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AUGUSTAN POETS ON THE ROMAN-PARTHIAN TREATY OF 20 BC

ABSTRACT: From the moment Rome established contacts with the Parthian empire in the 1st century BC, its relations with the eastern neighbour became one of the most important points of Roman foreign policy. Attempts to subjugate Parthia ended in Rome's crushing defeat at Carrhae in 53 BC. Having taken over power in the Roman Republic, Octavian Augustus became much more active in his oriental policy, wishing to erase the shame brought upon Rome by the defeat. The peace treaty signed in 20 BC was the Emperor's diplomatic success and was presented as a great triumph by the Roman propaganda. In this paper, I analyse several fragments referring to this agreement in the works of the Augustan poets Horace, Propertius and Ovid. The works, written over almost three decades, present this event from various perspectives. On the one hand, they show a strong intermixture of politics and literature, and on the other hand, great talent and artistic skill of the poets writing creatively about issues which were current in Rome at the time.

KEY WORDS: Augustan age, Augustan poetry, Romano-Parthian relations, Roman-Parthian treaty of 20 BC, Iran in Latin poetry

1. INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of his life, when Emperor Augustus was writing his political biography, commonly known as the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* or – in reference to the location, where its first copy was found – the

Monumentum Ancyranum, alongside the numerous achievements of the long decades of his rule over the Imperium Romanum, he included a mention of the Roman-Parthian treaty of 20:¹

Parthos trium exercitum Romanorum spolia et signa reddere mihi supplicesque amicitiam populi Romani petere coegi. Ea autem signa in penetroali quod est in templo Martis Ultoris reposui. (RGDA 29)

Augustus considered the peace treaty signed with the King of Parthia at the time, Phraates IV (37–2), to be significant enough to be counted among the main accomplishments of his rule, in the part of the *Res Gestae* in which he described his military and diplomatic achievements (RGDA 26–33).² Like all the other events recorded in this account, the mention of the treaty signed in 20 has clear propaganda goals and its aim is to show the Princeps in the glory of a ruler as successful in war as in negotiations. The comments of the Augustan poets who mentioned this peace treaty in their works, i.e. Horace, Propertius and Ovid, should also be analysed in the context of Augustus' political and social programme, taking into account decades of Roman-Parthian relations.

2. ROMAN-PARTHIAN RELATIONS (95–20)

The Roman Republic's expansion to the East started for good after the victory against Carthage in the Second Punic War; the victorious military conflicts that followed strengthened the Romans' position in this part of the world. After signing a peace agreement with the Seleucid king at Apamea in 188, Rome only rarely became involved in the East

¹ All dates to which reference is made are BC unless otherwise stated.

² It is worth noting that in the *Res Gestae* the Emperor also mentions his other achievements in relations with Parthia. In cap. 27 he recalls putting pro-Roman candidates on the Armenian throne, successively: Tigranes III (20 BC), Ariobarzanes II (AD 1/2) and Tigranes V (AD 6). In cap. 32 he mentions the Arsacids Tiridates and Phraates V among the kings who sought his help. In cap. 32–33 Augustus also mentions Phraates IV sending four of his sons, who subsequently lived in Rome, and one of whom, Vonones, was later recalled to his homeland to take the Parthian throne. For more on this see Brunt 1990: 437; Campbell 2002: 227–228; Olbrycht 2013: 16–21 and 36–42.

and preferred to act through clients. This changed with the capture of the Kingdom of Pergamum and the establishment of the province of Asia in 129. From that point on the Republic was more involved in the affairs in the eastern part of the Mediterranean, although for some time it continued to pursue its interests mainly through client states such as Bithynia. Meanwhile, the Parthian state ruled by the Arsacid dynasty, which emerged on the Caspian steppes of Central Asia around the 3rd century, pursued the policy of expansion to the West, towards the Mediterranean, fighting against the increasingly weak Seleucid monarchy. The Parthians drove out the Seleucid forces from one province after another, and in the times of Mithridates I (165–132) they managed to capture the wealthy Mesopotamia, which over time would become the centre of their state. Seleucid attempts to reconquer the lands, made by Demetrius II and Antiochus VII, ended in failure and the rule of Seleucus' heirs was limited to Syria. Despite frequent wars against nomad tribes, the Arsacids continued to push westward, which inevitably had to lead to a clash between the Parthian power and the Roman Republic in Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia.³

The first contacts between Rome and Parthia took place in the early 1st century. At the time Parthia was ruled by Mithridates II (122–87), who assumed the title of 'King of Kings,' associated with the Achaemenid tradition. He was active in Asia Minor and the Caucasus, and ca. 96 he put his candidate, Tigranes II (96/95–55) of the Artaxiad dynasty, on the Armenian throne. It was through Tigranes that the Parthians supported the ambitious King of Pontus, Mithridates VI Eupator (120–63), who started to pursue a clearly anti-Roman policy in the early 1st century.⁴ In 95–94 both Eupator and Tigranes intervened in Cappadocia, which was ruled by the pro-Roman Ariobarzanes. The latter was deposed as a result of the Armenian invasion, but he reclaimed the throne after an intervention of the governor of Cilicia, the pro-praetor Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who defeated Tigranes' army. The Parthians then sent their ambassador

³ For the beginnings of the Parthian state see Bivar 1986: 28–45; Wolski 1999; Olbrycht 2010: 161–175.

⁴ The cooperation of the three kings is also confirmed by dynastic marriages between their houses: Tigranes wedded Eupator's daughter, and married his daughter off to Mithridates II, who was quite advanced in years at the time. For the relations of the King of Pontus with the Iranian world see Olbrycht 2009.

Orobazus to Sulla and the first diplomatic meeting between the two states took place, but a permanent peace treaty was not signed.⁵

The first war between Rome and Mithridates VI started in 89. The sources say nothing about the direct Roman-Parthian relations in this and the next decade, even though the ruler of Pontus was financially supported by the Parthians during the Mithridatic War, which initially enabled him to achieve considerable success and to move the fighting to Greece. However, when Mithridates II died and the Arsacid monarchy experienced infighting, this support was much weakened and Sulla's forces scored victories over the Pontic armies and forced Eupator to sign an unfavourable peace treaty at Dardanus in 85. The 80s were a time of crisis for the Parthian state: civil wars and fighting against Tigranes of Armenia made it impossible for the Parthians to pursue an active policy in Asia Minor. In 74 the Third Mithridatic War broke out, as a result of which the King of Pontus, suffering successive defeats against Lucius Licinius Lucullus, had to seek shelter in Armenia, ruled by his son-in-law (earlier the Parthian King Sinatruces refused to help Eupator). Lucullus attacked Tigranes and captured his capital city, Tigranocerta, in 69. The two defeated kings and the victorious Lucullus all turned for help to Phraates III (70–58/7) of the Arsacid house. Phraates played for time, refusing to be provoked into a war against the Republic and ultimately signed agreements with both sides in 69. Offended, Lucullus declared the treaty invalid and wanted to attack Parthia, but a mutiny of his legions forced him to abandon this plan. Two years later he was recalled from the East and replaced as the commander of Roman legions in this area by Gnaeus Pompeius, known as Pompey the Great.⁶

⁵ The earliest Parthian-Roman relations were analysed by Keaveney 1981: 195–199; Dąbrowa 1983: 16–24; Lerouge 2007: 44–49; Olbrycht 2009: 173–175; Olbrycht 2010: 172–174. Dąbrowa's reflections are especially valuable; he examines the Roman-Parthian relations in a slightly broader context and emphasises Armenia's role in the general situation in the region.

⁶ This period of relations between Rome and Parthia is discussed by Keaveney 1981: 199–202; Dąbrowa 1983: 24–26; Bivar 1986: 45–47; Lerouge 2007: 49–58; Olbrycht 2010: 174–177; Piegdóń 2011: 191–194. For Lucullus' role in the war against Mithridates and Tigranes and his recall see Keaveney 1998: 85–140; Seager 2002: 42–43.

Pompey, in command of the Roman forces, continued an active oriental policy, but renewed the treaty with Phraates III already in 66 and ended the Third Mithridatic War victoriously in the same year. Soon, however, he took advantage of the dispute between the Armenian King Tigranes and his son of the same name. The heir to the throne gained Phraates' military support, as a result of which the elder Tigranes had to seek Rome's protection. The pretender to the throne was defeated and captured by Pompey's army, to which the Arsacid ruler responded by demanding his release. There was a threat of military conflict, especially since the Roman governor of Syria, Gabinius, acting on Pompey's orders, created a diversion by marching into Mesopotamia. Phraates demanded that the border on the Euphrates be respected and responded by seizing the region of Gordyene, but he left it without a fight when the Roman legions arrived there. The diplomatic struggle and the problem of Armenian succession posed a threat of war, which the Parthian King really wanted to avoid, ultimately choosing to leave the Armenian-Parthian border dispute in the hands of Pompey, who, having achieved this prestigious success, decided to sign a peace treaty in 64. However, the position of the Arsacid monarchy in the region was weakened, because the Roman Emperor dissolved what remained of the Seleucid Kingdom in the same year, establishing the province of Syria in its stead. The Republic continued to grow stronger in the East.⁷

Pompey's return to Italy in 62 complicated the political situation in Rome, ultimately resulting in the creation of the First Triumvirate in 60, and later in the outbreak of civil wars. In 58 or 57 the Arsacid state also experienced internal fighting. Phraates III was murdered by his sons Orodes and Mithridates, which was followed by a fratricidal conflict that forced Mithridates to flee to Syria. There, he enlisted the help of the Roman governor and pro-consul Aulus Gabinius, who (having the Senate's

⁷ For Pompey's activities in the East and his Parthian policy see Keaveney 1981: 202–212; Dąbrowa 1983: 26–32; Seager 2002: 49–59; Lerouge 2007: 58–63; Olbrycht 2010: 177–178; Morrell 2017: 57–97. It is telling that the question of separating the Roman and Parthian spheres of influence along the Euphrates came up during Phraates' negotiations with Pompey. However, this was postulated by the Parthian side, while the Romans did not attach such importance to the Euphrates before Gaius Caesar's expedition in AD 1/2; the river had not been treated as a border prior to that point; see Lerouge 2007: 80–81; Olbrycht 2009: 174–175; Edwell 2013.

support for such interventions) set off on a campaign to Mesopotamia with the Arsacid. Gabinius was soon recalled from Syria to restore Ptolemy XII Auletes to the Egyptian throne on Ptolemy's orders, but in 55 Mithridates crossed the border on the Euphrates on his own and, having won support, conquered Babylonia and started to mint his coins in Seleucia on the Tigris. The war between Orodes and Mithridates took place in the year when the triumvirs Pompey and Crassus were consuls in Rome for the second time. When their term ended, they took charge of their pro-consular provinces, in accordance with the agreements of the Luca conference: Pompey took charge of Hispania and Crassus of Syria, from where he intended to strike against the internally weakened Arsacid monarchy, with the Senate's blessing.⁸

Crassus arrived in his new province in early 54 and started a campaign against Orodes II (57–37) already in the spring. It is very likely that he counted on joining forces with Mithridates, who was fighting against his brother.⁹ Towards the end of 55 or in the first months of the following year, the pretender was, however, defeated by the talented general Surena, who captured Seleucia, where Mithridates was besieged. Crassus crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma and, having taken control over Osroene and northern Mesopotamia, he retreated to Syria for winter. The triumvir formed an alliance with the son and heir of Tigranes of Armenia, Artavasdes II (55–34). Orodes tried to negotiate, but when that failed, he entrusted Surena with fighting off the invasion while he led a diversionary attack against Armenia. The Roman commander reached Carrhae in June 53 and clashed with the Parthian force there. The battle ended in a crushing defeat for the Romans, who were surrounded by the enemy's excellent heavy cavalry and horse archers. The Roman casualties and losses were enormous, but some of the troops managed to flee. The Parthians tried to negotiate with the defeated opponents, but violence

⁸ For the civil war in Parthia and its impact on relations with Rome see Keaveney 1982; Bivar 1986: 48–50; Arnaud 1998: 15–28; Lerouge 2007: 63–67; Olbrycht 2010: 178; Piegoń 2011: 180–187. With respect to the Senate's approval for Gabinius' and Crassus' aggressive actions I agree with Arnaud's view, who convincingly showed that they both received the senators' permission to take action against the Parthians; see Arnaud 1998: 15–20. G. Traina (2010: 211 and 214) also agrees with the French historian.

⁹ Lerouge (2007: 71) points out that none of the ancient writers link Crassus' expedition to the internal affairs of the Arsacid state.

broke out during the attempted truce talks and Crassus was killed. The triumvir's Parthian campaign ended in complete failure, and the Battle of Carrhae became a symbol of power of Rome's eastern neighbour for centuries, but at the same time motivated the Romans to take revenge for Crassus' death and the loss of the legionary standards.¹⁰

The victory at Carrhae did not start a Parthian offensive against the Republic. Shortly after the battle Orodes attacked Armenia and made Artavasdes swear an oath of allegiance, but in the following years he did not invade the eastern provinces of the Republic, with the exception of minor attacks against Syria and Asia Minor in 51–50. Cassius and Bibulus, who were governing Syria at the time, dealt with this threat largely by diplomatic means. The Parthian king also did not attack Rome when the state was engulfed in the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, although he did support the latter to some extent. The victorious Caesar, wanting to draw his fellow citizens' attention away from the civil wars, planned a retaliatory war against Parthia and was the first to clearly articulate the need to avenge Crassus' death. However, the campaign never came to pass, because in the spring of 44 the dictator was murdered by conspirators. The Republic was plunged into another civil war. Brutus and Cassius, fighting against the Caesarians, tried to enlist Orodes' support and sent Quintus Labienus to his court. His mission was successful, and in 41 the Parthians finally invaded the eastern territories of the Imperium Romanum. The Parthian forces, commanded by Pacorus, Orodes' son, and the deserter Labienus, destroyed the army of the governor Decidius Saxa and went on to capture Syria, Palestine, and parts of Asia Minor. In 39 the Romans finally went on the offensive. After winning victories in the mountains of Cilicia and killing Labienus, the legions under Publius Ventidius Bassus' command drove the enemy out of Syria. In the following year Pacorus led another invasion, but Bassus defeated him in the Battle of Mount Gindarus. The Parthian heir to the throne was killed, and the eastern provinces of the Republic were soon cleared of the enemy forces.¹¹

¹⁰ Crassus' expedition and the Battle of Carrhae: Bivar 1986: 50–56; Brunt 1990: 301–302; Lerouge 2007: 67–75; Traina 2009; Olbrycht 2010: 178–179; Piegdoń 2011: 201–226.

¹¹ The Republic's relations with Parthia between the Battle of Carrhae and the Battle of Mount Gindarus are discussed by Huzar 1978: 171–176; Dąbrowa 1983: 32–37;

In 37 Mark Antony arrived in Syria and attacked the Arsacid monarchy from there. The Parthian throne at that time already belonged to Phraates IV (38/7–2), who had taken the place of his father, Orodes II, shortly beforehand. Antony, supported by Artavasdes, headed to Media Atropatene in 36, but the partisan war waged by the Parthians and the betrayal of the king of Armenia meant that the triumvir could not seize the besieged Phraaspa, the capital of Atropatene, and had to retreat. The withdrawal cost the Roman army large casualties and losses, and the legionary standards were again captured by the enemy. In 34 Mark Antony decided to punish the turncoat Artavasdes and attacked Armenia. He managed to conquer the country and depose the Armenian king, but the Roman rule could not continue, even though a treaty was signed with the king of Atropatene against Phraates. In 33 the Roman Emperor withdrew his forces and returned to Egypt, where he celebrated a triumph for his alleged successes in the war against Parthia, during which time Phraates regained control over Armenia and Atropatene. The victorious Arsacid successfully strengthened his position in the region, while the Romans faced off in another fratricidal fight.¹²

Octavian's triumph in the civil war was the beginning of sweeping changes in the entire Imperium Romanum. Soon after the victory at Actium Octavian arrived on Samos, where he started to organise a new order in the eastern part of the state, which had previously been *de facto* under Antony's rule. Relations with the Arsacid monarchy also underwent changes. Although the Parthians were driven out of the Roman lands in 39–38, the defeats of Crassus and Antony showed that they were a very dangerous opponent on their own territory. Moreover, the defeats still remained unavenged and the Romans thought it necessary to erase the dishonour and recapture the standards lost by Crassus, Saxa and Antony. Caesar had already intended to draw the Romans' attention away from

Bivar 1986: 56–58; Brunt 1990: 449–451; Lerouge 2007: 83–86; Olbrycht 2010: 179–180; Morrel 2017: 177–203. For Caesar's plans of a Parthian war see the valuable study of Malitz (1984). The historian discusses in detail the importance of the Battle of Carrhae and Crassus' death for Roman politics in the 40s.

¹² Antony's activities in the East: Timpe 1975: 162–163; Huzar 1978: 176–183; Dąbrowa 1983: 37–40; Bivar 1986: 58–65; Olbrycht 2010: 181–182. The significance of the military campaign against Parthia for the course of the Roman civil war: Milczanowski 2013: 95–97 and 153–154.

the recent civil wars when he planned his campaign against Parthia; Octavian acted similarly. The idea of a war against the Arsacids could have been implemented shortly after the Battle of Actium, because in 31–30 Tiridates became a usurper in Parthia, taking over power and banishing Phraates to the eastern borderlands of the state. However, the *Princeps* did not support Tiridates and the rightful ruler regained the throne with the help of nomadic tribes. The usurper had to flee to the Roman territory, kidnapping one of Phraates' sons. Octavian received Tiridates, but did not support his cause. He failed to do so in 26 as well, when Tiridates again deposed Phraates for a short time. The Emperor clearly preferred diplomatic methods in his relations with Parthia, in which he differed from the imperators from the Late Republic, who attached more weight to military actions. Sending the King's son back in 23 was a gesture which initiated efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the matter of regulating the border on the Euphrates.¹³

The Emperor, who was honoured with the title of Augustus in 27, tried to obtain at least slight concessions from the Arsacid. Phraates IV, whose position was weakened as a result of Tiridates' actions, did not, however, want to agree to return the Roman legionary standards and prisoners, just like he had not in 36, when Antony made a similar request. The *Princeps* did not abandon his efforts and was ultimately rewarded when he played the Armenian card. In 22–19 Augustus was in the eastern part of the state and this is where he received ambassadors from Armenia. After Artavasdes II had been deposed by Antony, the country was ruled by his son, Artaxias II (33–20). He pursued a pro-Parthian and anti-Roman policy, but he was a cruel and unpopular king. In 20 some Armenian noblemen turned to Augustus with a request to send them Tigranes, Artavasdes II's other son, who had been a hostage in Rome for over a decade, as the successor. The Emperor entrusted his stepson Tiberius with the task of putting Tigranes on the throne. Before Tiberius and his legions managed to reach Armenia, Artaxias had been

¹³ Rome and Parthia after the Battle of Actium: Timpe 1975; Bowersock 1985: 169–170; Sartre 1997: 15–37; Campbell 2002: 221–222; Olbrycht 2010: 182–183. Usurpations and struggle among factions in Parthia in the 1st century: Dąbrowa 1983: 40; Bivar 1986: 65–66; Brunt 1990: 458–463; Gruen 2006: 158–159; Olbrycht 2013: 21–32. For the long-lasting model of relations with Parthia started by Augustus see Rich 1998: 72; Campbell 2002.

murdered by his own subjects, and therefore the Roman commander did not encounter major problems in his Armenian mission, crowning Tigranes (who ruled from 20 to 6). Rome could now demand the return of its standards from a much better negotiating position and posing a threat to the Parthians from the north-west. Not wanting to risk an open conflict, Phraates agreed to return the standards and free the prisoners in exchange for Rome accepting his rule and withdrawing its support for Parthian malcontents. The peace was signed and the Roman-Parthian relations enjoyed a temporary *détente*. In 19 August returned to Italy and although he did not decide to hold a triumph,¹⁴ he did not reject the other honours offered to him by the Senate. The diplomatic success in the East became one of the most highlighted elements of the imperial propaganda in the following years.¹⁵

The recaptured standards of Crassus, Saxa and Antony were probably initially kept in a small shrine of Mars on the Capitol, and were ceremoniously moved to the Temple of Mars Ultor on the Forum Augustum in 2. The construction of this sanctuary had been promised by young Octavian already during the Battle of Philippi; it was intended as a dedication for defeating the murderers of his step-father. Placing the standards in this temple was an example of marrying two ideas: revenge for Crassus' defeat and for Caesar's murder. The Emperor's diplomatic success was reflected in the arts: a triumphal arch was built in the Forum to commemorate this occasion, a giant tripod (with three kneeling Parthians in oriental clothes at the base) was dedicated to Apollo,¹⁶ and a statue of the Emperor (the so-called Augustus of Prima Porta) was erected, whose

¹⁴ Interestingly, it was also in 19 that the triumph of Lucius Cornelius Balbus was held – the last triumphator in history who did not belong to the imperial family. The triumph had been held shortly before Augustus' return, when the Parthian arch was put up in the eastern part of the Forum Romanum. It was on this arch that the famous *Fasti Triumphales* were recorded – a list of triumphators from 588–19. See Rose 2005: 30–33; Crook 2006: 91.

¹⁵ The signing of the peace treaty of 20: Wissemann 1981: 9–11; Dąbrowa 1983: 41–43; Bivar 1986: 66–67; Chaumont 1992: 181–187; Rich 1998: 73–79; Crook 2006: 88–92; Gruen 2006: 159–160; Edwell 2013: 200. By signing the agreement, Augustus departed from the Republican methods of conducting war: Meyer 1961: 5.

¹⁶ The tripod was clearly based on the one dedicated by the Greeks during the Persian Wars. For this monument see Spawforth 1994: 238; Lerouge 2007: 124; Schneider 2007: 71–72. The figures of the Parthians were carved out of colourful Phrygian mar-

cuirass depicts a Roman (Tiberius?) taking the legionary *signum* from the hands of a Parthian. The success was also celebrated in numismatics, with a series of coins bearing the legend *signis receptis*. All this was to show the subservience of the Parthian state towards Rome and Augustus' enormous success. However, the Roman propaganda exaggerated the scale of the accomplishment.¹⁷ In fact, the treaty was an agreement of two equal sides, both of which made some concessions. Undoubtedly, however, after almost three decades of stressing the need to avenge Crassus, the attitude to Parthia could not suddenly change without any justification. Describing the treaty as a great success may have provided just such a justification and the Augustan poets Horace, Propertius and Ovid may have played a part in promoting this view of the treaty.¹⁸

3. HORACE

Out of the three poets, Horace was the one who was believed to emphasise the ideals promoted in the Augustan age the strongest. This was true both of matters of politics and customs as well as the first Princeps' foreign policy. Mentions of the peoples of Iran, which sometimes appear in his works, can be classified as such. It is notable that the poet from Venusia uses three different terms to refer to them: the *Persae*, the *Medae* and the *Parthi*. The first two, already somewhat anachronistic in the 1st century, were a clear nod towards the Classical Greek tradition, in which they were used interchangeably to refer to the peoples of the Achaemenid

ble, which was frequently used to depict people from the Orient in official Roman art. See Schneider 1986 (esp. 18–45).

¹⁷ Dąbrowa puts it aptly: 'Au vrai, la défaite et l'humiliation du souverain parthe, telles que voulaient les voir les Romains, n'étaient réelles que dans la propagande et dans l'entourage d'Auguste.' – Dąbrowa 1983: 42. H. D. Meyer (1961: 53) and J. Rich (1998: 73) have a similar opinion.

¹⁸ The Temple of Mars Ultor: Rich 1998: 79–97; Herbert-Brown 1994: 102–103; Ostrowski 1999: 196–198; Milczanowski 2013: 66–72. The image of the East in Roman art during the Augustan period: Rose 2005; Schneider 2007. For the use of art in the process of building the image of a new, golden age see Hannestad 1988: 39–92; Zanker 1999: 171–239, esp. 188–196.

kingdom. Horace undoubtedly used these names mainly to show that his roots were in the literary tradition of Archaic and Classical Greece.¹⁹

Horatian references to Iranian topics can be divided into two clearly separate categories. The first includes references to Achaemenid Persia consistent with the Greek model of perception, i.e. ones that emphasise such *topoi* as opulence and richness, the monarch's autocratic power, the vastness of the land. This is illustrated by verses such as: *Persicos odi, puer, apparatus* (Hor. *Carm.* I 38, 1) or *Persarum vigui rege beatior* (Hor. *Carm.* III 9, 4). The second category are those inspired by contemporary relations between Rome and the Arsacid monarchy. These included references to the wars against Parthia fought in previous decades, or the Parthians' excellence at horse-riding and archery. That the majority of topics related to war is not only characteristic of Horace, since other Roman writers also often saw the Parthians through the prism of their military skill. Some examples of the latter category of references include such phrases as: *Miles sagittas et celerem fugam / Parthi, catenas Parthus et Italum* (Hor. *Carm.* II 13, 17–18) or *Iam bis Monaeses et Pacori manus / Inauspicatos contudit impetus* (Hor. *Carm.* III 6, 9–10). It is also this category to which references to the Roman-Parthian peace of 20 belong.²⁰

For obvious chronological reasons Horace could not include information about the treaty in his works written before 20. However, such references are already to be found in Book I of the *Epistulae* published that year, as well as in Book IV of the *Carmina*, published in 13. I will discuss, in chronological order, two passages from the *Epistulae* and then a fragment of *Carm.* IV 15.

¹⁹ The use of terminology from a few centuries earlier with reference to Parthia can also be interpreted in political terms. Putting themselves in opposition to the Medae or the Persians, the Romans could have considered themselves, equally with the classical Greeks, to be the defenders of civilisation against oriental barbarianism – see Spawforth 1994: 240; Merriam 2004: 64–65.

²⁰ For the Parthians in Horace see Wissemann 1982: 47–78; La Bua 2013; Babnis 2016. La Bua puts the Parthian problem in a broader context and groups it together with the presentation of the entire oriental problem in his works. For Horace's attitude to Augustus and his politics see Meyer 1961: 33–67 (also a lot of information on Parthian topics); Korpanty 1985: 32–48; Śnieżewski 1993: 41–47 and 52–66; Lowrie 2007: 77–89; La Bua 2013: 265–267.

Having published three books of the *Carmina* in 23, Horace turned to a genre which he had not used before, the poetic letter. The first book of the *Epistulae* appeared a few months after Tiberius' meeting with Phraates IV.²¹ This series of twenty hexametric poetic letters features two mentions of the treaty. The first one is to be found in letter I 12, addressed to Iccius:

*Ne tamen ignores, quo sit Romana loco res,
Cantaber Agrippae, Claudī virtute Neronis
Armenius cecidit; ius imperiumque Phraates
Caesaris accepit genibus minor; aurea fruges
Italiae pleno defudit Copia cornu.* (v. 25–29)

The main part of the poem is devoted to philosophy and social conventions. The poet advises the addressee, the steward of Agrippa's Sicilian property, to be moderate in life and to occupy himself with philosophical problems. Only the last five verses turn towards current political and military topics: Agrippa's victories in the Cantabrian Wars (29–19) in Spain,²² the success of Tiberius' Armenian expedition and King Phraates accepting the role of Rome's vassal. The latter two events are indeed closely related, because the fact that Tiberius put Tigranes III on the Armenian throne and a pro-Roman ruler appeared on the Caucasian flank of Parthia made Phraates sign the treaty. Undoubtedly, this brief catalogue is meant to show that at the time of writing the letter the state enjoyed the gods' favour, which may have followed from the fact that – through successful relations with Parthia – penance for the crimes of the civil wars had been done. It can also be noted that Rome's accomplishments and the prosperity they bring could change Iccius' previously individualistic approach and turn his attention to matters of the state.²³

²¹ For Book I of the *Epistulae* see McGann 1969; Allen et al. 1970; Kilpatrick 1986; McCarter 2015.

²² From the 2nd century BC Spain demanded an enormous military effort from the Romans. In ode III 14 Horace expressed (prematurely, as it later turned out) his joy at the end of fighting in the region. For Augustus' Spanish conquests see Magie 1920; Syme 1978: 66 and 185–186; Gruen 2006: 163–166.

²³ Meyer 1961: 36; Allen et al. 1970: 262; Wissemann 1982: 73; McCarter 2015: 115 and 123. Iccius appears in the earlier ode I 29, where Horace advises the addressee not to be overcome by the mirage of oriental riches. For Iccius see McGann

It is difficult to miss the propaganda (perhaps even panegyric) nature of the analysed verses. While in the case of young Tiberius only his *virtus* is emphasised, which does not raise real objections considering the Emperor's stepson's significant leadership talents, the image of Phraates IV as a humble petitioner, or even a vassal of Rome, cannot be reconciled with the actual situation at the time. The words *ius imperiumque Phraates / Caesaris accepit genibus minor* (v. 27–28) seem to suggest that the Parthian King subjected himself to Roman authority. The phrase *Caesaris [...] genibus minor*, in turn, shows that the Arsacid was in a kneeling position, which is probably the clearest sign of his subservient status. This exaggeration is significant, not only because Augustus himself did not meet Phraates at all (as I have mentioned above, Tiberius was Rome's representative), but also because the treaty was an agreement between two equal partners, which ruled out the King kneeling. Horace's words correspond to some extent with the fragment of Augustus' official biography cited at the beginning (*Parthos [...] supplicesque amicitiam populi Romani petere coegi*, RGDA 29), although even this fragment does not discuss *ius imperiumque*, but only *amicitia populi Romani*. Furthermore, this passage brings to mind the aforementioned category of representations involving the kneeling Parthian, which appeared in Roman art after 20. Therefore, in the context of this passage we do not only see Horace adding drama to the entire scene, but also deliberately building the image of a diplomatic success, which fitted the official state propaganda visible in art and official texts.²⁴

The second mention of the treaty of 20 in the *Epistulae* appears in letter 18 addressed to Lollius. Most of the letter concerns life advice given by the more experienced Horace to the still young Lollius. Approximately half way through the letter reference is made to military service, which serves to create the addressee's image as an active person who is involved in typically male activities:

...*Denique saevam*
Militiam puer et Cantabrica bella tulisti

1969: 65; Allen et al. 1970: 259 and 263; La Bua 2013: 277–280; McCarter 2015: 115–117 and 121–122.

²⁴ Meyer 1961: 52–54; Wissemann 1982: 72–73.

Sub duce qui templis Parthorum signa refigit
Nunc et, si quid abest, Italiam adiudicat armis. (v. 54–57)

According to the text, Lollius served in Spain under the command of Augustus, whose identity is concealed here behind a long periphrasis: *duce qui templis Parthorum signa refigit* (v. 56). We are dealing with a mental shortcut here, because the Princeps himself did not personally lead the Armenian campaign, which culminated in meeting the Arsacid, and he had conducted only one, not very successful, campaign in Spain (in 26–25). Unlike in letter I 12, here Horace emphasises a different aspect of the treaty signed in 20: the recovery of the legionary standards, lost in previous wars against the Parthians. It is notable that he emphasises the fact that it had happened recently (*nunc*, v. 57). In this passage, the poet mentions taking the standards from Parthian temples, although we do not in fact know where the Parthians kept the trophies. The poet probably made an analogy with the Roman behaviour: since they put the recaptured ensigns in a temple, then the Parthians had likely also kept them in places of cult. It is also important that the term *signa* is placed in the context of Rome's conquests at the time (or expanding its sphere of influence, since the verb *adiudicare* does not have a strictly military meaning): it is possible that this refers to Armenia, where a Roman ally sat on the throne. Augustus, to whom the last two verses refer, is shown as a commander achieving both diplomatic and military success.²⁵

Published in 13, five years before the poet's death, Book IV of the *Carmina* is usually considered to be the most 'Augustan' of all his works. Michèle Lowrie notes that this book is more panegyric towards Augustus than others.²⁶ Its fifteen songs contain a lot of praise for the ruler and his entourage, and their general tone indicates that the Imperium Romanum had entered a truly golden age both in the sphere of internal politics and relations with foreign states. In Book IV of the *Carmina* Horace does not call for war (e.g. against the Parthians), like he had before, but he praises the results of peace and the international position achieved by Rome. There are a few catalogues of peoples which fear the

²⁵ Meyer 1961: 54–55; Allen et al. 1970: 265; Wissemann 1982: 71–72; McCarter 2015: 217. For Lollius (the addressee of the letters in this collection) see McGann 1969: 77; Allen et al. 1970: 259–260; McCarter 2015: 32–34 and 204–205.

²⁶ Lowrie 2007: 86–87.

Roman power (e.g. Hor. *Carm.* IV 5, 25–28; IV 14, 9–13 and 41–44; IV 15, 21–24). This triumphant atmosphere is particularly noticeable in ode IV 15, which completes the book (and also the poet's lyrical works) and whose tone resembles the *Aeneid*.²⁷

Horace put two works praising the Princeps in the prominent place at the end of the book. In this way, he strengthened the tone of praise addressed towards the ruler, who truly gave back the *saeculum aureum* to Italy:

... *Tua, Caesar, aetas*

Fruges et agris rettulit uberes
Et signa nostro restituit Iovi
Derepta Parthorum superbis
Postibus et vacuum duellis

Ianum Quirini clausit... (v. 4–9)

Another of the Emperor's accomplishments, apart from 'restoring rich crops to the fields,' is bringing back the standards lost to the Parthians and closing the gates of Janus Quirinus' temple, which symbolised a time of peace in the Roman state. Like in letter I 18, the poet seems to express the belief that the legionary eagles had been kept in Parthian temples (v. 6–7). What is surprising is the mention about their return to *nostro* [...] *Iovi* (v. 6), even though we know that they were ultimately put in the Temple of Mars Ultor on the Forum Augustum, not in Jupiter's temple.²⁸ Mars, as the god of war, was in fact more suitable to the military context than Jupiter.²⁹

²⁷ For Book IV of the *Carmina* see Meyer 1961: 57–67; Śnieżewski 1993: 61–66; Breed 2004; Johnson 2004.

²⁸ Since we do not know where the recovered standards were kept between their return from the East and their placement in the Temple of Mars Ultor (19–2 BC), it is possible that they were stored in the Temple of Jupiter. Writing this ode in ca. 13 BC, Horace may have been referring to the current rather than planned situation (the Temple of Mars Ultor had not been completed yet) – Rich 1998: 91.

²⁹ Meyer 1961: 64; Wissemann 1982: 76. This work contains another reference to Persian matters. In the catalogue of peoples which are now subservient to Rome and obey its laws, apart from the tribes inhabiting the Danube area, the Getae, the Scythians, and the Seri (i.e. the Chinese), there are also the *infidique Persae* (v. 21–24).

To sum up this analysis of three fragments mentioning the peace treaty of 20, it is possible to point out a few characteristic elements which they have in common. Firstly, mentions of this event are used to praise the Princeps and to show him as a leader building the state's power, victorious in war and in diplomacy. Secondly, it is notable that while Horace's earlier works did not mention a call to fight a war against the Parthians as a kind of penance for the sin of civil wars, references in later works seem to indicate that a victory had already been achieved (through advantageous treaties), and the angry gods accepted this success in relations with the Arsacid state as satisfactory compensation and granted their favour to Rome, which entered a new era of peace and prosperity.³⁰

4. PROPERTIUS

Unlike in Horace's case, Propertius' attitude toward Augustus and his ideological programme can be described as ambivalent at best. The poet, whose elegies expressed his love for Cynthia, did not really fit in the framework of the Princeps' plan to renew Roman customs in the spirit of old Republican virtues; suffice it to mention elegy II 7, criticising marriage laws. At the same time, Propertius' poems contain many references to current political topics, such as the planned war against the Parthians. The poet's attitude to the Emperor seems to evolve, however, and takes a different form in Book IV of his elegies, published after 16. In Propertius' late poems the subject matter (a shift to Roman affairs and antiquarianism) and attitude to state-related topics are different.³¹

Wissemann reads this verse as a reference to the treaty with Phraates and links it to the opinion about Parthia's subservience to Augustus found in Horace in *Epist.* I 12. However, this seems to be an erroneous conclusion due to the context of the phrase in the entire catalogue. We can hardly compare Rome's relations with Parthia to those with the Scythians. We should rather emphasise a lack of threat from these people, not their subservience to the Imperium Romanum.

³⁰ H. D. Meyer writes about this new situation in the Roman state: 'Der Gedanke der imperialistischen Expansion in der früheren Form hat keinen Raum mehr' (1961: 63).

³¹ For Propertius' attitude towards Augustus and his policies see Meyer 1961: 68–80; Korpanty 1985: 62–67; Gale 1997; Cloud 2002: 117–124.

In the third book of elegies, published after 23, Propertius referred to Parthian themes more frequently, which was probably related to the Emperor's plans to change the Roman-Parthian relations by means of either war or diplomacy. It is worth recalling that in 23 Augustus sent back the Parthian King's son, who had been abducted by the usurper Tiridates, but Phraates still did not want to agree to any concessions or a peace treaty. The sources do not inform us about the exact plans of the imperial authorities, but Propertius' poems written in this period and heralding an imminent expedition to the East (not only to Parthia but as far as India – Prop. III 4, 1) to recover Crassus' standards, talk about such ideas among the Roman elites of the time, and perhaps also among the general public. In this context, it is worth looking at two fragments of elegies from Book III, which mention this topic.³²

In elegy III 4, which is about the future campaign against the Parthians, there is a clear conviction about the expedition's certain success and the future triumph over the eastern neighbour. It is especially worth noting the phrases *Omina fausta cano. Crassos clademque piare! / Ite et Romanae consulite historiae!* (v. 9–10), which clearly demand retribution for Crassus' defeat; moreover, it is revenge perceived in religious terms, as connoted by the verb *piare*. In elegy III 5, devoted to the issues of wealth, passage of time, and his own artistic works,³³ the poet juxtaposed his lot as an artist with the lot of a soldier in the last distich: *Exitus hic vitae superet mihi: vos, quibus arma / Grata magis, Crassi signa referte domum.* (v. 47–48). These two verses were preceded by a long catalogue of mythical and philosophical topics which the poet would like to address in the last years of his life (this is the *exitus [...] vitae*, v. 47). Propertius compares his own situation with the future achievements of Roman armies. The last verse of the poem has the form of a demand on the army, which corresponds well with the optimistic vision of the coming

³² For the presence of Parthian topics in Propertius' poetry see Wissemann 1982: 79–103. Tellingly, Propertius no longer interprets the war against Parthia as a method of expiation for the *nefas* of the civil wars (which was strongly stressed by Horace in those years) – Meyer 1961: 72–73.

³³ In his commentary (introduction to poem III 4), Richardson draws attention to the complementary character of elegies III 4 and III 5.

war in elegy III 4, 9–10. Emphasising Crassus' role again³⁴ and the entire later celebration connected with placing the standards in the Temple of Mars Ultor allows us to hypothesise that it was revenge for the Battle of Carrhae that was the main element of propaganda on the eve of the coming confrontation with the Arsacid empire.³⁵

Out of the five references to the Iranian world which appear in Book IV of Propertius' elegies³⁶ only one directly concerns the treaty signed in 20. It comes in the final verses of the aetiological elegy IV 6, which explains the genesis of the cult of Apollo Actiacus, observed on the Palatine Hill. Here Propertius takes up a topic which was of particular significance for Augustus' reign, referring to the Battle of Actium, which can be described as the cornerstone of the Principate, and to Apollo, the divine patron of the Princeps. The last part of the poem, (v. 69–86) talks about a gathering of poets celebrating Apollo's festival near the temple. One of them (*ille*) talks about Roman victories in Germania and Egypt, the other (*hic*) talks about the relations with the Parthians:

*Ille paludosos memoret servire Sycambros,
Cepheam hic Meroen fuscaque regna canat,
Hic referat sero confessum foedere Parthum:
(Reddat signa Remi, mox dabit ipse sua:
Sive aliquid pharetris Augustus parcat Eois,
Differat in pueros ista tropaea suos.
Gaude, Crasse, nigras si quid sapis inter harenas:
Ire per Euphraten ad tua busta licet.)
Sic noctem patera, sic ducam carmine, donec
Iniciat radios in mea vina dies. (v. 77–86)*

³⁴ Here we could note the poets' references to the death of one or two Crassi. The triumvir Marcus Licinius Crassus died in the skirmish after the battle, while his son Publius died during the actual Battle of Carrhae. The plural form *Crassi*, sometimes used by the poets, indicates that both the elder and younger Crassus were remembered; the latter proved himself to be a good general during the war in Gaul.

³⁵ Meyer 1961: 70–76.

³⁶ Propertius refers to Iranian (or more broadly speaking, oriental) topics three times in elegy IV 3, Arethusa's famous letter to Lycotas. The topic of the poem is Lycotas' participation in the war fought by Augustus in the East. The poet also mentions Parthian perfume in elegy IV 5.

Although formally the statement about the Parthians comes from the mouth of a poet (which may be a reflection of actually existing epic works about this topic), it is best to treat it as an opinion interjected by Propertius himself about Augustus' diplomatic victory.³⁷

The entire fragment under consideration is full of references to Roman triumphs achieved in previous years on various fronts. Leaving behind the wars in Germania and Egypt and moving on to the description of the treaty with the Parthians, I would like to emphasise the phrase *sero confessum foedere Parthum* (v. 79). The verb *confiteor* here has the rarer meaning 'admit defeat,' which is used in poetry. It is again somewhat of an exaggeration, but not as great as in the case of the passages from Horace's *Epistulae* analysed above. Propertius also draws attention to the problem of the treaty being signed so late: indeed, the previous Roman-Parthian treaty had been Pompey's renewal of the *foedus* in 64. The agreement was broken by Crassus' aggression in 54 and from then on the two empires were at war, which lasted, with intervals, until 34, and then turned into a kind of cold war. A cold war which could, at any moment, become a military conflict, since at least on the Roman side there were plans to resume military operations.³⁸

While the tone of the final segment of poem IV 6 is different from the already discussed fragments of elegies III 4 and III 5, written before the signing of the treaty with Phraates, here we can also see plans for a coming war against Parthia. However, two alternative timelines of the conflict appear over the course of a few verses. Verse 80 talks about an imminent triumph and the capture of the Parthian standards (*Reddat signa Remi, mox dabit ipse sua*) as the next step in the Roman

³⁷ Richardson 1977: *ad* v. 80–84; Zanker 1999: 90–96. C. U. Merriam interprets this fragment differently. The historian believes the entire elegy is an expression of Propertius' disapproval for Augustus' actions. She draws attention to the fact that the final scene plays out when the poets are already intoxicated on wine (which lowers the value of their praises), and the Roman standards are referred to as the *signa Remi* (v. 80) – see Merriam 2004: 66–68. On the other hand, Hutchinson (2006: *ad* v. 85–86) believes the entire meeting of the poets to be imagined and interprets the reference to wine as a recollection of the poet's previous lifestyle.

³⁸ Keaveney 1981: 207–209; Campbell 2002: 226–227; Hutchinson 2006: *ad* v. 77–78.

foreign policy.³⁹ Verse 82 delays the triumphs in time, stating that the Emperor postponed them to a more distant future for his sons (*Differat in pueros ista tropaea suos*). The mention of *pueros* [...] *suos* (v. 82) refers to Gaius Caesar and Lucius Caesar, the sons of Agrippa and Julia the Elder, adopted by Augustus in 17. They played an important role in the Princes' succession plans, but they both died before their adoptive father: Lucius in AD 2, and Gaius two years later. Gaius did, in fact, play a role in the Roman-Parthian relations, which will be discussed below. It seems, therefore, that Propertius, predicting the future successes of the young Caesars, postpones the future Parthian war *ad Kalendas Graecas* and prefers to enjoy the comforts of the peace Augustus had fought for, which is somewhat similar to the opinion expressed by Horace in ode IV 15.⁴⁰

Verse 83 contains a direct mention of the fallen Crassus (*Crasse*), who can be glad although not – as we might expect – because of the return of the standards but because the Romans can now cross the Euphrates to visit his grave. L. Richardson notes that *tua busta* (v. 84) should be read as ‘graves of fallen Roman soldiers,’ since the triumvir’s body had been desecrated, but on the other hand there could have been a grave in which the rest of the body was buried (especially since the killed soldiers were probably buried in mass graves).⁴¹ What seems more interesting is the statement that the way across the Euphrates was now open to the Romans. The border between the two states had not been moved and was still marked along the upper Euphrates. Carrhae continued to be outside Rome’s territory and the words *Ire per Euphraten ad tua busta licet* (v. 84) seem to merely express the poet’s wishes and his attempt to show

³⁹ D. H. Meyer (1961: 79) writes: ‘die Rückgewinnung der verloren römischen Feldzeichen kann nicht das letzte Wort in dieser Angelegenheit gewesen sein, es müssen Partherzeichen erobert werden.’

⁴⁰ For Augustus’ succession plans see Zanker 1999: 217–239; Sawiński 2016: 19–92. Gaius was born in the same year that the standards were recaptured from the Parthian hands. There is a hypothesis that it was little Gaius who was portrayed as the *putto* on the famous statue of Augustus of Prima Porta – see Hannestad 1988: 51.

⁴¹ Richardson 1977: *ad loc.* Plutarch (*Crass.* 32–33) gives the information that the victorious Surena ordered for Crassus’ hand and head to be cut off and sent to Orodes. The head was later reportedly used in a performance of Euripides’ *The Bacchae* as the head of Pentheus murdered by Agave. For the influence of the tragedy on Plutarch’s *Crassus* see Braund 1993; Zadorojniy 1997.

Parthia as a kingdom subservient to Rome, as well as a symbolic opening of the way to the East.⁴²

All the remarks about the Roman-Parthian relations in elegy IV 6 are an element of Propertius' parenthetical commentary. However, they cannot be viewed only as an expression of the author's wishful thinking; we must also consider their propaganda context, in which elements such as Crassus' death, the recapturing of the standards, or the freedom to cross the Euphrates, together create the image of a great triumph of Rome, capable of subjugating formerly dangerous Parthia. The final distichs of this poem clearly contrast with the tone of the poems from Book III (written before the treaty of 20), which called for attacking the eastern neighbour. Following the return of the standards from the Parthian hands, Propertius, like the other Augustan poets, shifts from war rhetoric to peaceful one, showing that success had been achieved and the era of the *Pax Augusta* had arrived.

5. OVID

The works of Ovid, the youngest of the Latin writers discussed here, have been analysed from various perspectives. One of the most frequently analysed issues was the question of the poet's attitude towards Augustus and his ideological programme. It changed over the course of his artistic activity, going through the stages which can be described as the period of love poetry, the period of mythological works, and the period of exile. Comparing Ovid with the other Augustan poets, we must remember about the age difference between them, as well as the fact that he had a different view on the period of civil wars, which were a generational experience for his predecessors.⁴³ Naso, who belonged to the equestrian order, could have chosen an administrative or military career, but at a young age he gave up offices that, he said, 'would have been an effort too great for my powers' (*Maius erat nostris viribus illud onus*,

⁴² Meyer 1961: 79–80; Wissemann 1982: 102–130.

⁴³ Meyer 1961: 81; Śnieżewski 1993: 69; Zagórski 2006: 32–33. Some objections to the theory about the presence of 'two generations' of Augustan writers are put forward by Syme (1978: 188–189), who attaches more importance to Ovid and the other elegists continuing the Neoteric traditions.

Ov. *Tr.* IV 10, 36), which in a way put him in opposition to the Emperor's attempts to use the equites to serve the state. The first years of the common era, i.e. the years when he remained the only active great poet of the period, were a time when the poet (who at that time was writing more serious mythological works, such as the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*) and the Emperor became a little closer, but the tragedy of being banished in AD 8 turned the poet from a companion to a petitioner asking for the Emperor's favour.⁴⁴

As for references to the Roman-Parthian relations in Ovid's poems, we should firstly note that all his works were written after the treaty of 20 had been signed, so they refer to the reality after the agreement with Phraates. The poet did not write in an atmosphere of war preparation against the Parthians. During his adult life the mutual relations between the two states were peaceful, even friendly. In 10, Phraates IV surrendered his four eldest sons to the Romans; they lived in Rome from that point on. At the same time in Parthia the King's concubine, Musa, became very influential and it was her son Phraates V (Phraataces) who succeeded to the throne in 3/2. This ruler caused another conflict over Armenia. After the death of Tigranes III, who had been put on the throne by Tiberius, his son Tigranes IV became King of Armenia in ca. 6. Like his father, he recognised Rome's supremacy, but he died as early as in 2. At that time Augustus supported Ariobarzanes, the King of Atropatene, as his candidate and sent his adopted son Gaius to the East to put Ariobarzanes on the throne. Initially, the Armenians did not want to accept a Roman nominee, but King Phraataces, not wanting to risk a war about influence in Armenia, preferred to reach an agreement with young Gaius rather than to support the anti-Roman Armenian faction. The meeting took place on one of the islands on the Euphrates in AD 1. As a result, Ariobarzanes was recognised as the ruler of Armenia (although Gaius still had to break the resistance of some dissatisfied Armenians) and Phraataces as the ruler of Parthia. Neither side enjoyed the results of the agreement for very long; Gaius died in AD 4 as a result of a wound suffered in Armenia, and Phraataces, overthrown also in AD 4, fled to

⁴⁴ Ovid's attitude to Emperor Augustus and his policies: Meyer 1961: 81–101; Korpanty 1985: 68–82; Brunt 1990: 97–98; Śnieżewski 1993: 69–84; Herbert-Brown 1994: 32–108; Sharrock 1994; Zagórski 2006. For the equestrian background of literary writers during that period see Taylor 1968; Syme 1978: 181–183.

Syria, where he soon died. The new king of the Parthians was Orodes III (AD 4–8), who was also overthrown by his compatriots. One of the Parthian factions was in favour of giving the throne to Vonones, son of Phraates IV, who had been living in Rome for many years. In AD 9 he returned to his homeland, but he soon lost power when the opposing faction supported another member of the dynasty, Artabanus, who won the civil war and took the throne as Artabanus II (AD 11–38).⁴⁵

Chronologically, the first mention about the peace of 20 appears in Book I of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and is clearly related to Gaius Caesar's campaign in Armenia mentioned above.⁴⁶ In May 2 Rome hosted a great celebration, which combined the dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor and the departure of the imperial grandson to the East. As part of the celebration a *naumachia* was staged showing the Persians' battle against the Greeks at Salamina. Emphasising the continuity between the Persian Wars and the conflict with the Parthians in Augustus' times was an element of Roman propaganda, showing the Romans as heirs of the ancient Greeks in the struggle against the Oriental threat.⁴⁷ The connection between young Caesar's expedition and the erection of the Temple of Mars Ultor was also significant: following in the footsteps of Tiberius heading off to the East and recapturing the lost standards several years prior, now Gaius was to complete his work. It could be said that Ovid returns to

⁴⁵ The relations between Rome and Parthia from the treaty of 20 to Augustus' death: Romer 1979; Dąbrowa 1983: 43–45; Bowersock 1985: 170–174; Bivar 1986: 67–69; Rose 2005: 45–50; Crook 2006: 104–105; Gruen 2006: 160–163; Olbrycht 2010: 183–184; Sawiński 2016: 58–60. The period of chaos in Parthia after overthrowing Phraates: Olbrycht 2013: 35–53.

⁴⁶ It should be noted that within the structure of the poem the fragment is not meant to praise the Emperor and his oriental policy. Therefore, it is difficult to agree with the opinion that it is a panegyric in honour of Augustus and the entire Julian house (Stabryła 1989: 125), since Ovid mentions this great public celebration to prove that it is an excellent opportunity to rendezvous with the beloved woman. Zarzycka-Stańczak (1999: 86) even writes about a nonchalant mention of the *naumachia* which the ruler was so proud of.

⁴⁷ Bowersock (1985: 174–175) and Hardie (2007: 127–129) draw attention to this element of the Augustan propaganda. For the use of the Classical Greek tradition by Augustus and the later emperors see Spawforth 1994: 238–240; Rose 2005: 50–53; Lerouge 2007: 124–127; Spawforth 2012 (esp. 1–58).

motifs known from poetry written before 20,⁴⁸ when he predicts another Parthian war:

*Ecce, parat Caesar domito quod defuit orbi
Addere: nunc, oriens ultime, noster eris.
Parthe, dabis poenas: Crassi gaudete sepulti,
Signaque barbaricas non bene passa manus.
Ultor adest, primisque ducem profitetur in annis,
Bellaque non puero tractat agenda puer.* (v. 177–182)

The first distich of this fragment seems to be an exact enactment of Propertius' words from elegy IV 6, 81–82.⁴⁹ Augustus' descendant heads off to the East to finish the invasion delayed by the signing of the treaty of 20. Years later, the *topos* of punishing the Parthians and avenging Crassus' death returns (v. 179). The poet, mentioning future successes, in a way questions the previous achievements in relations with the Parthians, especially the return of the standards, which weakens the panegyric tone of the passage. The soldiers fallen at Carrhae should rejoice because of the coming military expedition and the legionary ensigns recaptured years before should also be glad. The phrase *ultor adest* (v. 181) is fitting in the context of the dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor:⁵⁰ the avenger is young Gaius (bearing the identical *tria nomina* as the murdered dictator), but he will be helped by the god of war himself, as well as by the deified *divus Iulius*. The support of the god-avenger, punishment for old grievances, avenging the dead – all of this makes the

⁴⁸ Brunt 1990: 97: 'Ovid [...] predicts great eastern conquests in 2 B.C. quite in the old style.'

⁴⁹ There is a notably close similarity between the phrases: *sive aliquid parcat Augustus* in Propertius (v. 81) and *quod defuit domito orbi* in Ovid (v. 177). The two poets write similarly about Crassus' joy and the tombs of the fallen. In Propertius, it is *gaude, Crasse* (v. 83) and *Ire per Euphraten ad tua busta licet* (v. 84), and in Ovid *Crassi gaudete sepulti* (v. 179). However, Propertius believes that the signing of the peace (which has already been done) is the reason for joy, while Ovid refers to the future conquest of the East – Meyer 1961: 84.

⁵⁰ Therefore, it is difficult to agree with D. H. Meyer (1961: 83) that there are no references to the dedication of the temple of this god.

expedition to the East a *bellum iustum*, welcome by the gods, although without Horace's expiatory associations with the Parthian war.⁵¹

The second, very long fragment in which Ovid mentions the treaty of 20 is also related to the Temple of Mars Ultor, as it is a description of this sanctuary included in Book V of the *Fasti*.⁵² The poet starts by showing the god of war looking at the temple dedicated to him, and then relates its history: young Octavian's oath at Philippi in 42 and his actions during the civil war against his father's assassins. The poet's fluid transition from revenge for Caesar's death to recapturing Crassus' standards happens in a way 'under the patronage' of Mars. The god is a link between the two events because he earned the double nickname of 'the Avenger' thanks to them.

*Nec satis est meruisse semel cognomina Marti:
Persequitur Parthi signa retenta manu.
Gens fuit et campis et equis et tuta sagittis
Et circumfusus invia fluminibus,
Addiderant animos Crassorum funera genti,
Cum periit miles signaque duxque simul.
Signa, decus belli, Parthus Romana tenebat,
Romanaeque aquilae signifer hostis erat.
Isque pudor mansisset adhuc, nisi fortibus armis
Caesaris Ausoniae protegerentur opes.
Ille notas veteres et longi dedecus aevi
Sustulit: agnorunt signa recepta suos. (v. 579–590)*

In the above fragment Ovid briefly described the Parthians, presenting them as good riders and archers, a people hidden beyond great rivers,⁵³ and overconfident of their own power as a result of the victory in the Battle of Carrhae (v. 581–584). In this fragment strong emphasis is put on the standards: over only twelve verses the word *signa* is used

⁵¹ Meyer 1961: 82–84; Syme 1978: 8–12; Wissemann 1982: 112–115; Bowersock 1985: 171–172; Herbert-Brown 1994: 103–106; Rich 1998: 88–89; Zarzycka-Stańczak 1999: 86–89.

⁵² Syme (1978: 31) draws attention to the fact that Ovid described these events already in Book V, rather than delaying their mention until the book devoted to the month of August, when the Temple of Mars Ultor and Forum Augustum were dedicated.

⁵³ Meyer 1961: 78. This issue deserves a separate study due to the frequency of such associations in Augustan and imperial literature.

four times (v. 580, 584, 585, 590) and the words *aquilae* and *signifier* are each used once as well (v. 586).⁵⁴ Overall, we can note almost an ‘obsession with standards.’ The passage from the *Fasti* under discussion abounds in references to them, even in comparison with the other analysed works, whose creators also liked to invoke this topic. Furthermore, Ovid emphasised the long-lasting shame brought on the Romans as a result of the standards being kept by a hostile country. Phrases such as *isque pudor mansisset adhuc* (v. 587) or *longi dedecus aevi* (v. 589), stressing how long Rome was unable to recapture the legionary eagles, also show the ground-breaking role of the Princeps, who managed to change this state of affairs.⁵⁵

The next part of the long fragment describing the Temple of Mars Ultor also focuses on the success achieved in relations with the Parthians, but this time it contains an interesting direct reference to a member of the hostile nation:

*Quid tibi nunc solitae mitti post terga sagittae,
Quid loca, quid rapidi profuit usus equi,
Parthe? Refers aquilas, victos quoque porrigis arcus:
Pignora iam nostri nulla pudoris habes.
Rite deo templumque datum nomenque bis ulto,
Et meritis voti debita solvit honor,
Sollemnes ludos Circo celebrate, Quirites!
Non visa est fortem scaena decere deum.* (v. 591–598)

Here the poet uses an extensive network of associations that a mention of the Arsacids’ subjects evoked among the Romans. The Parthians were perceived through the prism of their skill as horsemen and archers, which cannot help them at all when faced with Rome’s might.⁵⁶ Juxta-

⁵⁴ While in Horace we could see a conviction that the Parthians placed the captured standards in temples (*Parthorum superbis / Postibus* – *Carm.* IV 15, 7–8; *templis Parthorum* – *Epist.* I 18, 56), Ovid uses the image of a standard-bearer holding the *signa* (*Signaque barbaricas non bene passa manus* – *Ars* I 180; *Signa, decus belli, Parthus Romana tenebat, / Romanaeque aquilae signifer hostis erat* – *Fast.* V 585–586).

⁵⁵ Meyer 1961: 95–97; Herbert-Brown 1994: 97–98.

⁵⁶ It is worth noting that this fragment of the *Fasti* contains the second list of Parthian attributes which mentions geographical location along with the bow and horse (*Gens fuit et campis et equis et tuta sagittis / Et circumfusus invia fluminibus*, v. 581–582;

posing the return of the legionary eagles with the offering of ‘unstrung bows’ (v. 593), Ovid proposes an interpretation of the treaty of 20 which is close to the one Horace presented in letter I 12. However, it can hardly be said that the Parthian bows were unstrung by Augustus, since the war did not happen. In the passage from Book V of the *Fasti*, there is a clear connection between the diplomatic agreement and Roman religion: avenging Crassus’ death was a religious duty to Mars (*deo [...] bis ulto*, v. 595). In this regard, there is some similarity between two aetiological works: the analysed Ovidian description of the Temple of Mars Ultor and Propertius’ elegy IV 6. In both cases the temple is a votive offering in gratitude for help with fighting the enemy⁵⁷ and in both cases the success is an occasion for celebrations.⁵⁸

The second mention of the treaty in question in the *Fasti* appears in a long description of the shrine of Vesta (Ov. *Fast.* VI 249–468). Here Ovid included a lot of different information about the history of Rome, starting with the times of Numa Pompilius. Six verses devoted to the Battle of Carrhae and revenge for the defeat are found in the last three distichs of this section:

Quid tibi nunc solitae mitti post terga sagittae, / Quid loca, quid rapidi profuit usus equi, v. 591–592). This opinion about the protection of the Parthian borders by the currents of great rivers shows the conviction that the centre of the Arsacid monarchy was in rich Mesopotamia. Indeed, this is where the capital city, Ctesiphon, was located, as well as the main economic centres, but the true heart and homeland of the Parthians was the Iranian Plateau and the steppes near the Caspian Sea. However, since the Romans knew little about these regions, they saw the Parthian kings mainly as rulers of Mesopotamia. This explains the frequent phenomenon in Latin poetry of making no distinction between the civilisation of the Land between the Rivers and the Iranian civilisation (cf. Prop. III 11, 21: *Persarum statuit Babylona Semiramis urbem*; Luc. I 10–11: *Cumque superba foret Babylon spolianda tropaeis / Ausoniis, umbraque erraret Crassus inulta*).

⁵⁷ The similarity is twofold because, like Apollo Actiacus, Mars Ultor helped to defeat both the external enemy (Egypt and Parthia, respectively) and the internal one (Mark Antony and the *coniurati*, Caesar’s murders, respectively).

⁵⁸ Wissemann 1982: 120–121. The German philologist notes that the phrase *victos quoque porrigis arcus* (v. 593) can be related to the events which were current at the time when the work was being written, i.e. to the hopes of putting Vonones, who had been living in Rome for several years, on the Parthian throne.

*Scilicet interdum miscentur tristia laetis,
 Nec populum toto pectore festa iuvant:
 Crassus ad Euphraten aquilas natumque suosque
 Perdidit et leto est ultimus ipse datus.
 'Parthe, quid exultas?' dixit dea 'signa remittes,
 Quique necem Crassi vindicet, ultor erit.'* (v. 463–468)

After enumerating various triumphs which Rome owed to the goddess Vesta, the poet goes on to present the event which prevented the people's complete delight: Crassus' defeat.⁵⁹ Here Ovid gives a list of the losses the general had suffered: he lost the eagles, his son, his soldiers, and finally he himself was killed (v. 465–466). The use of the verb *perdere* indicates the triumvir's fault, which the other poets had not suggested. The defeat near the Euphrates does not, however, conclude this fragment, because the last words, directed to the Parthian by Vesta, are full of optimism. They predict the return of the standards and revenge for Crassus' death. It is an example of *vaticinium ex eventu*, since Naso wrote these words over twenty years after the prediction had come true and the reader of the *Fasti* knew very well who the avenger of Crassus turned out to be. Therefore, the panegyric element is also present here, and an additional element pointing to the first Princeps is the verb *vindicare*, which was suggestive of Octavian's title of *vindex libertatis*. The poet does not mention any plans to invade the East in this fragment, as they had been abandoned at the time when the *Fasti* were being written.⁶⁰

The last mention of the peace treaty with the Parthians was made during the third period of Ovid's artistic activity, which was spent in exile. The poet included it in a long poetic letter addressed to Augustus, which constitutes Book II of his *Tristia*. The letter is an apologia of Naso's life and work, so that the practical aim of all the Pontic poems should be primarily emphasised: to reverse the verdict which sentenced

⁵⁹ The description of the Temple of Vesta is dated to 9 June, when her festival, the Vestalia, was celebrated. Ovid dates the mention of Crassus' defeat, which prevents people from fully enjoying the religious celebrations, to this day. It is, therefore, very likely, that this was the anniversary of the defeat at Carrhae. Traina (2009: 235) and Piegoń (2011: 216) date this battle to this day.

⁶⁰ Meyer 1961: 94–95; Wissemann 1982: 120. See also Zagórski 2006: 54–55 for an interesting discussion on the use of the word *vindex* in the context of the description of the golden age in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

the poet to *relegatio* in Tomis. The *Tristia* II is a work planned out like a defendant's argument in court. The fragment in question is part of the section which could be described as *refutatio* (refuting the arguments of the opponent), i.e. in this case proving that the punishment was incommensurate with the crime, and Ovid was the only poet to be punished for such an offence:

*Scilicet imperii Princeps statione relictā
 Imparibus legeres carmina facta modis?
 Non ea te moles Romani nominis urguet,
 Inque tuis umeris tam leve fertur onus,
 Lusibus ut possis advertere numen ineptis,
 Excutiasque oculis otia nostra tuis.
 Nunc tibi Pannonia est, nunc Illyris ora domanda,
 Raetia nunc praebent Thraciaque arma metum,
 Nunc petit Armenius pacem, nunc porrigit arcus
 Parthus eques timida captaque signa manu,
 Nunc te prole tua iuvenem Germania sentit,
 Bellaque pro magno Caesare Caesar obit;
 Denique, ut in tanto, quantum non extitit umquam,
 Corpore pars nulla est, quae labet, imperii. (v. 219–232)*

In this long section Ovid counters the allegations raised against him and asks Augustus a question: is ruling the empire such an easy task that it leaves him time to read what is merely the poet's *lusus ineptus* (v. 223)? Naso suggests a negative answer and lists various important events which the Emperor should be occupied with. There is an entire catalogue of lands and peoples which require some sort of action: Pannonia, Illyria, Raetia, Thrace, Armenia, Parthia and Germania. The last years of the first Princeps' reign, starting in 6 (the beginning of the war against the Marcomanni, which Rome could not finish because of uprisings in Pannonia and Germania) were a difficult period for the state because of a multitude of wars, mutinies and natural disasters.⁶¹ In the ensuing situation pros-

⁶¹ Velleius Paterculus' opinion, stressing the extent of the threat to the state during that period, is of note: *Quin etiam tantus huius belli [scil. in Pannonia] metus fuit, ut stabilem illum et firmatum tantorum bellorum experientia Caesaris Augusti animum quateret atque terreret* (Vell. II 110). The political context in which Book II of the *Tristia*, dated to AD 9, was written is discussed by: Wiedemann 1975 (esp. 265–268). See also Brunt 1990: 106–107; Gruen 2006: 176–178.

ecuting disloyal poets may seem like an inappropriate pursuit for the ruler responsible for an entire state. Ovid again recalls the return of the standards and juxtaposes this with the Parthians accepting Rome's supremacy. The poet uses almost the same phrase, *arcus porrigere*, as in the fragment of the *Fasti* analysed above.⁶² This may have been either a reference to the peace agreement of 20, or to Vonones (who had been living in the Roman court) ascending to the Parthian throne in 8/9. The *Tristia* II is a mixture of panegyricism and subtle criticism of the Emperor, hidden under a layer of occasionally ambiguous compliments. The mention of the peace treaty with the Parthians is one of the elements of a catalogue of important matters which the Emperor should be dealing with, and as such it praises his diplomatic success, but at the same time the catalogue indicates that the ruler is dealing with matters which are beneath his notice, which can be regarded as a form of criticism.⁶³

Ovid's mentions of the Roman-Parthian peace treaty of 20 are from a later period than analogous references in Horace and Propertius, but they are longer and more detailed. In Naso's works there is a clear connection between them and events which the other poets could not have written about for chronological reasons: Gaius Caesar's expedition to the East and – probably also – Vonones' ascension to the Parthian throne. Despite the passage of time, the matter of the treaty was still important to Ovid; he still kept in mind Crassus' defeat and the later return of the legionary standards. Like Horace and Propertius, Naso reaches for the topic of Parthia mainly because it presents an opportunity to praise Augustus, and the fragment of the *Tristia* II, where panegyricism mixes with criticism of the Emperor, related to the poet's life experiences, is an exception here.

6. CONCLUSION

The peace treaty signed by Rome with the Parthians in 20 BC ended decades of tense relations between the two empires, which had sometimes

⁶² *Fast.* V 593: *victos quoque porrigis arcus*; *Tr.* II 227: *nunc porrigit arcus*.

⁶³ Meyer 1961: 100; Wissemann 1982: 122. Vonones was supposedly under the influence of the Roman culture, which was one of the reasons why he was dethroned by Artabanus – see Olbrycht 2013: 40–44.

turned into military conflict. Poets of the Augustan age, who sometimes reached for Parthian themes, also recorded this event in their works, and although each of their mentions of this treaty is in fact marginal, if we analyse them together, it is possible to draw some general conclusions.

Firstly, it should be noted that the information about the peace with Phraates IV appears in works which span a period of almost thirty years. The passages by Horace and Propertius were written between 20 and 13, while Ovid refers to the treaty in his poems of the first decade of the 1st century AD. Secondly, the relevant works belong to various genres and make use of various systems of versification. Horace mentions the treaty in his hexametric letters and an ode in Sapphic stanzas. Propertius and Ovid, on the other hand, include these references in elegies, although the genre varied: Prop. IV 6 and the *Fasti* are examples of aetiological elegy, the *Ars Amatoria* is a playful didactic poem,⁶⁴ and the *Tristia*, a poetic letter addressed to the Emperor. However, the passages representing the different genres do not seem to share any common elements, perhaps with the exception of a strong connection with Roman religion in the aetiological works.

All the references to the treaty under discussion can be linked to the tendency to praise Augustus, which characterised, to varying extents, all of the Augustan poets. With regard to the diplomatic success of the treaty with Phraates IV, it can be concluded that the poets' aim was not only to celebrate the subservience – at least in the sphere of propaganda – of the Parthian monarchy to Rome,⁶⁵ but also the wish to present the Princeps as a good commander and diplomat, as well as an avenger of the Republic's old defeats. The motif of revenge, emphasised by the fact of placing the returned standards in the Temple of Mars Ultor on the

⁶⁴ We should note the complex character of the *Ars Amatoria* as a work which, while representing the didactic genre, should be read in conjunction with Virgil's *par excellence* didactic work of *Georgics*. The political connotations of the latter also play a role in the erotodidactic work of Ovid. See Sharrock 1994: 106–107; Zarzycka-Stańczak 1999: 111–112.

⁶⁵ It is worth noting that, despite Parthia's subservience to Rome, which was stressed many times, the art of this period appreciated the Parthians, who were presented on various artefacts (as the only foreign people) as warriors rather than enslaved women. According to Rose, this can be seen as 'a radical new construction of Rome's enemies, which made them look like contributors to peace rather than its opponent.' See Rose 2005: 28 and 33–34.

Forum Augustum, was additionally related to avenging Caesar, who did not manage to launch his own expedition against the Arsacids (Ov. *Fast.* V 579–580).⁶⁶ The peace treaty of 20 began a new period of the Roman-Parthian relations, which did not remain without an influence on the content of poetic references to Parthian themes. An analysis of the fragments mentioning this treaty confirms Brian Campbell's opinion that after this date the poets' emphasis changed from calls for war to advocating peace and stressing the success that had already been achieved.⁶⁷ The works of Propertius, who wrote about a war with Parthia which might be launched by the Emperor's adopted sons (Prop. IV 6, 81–82), are a good illustration of this suspension of plans for expansion.

The treaty signed in the East by Tiberius, representing Rome, with King Phraates was first of all a result of a successful Armenian campaign of the Emperor's stepson. The poets mentioning the treaty do not clearly link these events and marginalise Tiberius' role. Suffice it to say that only Horace mentions it, in letter I 12, and even there it appears in the Armenian, not the Parthian context. We can attempt to explain this in two ways. Firstly, the wish to praise the Emperor in the first place (under whose auspices all Roman generals carried out their command); secondly the gradual weakening of Tiberius' position at the ruler's side and the increasing importance of the Princeps' adopted sons, Gaius and Lucius Caesar (of course until their death, after which Tiberius' was again in the Emperor's favour).⁶⁸

⁶⁶ H. D. Meyer (1961: 6–7) draws attention to the fact that the dedication of the standards, recaptured by peaceful methods, to Mars Ultor, in a way stripped this god of his wartime prerogatives. This could be regarded as another example of the gradual changes introduced by Augustus in the area of religion.

⁶⁷ Campbell 2002: 227: 'It is notable that after 20 the tone changes. Roman power stretches everywhere and peace has been achieved, founded upon Parthian subservience, symbolized by the return of the standards.'

⁶⁸ It is notable that in Tiberius' biography Suetonius emphasises his role in the campaign in the East (*Regnum Armeniae Tigrani restituit ac pro tribunali diadema imposuit. Recepit et signa, quae M. Crasso ademerant Parthi.* – Suet. *Tib.* 9). In the *RGDA* Augustus did not mention his stepson in the context of the treaty with the Parthians (cap. 29), although he did mention him in the description of the Armenian campaign (cap. 27). Cf. Bowersock's remarks on Gaius and Tiberius competing for influence in the eastern part of the empire – Bowersock 1985: 170–178.

The most frequently emphasised aspect of the treaty is the return of the legionary standards (*signa* or *aquilae*). The most numerous references about them can be found in the passage from Book V of the *Fasti*, but such references appear in all the discussed works apart from Horace's letter I 12. The passage in question is built around the words *signa* or *aquilae*, used multiple times, which proves the Romans' great attachment to the standards as *decus belli* (Ov. *Fast.* V 585). Such a multitude of references to this aspect of the treaty can, however, be explained also by the fact that the return of the eagles was in fact the only tangible benefit (and Phraates' only concrete concession) that Rome obtained as a result of the agreement. In this context we should also note the somewhat surprising omission on the part of all three poets of the names of two out of the three generals who had lost their *signa* in the wars against the Parthians: Decidius Saxa and Mark Antony. Only Crassus is ever named.⁶⁹ On the one hand, this could be treated as *damnatio memoriae* of Antony (and by extension Saxa, who was his supporter). On the other hand, not using the strong contrast (in terms of propaganda) of Antony's defeat and Augustus' success may seem like a waste of the potential of such a juxtaposition to highlight the Princeps' achievements, especially in the first period of his independent rule.

Without doubt, in the context of the entire corpus of Augustan poetry references to the relations with the Parthian monarchy form only a very small portion. The information about the Roman-Parthian peace of 20 included by the poets is an even smaller fraction. The treaty, whose visible sign was the return of the legionary standards lost in the previous decades, was presented as Rome's great diplomatic success both in the Augustan propaganda and poetry. After 20 BC the idea of a war avenging Crassus' death was put aside, and *signa recepta* was regarded as sufficient revenge on the Arsacid monarchy. An analysis of the passages concerning these events shows, on the one hand, that there were strong links between politics and poetry in that era,⁷⁰ and on the other hand, that

⁶⁹ For the creation of Crassus' 'black legend' see Traina 2010.

⁷⁰ La Bua writes about Horace: 'Horace's artistic attitude towards, and re-use of, Augustus' oriental policy offers a perfect case study of the transposition of a political motif into the poet' (2013: 268). These words can also be applied to the other poets discussed in this text.

the poets of that time were very versatile and combined the art of poetry and political involvement on the Emperor's side to great effect.

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