal of Antony in Parthia is essentially sympathetic : see PETER, *Quellen Plutarchs* [n. 6], p. 145 and BENGSTON, *Partherfeldzug* [n. 1], p. 10. SHERWIN-WHITE, *Foreign Policy* [n. 6], p. 309 and BRENK, *Plutarch's Life 'Markos Antonios'* [n. 6], p. 4425 rightly note that Plutarch's account of the campaign is not uniformly friendly to Antony.

and who shows contempt toward the gods. At times (even in Plutarch) he is an unsophisticated *miles gloriosus* who is subservient to all and sundry and constantly tricked<sup>(158)</sup>. Occasionally, especially in Plutarch, he is the good general, who cares for his men, shares their pain, fights with them in battle, and is loved by them. This is what we would expect. Dio tells us that Octavian saw the potential that the disastrous campaign had to damage the image of Antony, and that Antony tried to limit this damage. Therefore what we have in our extant accounts of the Parthian campaign seems to be largely a reflection of attempts to create an image of Antony on campaign that would serve partisan ends. The extant sources are unlikely to reflect in any direct way the account of an unprejudiced eyewitness.

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(158) The fact that details which coincide with contemporary anti-Antonian rhetoric are found in most of the extant sources, including Plutarch and Strabo, throws doubt on Bengston's attempt to split the sources concerning the campaign into those sympathetic to Antony (Plutarch and Strabo) and those hostile to him (the other sources) : BENGSTON, *Partherfeldzug* [n. 1], p. 10.