Published: March 3, 2021
Last Updated: March 18, 2021

PHRAATES IV

PHRAATES IV (r. 37-3/2 BCE), king of Parthia, son of Orodes II (r. 57-37 BCE) and grandson of Phraates III (r. 70-57 BCE). He began his reign with the murder of his father, son, and brothers. In the alliance with Artavasdes of Atropatene (q.v.; see also Azarbaijan iii. Pre-Islamic History), Phraates IV gained a victory over Mark Antony (q.v.) in 36 BCE. He faced several rebellions against his rule. In external policy, he was a successful opponent of the emperor Augustus.

Accession and civil war in Parthia . After the death of the Parthian king Pacorus I (63-38 BCE), son of Orodes II, in the battle of Gindaros (q.v.) in the summer of 38 BCE, the eldest of Orodes' remaining sons, Phraates (Parth. *prht*/*Frahāt*, see Schmitt, no. 357), was designated heir to the throne (Justin, *Epit.*, 42.4.11-16; Dio Cassius, 49.23.2-3). Apparently, he was first acknowledged as his father's co-regent in line with the tradition of the Sinatrucids, who did not practice solitary monarchy, but appointed a junior king (*rex iunior*) alongside the King of Kings (such as Phraates III alongside Sinatruces, Mithradates III alongside Phraates III, and Pacorus I alongside Orodes II; Olbrycht, 1998, pp.114-17). Phraates IV's independent reign lasted about 35 years (ca. 37-3/2 BCE) (Debevoise, pp. 121-47; Ziegler, pp. 44-57; Timpe; Karras-Klapproth, pp. 137-45; Wolski, pp.141-48; Olbrycht, 1998, pp. 117-19; 2013; 2018; Bigwood; Gaslain and Maleuvre; Strugnell; Wiesehöfer; Schlude; Overtoom, 2016; Luther, 2018b). Phraates IV started issuing tetradrachms (see DIRHAM) on a large scale in June 37 BCE (de Callatay, pp. 47-48), but it cannot be ruled out that his first coins were minted already in the

summer of 38 BCE (Sellwood and Simonetta, p. 296, pl. V.1: month Loios/July of 38).

The sources do not tell us anything about the identity of Phraates IV's mother. Phraates's eldest son was called Vonones, a name that had occurred earlier in territories held by Partho-Sakan clans in the Iranian-Indian borderland. A certain Vonones, presumably linked to the Sūrēn (Lat. *Surena*) clan, was the Great King of Kings in the Indo-Sakan realm in the first half of the 1st century BCE (*NPIIN*, nos. 937-39). One of his daughters may have married Orodes II, and Vonones, son of Phraates IV, appears to have been named after his alleged great-grandfather, in accordance with a custom frequently practiced in western Asia (incidentally, Phraates IV was the namesake of his paternal grandfather, Phraates III). This conjecture is supported by Phraates' and his descendants' close relations with the house of Sūrēn, which had its power base in eastern Iran including Sakastān (Sistān), and maintained close relations to the Indo-Sakas (Olbrycht, 1998, pp. 114-17). Phraates' hostile attitude to his father must have made a favorable impression on the Sūrēn clan, whose leader had been executed shortly after the battle of Carrhae (q.v.) by Orodes II (Plutarch, *Crass.* 33). A circumstance which indicates that Phraates IV closely collaborated with the Sūrēn is the fact that after his death leaders of the Sūrēn wanted the sons and grandsons of Phraates IV, starting with Vonones I, put on the throne of Parthia (Olbrycht, 2013; 2014).

Phraates IV's rise to power was attended by atrocities and repressive measures directed against the potential threat from his numerous siblings, and from some of the great nobles. Sources relate that Phraates murdered his father and son, as well as his thirty brothers (Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.1-2; Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.1; *Crass.* 33.8-9). Dio Cassius (q.v.) denies that Phraates killed his father and claims that Orodes II died of grief, caused by the death of Pacorus and old age prior to the murder of his sons by Phraates. He stresses that Phraates killed his brothers, sons of Orodes II and the daughter of Antiochus of Commagene (q.v.; r. 70-36 BCE), "because they were his superiors in virtue, and, on their mother's side, in family; and when Antiochus chafed under this outrage, he killed him also" (49.23.-5). This circumstance demonstrates the part played by dynastic blood connections in Arsacid royal succession (see ARSACIDS). The queen mentioned by Dio Cassius was Laodice of Commagene (*SEG* 33/1215). The rulers of Commagene were close relatives of the Seleucids (312/311-64 BCE; SELEUCID EMPIRE), who were accorded a high

degree of respect in Asia as a dynasty that had reigned for centuries (Sullivan, pp. 117, 194-97; Facella). Antiochus of Commagene was a close ally of Orodes II. Evidence of this is supplied by his brave resistance against Roman forces in 38 BCE after the battle of Gindaros (Debevoise, pp. 118-20).

The vast scale of Phraates' repressive measures against his opponents shows that the Parthian elite was split up into rival factions (Dio Cassius, 49.23.2-5). One of the opposing nobles, Monaeses (Parth. *Manēč*; Schmitt, no. 274), fled to Roman Syria in 37 BCE. Roman power-holder Mark Antony gave him three cities in the Bambyce region of Syria (Plutarch, *Ant.* 37; Dio Cassius, 49.23.4-5; 24.1-5). The Roman invasion of Parthia led by Mark Antony (36 BCE) made the internal struggles in the Arsacid empire calm down for a short time, but the domestic conflict flared up again after the war.

Monaeses appears to have been one of the key figures in the reign of Phraates IV (Karras-Klapproth, pp. 90-92). Antony wanted Monaeses to assist him in his expedition against Iran. Soon, however, Phraates sent "a right hand", a sign of amnesty, to persuade the fugitive to return home (Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.1-2; 46.2). In 36 BCE, Monaeses took the command of Phraates' main force against Antony (Horace, *Carm.* 3.6.9). Presumably Monaeses commanded the Parthian troops in a battle against Antony in Media Atropatene, where thousands of Romans from Oppius Statianus' corps were slain (Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.3).

Royal titulature and coinage . Phraates IV's royal titulature in the Avroman II text (22/21 BCE; see AVROMAN DOCUMENTS) is stereotypical: "Of the King of Kings Arsaces, the Beneficent, Just, (God) Manifest, Philhellene" (Canali de Rossi, no. 455; contrary to a *communis opinio*, Luther, 2018a, dates the Avroman II text in the Arsacid era, that gives 43/44 CE). The same epithets appear on his coinage (S50.3). Two Greek inscriptions from Susa (q.v.) concerning the satrap Zamaspes, mention Phraates IV. In the first inscription (year 303 of the Seleucid era, i.e., 9/8 BCE), Zamaspes is commended for his achievements, by the will "of the Immortals and the *daimon* of the God Phraates the Omnipotent" (Canali De Rossi, no. 214). "Immortals" probably refers to Iranian *fravašis* (q.v.). In the second inscription in praise of Zamaspes (Canali De Rossi, no. 213), the satrap is honored for having brought water to the city "by the decision" of the supreme deity Maras. The inscription names the *daimon* of the "God Phraates *Pankrator* (Omnipotent)" and Tyche of Tiridates, the Parthian governor of Susiana. The inscriptions' elaborate honorifics and the epithet *theos* do not appear on Phraates IV's coinage,

however, some of his coins depict meaningful emblems alluding to a divine dimension of kingship. Thus, Phraates' drachms show a bird (eagle) or a goddess (Nike?) with a wreath/diadem, depicted behind the king's head (see ARSACIDS iii. Arsacid Coinage). Furthermore, a star and a crescent also appear, apparently as symbols of divine kingship (Olbrycht, 2016a; 2016c). The eagle and Nike were symbols of military victory (Curtis Sarkhosh, pp. 421-22).

Phraates IV's monetary issues (S50-54; de Callatay; Sellwood and Simonetta) suggest that he must have controlled practically the whole territory of the Parthian empire, from Babylonia to Khorasan, Margiana, and Bactria (q.v.). Coins of Phraates, particularly his drachms from Ecbatana (q.v.), circulated in Armenia (q.v.) and Iberia/Kartli (q.v.; present Georgia). A catalog of Parthian coins of the Tbilisi Museum lists twenty coins of Phraates IV, most of them found at Iberian sites (Sherozia and Doyen, nos. 258-77). Phraates IV's dated tetradrachms were issued in 37-23 BCE with some interruptions. The tetradrachms he minted in Seleucia-on-Tigris after 23 BCE do not bear a date. The chief distinctive feature of his image on many of his coins is the presence of a wart on his brow, known also from some of Orodes II's coins (Sellwood, p. 159; Todman).

Mark Antony against Parthia . In 37 BCE, a year after the Parthians were defeated at Gindaros and driven out of the Roman parts of Syria and Anatolia, Roman preparations were underway for an attack against the Parthian Empire under the command of the triumvir Mark Antony. The Roman invasion of Armenia, Iberia, and Albania led by Canidius Crassus in 37/36 BCE constituted a prelude to Antony's Parthian expedition (Plutarch, *Ant.* 34.10; see Patterson, pp. 83-86). Artavasdes II of Armenia (r. 55-34 BCE) acknowledged Roman supremacy, and even encouraged Antony to attack Parthia, just as earlier he had advised Licinius Crassus (Prantl). The Armenian king wanted to get rid of his mortal enemy and namesake, Artavasdes of Atropatene (see Pani, pp. 65-89; Schottky, 1989, p. 63). Antony decided to take the route through Armenia into Media Atropatene, a rough and hilly terrain where the Parthian cavalry would be less effective (36 BCE). Antony was probably following a plan for war against Parthia devised by Julius Caesar (Dio Cassius, 43.51.2; Appian, *B Civ.* 3.9; see Malitz, pp. 23-24). Artavasdes of Armenia supplied a large contingent of cataphracts and light cavalry (Strabo, 11.14.9; Plutarch, *Ant.* 37.4, 50.4). Antony had sixteen legions, ten thousand cavalries, and a number of auxiliaries. It was a mighty force, the largest army Rome had sent to Asia up to that time (see Plutarch, *Ant.* 37-51; Dio Cassius, 49.25-31;

Velleius Paterculus, 2.2.82ff.; L. Annaeus Florus, 2.20; details in Buchheim; Bengtson; Schieber; Chaumont, 1987; Dąbrowa, 2006; Halfmann, pp. 151-61; Patterson; Jones). The Roman army reached Phraaspa, the capital of Atropatene (see Schippmann). Strabo (11.13.3) names Gazaca and Vera as royal residences in Atropatene (see GANZAK). The defeat of Statianus' corps and the death of 10,000 Romans within a few hours was a blow that showed Antony the strength of Phraates' army, which did very well in the combat, defending Atropatene against the massive attack by Antony's forces. Rome had to concede that there was a powerful empire beyond the Euphrates (q.v.), which could not be beaten even with an army of more than 100,000 men. So for the next hundred years, the Romans avoided direct military engagement against the Parthians.

Phraates versus Atropatene and Armenia (30s BCE). The Roman invasion of Atropatene brought about a temporary lull in Parthia's domestic conflict. In particular, the Roman aggression prompted Artavasdes of Atropatene and Phraates IV to cooperate in 36 BCE. It is noteworthy that the capital of Atropatene, Phraaspa (Stephanus Byzantius, s.v. *Phraaspa*; Dio Cassius, 49.25.3; cf. Strabo, 11.13.3), was called Phraata (Plutarch, *Ant.* 38.3) for some time, apparently in honor of Phraates IV. After the Parthian victory over Antony, the animosity between Phraates IV and Artavasdes of Atropatene revived and eventually turned into war. Presumably, Phraates intended to install a more submissive ruler in Atropatene. Artavasdes was worried Phraates would depose him and, therefore, turned to Antony (Dio Cassius, 49.33.1-2). In turn, Armenian Artavasdes was in contact with Octavian, the mighty opponent of Antony in Rome (Dio Cassius, 49.41.5), thus the conflict acquired supra-regional dimensions. Unable to reach Phraates directly, Antony sought to engage in a minor war against Armenia and gain a surrogate victory over that isolated kingdom. The king of Armenia was abducted in 34 BCE and later killed by the Romans (Halfmann, pp. 162-72). The Armenians made Artavasdes' son Artaxias II (r. ca. 34-20 BCE) their king, who put up armed resistance against the Romans but was defeated and fled to Parthia (Dio Cassius, 49.40.1-2), which at the time was racked by domestic strife (Plutarch, *Ant.* 53.6). In 33 BCE, Antony ceded part of Armenia to Atropatene, probably the Simbaka region (Dio Cassius, 49.44.1-2; Strabo, 11.13.2; see Grosso, pp. 245-49). After the departure of the Roman units (Dio Cassius, 49.44.1-4; 51.16.2), the Parthians attacked Atropatene and regained Armenia. The king of Atropatene was at first defeated and captured (Dio Cassius, 49.44.4) but was able to flee. Artavasdes of Atropatene and Artaxares, king of

Adiabene (q.v.), apparently another opponent of Phraates IV, took refuge with Octavian around 32-31 BCE (RGDA 32; PIR II2 1936, XV, no. 1165a; Grosso, p. 248).

The deposition of Artavasdes meant the fall of the Atropatid dynasty in Atropatene, which then became a Parthian vassal kingdom (Grosso; Pani; Schottky, 1990). A review of diverse records suggests that Phraates IV put an unidentified Arsacid, the father of Artabanus II (q.v.), on the throne of Atropatene (Olbrycht, 2014). For another decade, Armenia was in the hands of Artaxias II, who was placed back on the throne with the support from Phraates IV. Around 34-33 BCE, the Parthian civil war appears to have affected Edessa (q.v.), which had an interregnum at the time (Luther, 1999b, pp. 446, 451).

Phraates against Tiridates and the support of nomadic peoples . Around 32 BCE, Tiridates (ca. 32-26 BCE), the most dangerous enemy of Phraates IV at the time, emerged on the political scene and for several years, until about 26 BCE, posed a threat to Phraates' reign (Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.6; Dio Cassius, 51.18.2; *RGDA* 32; see Debevoise, pp. 135-38; Timpe; Karras-Klapproth, pp. 171-76; Ziegler, pp. 45-46; de Callatay, pp. 42-47, 55-62; Luther, 1999a, pp. 165-67; Gaslain and Maleuvre, pp. 172-74; Nabel). After being defeated by Tiridates, Phraates "long wearied the neighboring people with entreaties for help, turning finally to the Scythians [q.v., *Scythae*, used as a generic name for various steppe peoples], and it was with Scythians' aid in particular that he was restored to the throne" (Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.4-5). When Tiridates heard of the approach of the Scythians, he fled with a great body of his supporters (about 30 BCE) to Rome (Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.6; Dio Cassius, 51.18.2-3).

However, the victory won by Phraates IV and his Scythian allies turned out to be short-lived, since Tiridates tried his luck a second time, but was beaten again (ca. 26 BCE; Dio Cassius, 51.18.2f.). At first, Phraates was so surprised by his rival's attack on Babylonia that he was worried about the security of his treasury on an island in the middle of the Euphrates, and had his concubines put to death (Isidoros of Charax, *Stathmoi* 1). Phraates soon recovered his kingdom, presumably with the help of the Scythians (Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.6). After his second abortive rebellion, Tiridates fled to Rome (Dio Cassius, 53.33.1-2). Tiridates issued coins at Seleucia-on-Tigris (de Callatay, pp. 42-47). Coinage that may definitely be ascribed to him are the tetradrachms bearing the meaningful titles *Autokrator* and *Philoromaios,* "Self-appointed ruler, Friend of the Romans" (S55.7-9, struck in 26 BCE) that stresses his pro-Roman politics.

From the August of 26 BCE to the September of 23 BCE, Phraates was minting huge quantities of dated tetradrachms at Seleucia. This must have been connected with his needs for the war and money for soldiers' pay (de Callatay, pp. 34-42).

The Scythians provided their support to Phraates IV on two separate occasions, and Justin's account (42.5.5) is a conflation of two major conflicts. Who exactly were those *Scythae*? In the prologue to his Book XLII of the *Philippic Histories,* Trogus refers to the peoples on the eastern fringes of Parthia: "He [Orodes] was succeeded by Phraates, who went to war both with Antony and with Tiridates. Scythian affairs are added to this. The Asian Kings of the Tochari, and the demise of the Sacaraucae." In other words, the history of Phraates IV provided Trogus (and his epitomist Justin) with an opportunity for a digression on the "Scythians" of Bactria and the Indo-Iranian borderland. Trogus' digression suggests that there was a connection between Phraates and the nomads of Bactria and the Indo-Iranian borderland, including the Sacaraucae, the Tocharians, the Asiani (see ASII), and probably also the Sakas of Sakastān. Phraates' "Scythian" allies must have belonged to one of these peoples. Justin's account in 42.5.5 shows that Phraates visited several principalities in search of assistance. After the Sacaraucae ceased to be the dominant people in the 50s BCE, Phraates' main allies would have been the Tocharians and Asiani, tribes of eastern Bactria, and the remnants of Sacaraucae and their Sakan kinsmen in Sakastān and western Bactria (Olbrycht, 1998, pp. 110-19). Phraates IV's coins or their imitations were commonplace in Bactria, which shows that he had strong political connections with this region (Olbrycht, 1998, pp. 118-19; Gorin; Rtveladze, 1993/4; 2000).

Phraates may have also sought the assistance of the powerful Aorsi of the Lower Volga-Caspian steppes and the lands to the northwest of the Aral Sea (q.v.). The rulers of this people appear to have been kinsfolk of the Arsacids, as is suggested by the fact that Phraates' son Vonones I was related to the kings of the peoples inhabiting the lands around the Caspian and Black Seas (qq.v.; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.68.1; Olbrycht, 1998, pp. 144, 194). Then there are the Dahae (q.v.) on the fringes of Gorgān and Khorasan (qq.v.). The career of the father of Artabanus II, who was strongly connected with the Dahae, started in the reign of Phraates IV (Olbrycht, 1998, esp. pp. 138-44; 2014).

Parthia versus Rome, circa 30-20 BC E. Parthian involvement in trading in Arabia and the Persian Gulf (q.v.) region did not escape the notice of Rome. The Roman expedition of Aelius Gallus to South Arabia in 26-24 BCE was an

attempt to outflank Parthia and curtail its trade connections in the region (see Marek; Luther, 1999a). Rome became interested in gaining control of the vast volume of trade across Arabia. One should recall Antony's attack on Palmyra in 41 BCE and the flight of its inhabitants to safety under Parthian protection (Appian, *B Civ.* 5.9f.). In the 1st century BCE and 1st century CE, parts of Eastern Arabia and the Persian Gulf region were under Arsacid hegemony (*Periplus Maris Erythraei* 33), directly exercised by Mesene/Characene (q.v.), the powerful vassal state of the Arsacids that held control of the Persian Gulf region (Schuol; Gregoratti). King of Mesene/Characene, Attambelos I, may have supported the rebellion of Tiridates. His coins were overstruck by minters of Phraates IV in 28-26 BCE.

In 23 BCE, Parthian envoys arrived in Rome demanding that Augustus deliver the son of Phraates IV, abducted by Tiridates, back to Parthia. A key role in Augustus's policy in Asia at that time was played by Agrippa, performing a special mission in Asia in the years 23-21 BCE (Magie). His tasks included negotiations with the Parthians. In 23 BCE, Augustus sent Phraates' son back to him. In return, Augustus requested the standards of the Roman legions and the prisoners-of-war (Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.9; Dio Cassius, 53.33.1-2). In 20 BCE, Augustus decided to intervene in Armenia (Luther, 2018b). King Artaxias II was murdered in strange circumstances (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.3.4; Dio Cassius, 54.9.5). In fact, he was deposed by the intervening Romans (Josephus, *AJ.* 15.104) who put Tigranes III on the throne of Armenia. It seems that Phraates applied pressure to Tigranes, who after a few years was considered an adherent of the Parthians (*RGDA* 27; Velleius Paterculus, 2.94.4; Suetonius, *Tib.* 9; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.3.4; Dio Cassius, 54.9.4-5; Horace, *Epist.* 1.12.27-28).

Fearing that Augustus would lead an expedition against him, Phraates fulfilled the agreement with Agrippa and returned the Roman standards (of Crassus, Antony, and probably Decidius Saxa) and some prisoners-of-war (*RGDA* 29; Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.11f.; Velleius Paterculus, 2.91; Suetonius, *Aug.* 21.3 and *Tib.*9.1; Dio Cassius, 54.8.1-2; Ovid, *Fast.* 5.545-98; cf. Ziegler, p. 47). But it was a symbolic gesture; there could not have been a large number of prisoners returned: the majority already served in the Parthian army or settled in distant Margiana (Pliny, *HN* 6.47; Solinus, 48.2-3). They intermarried with Parthian women (Horace, *Odes* 3.5.5) and made military service in Parthian armies (Velleius Paterculus, 2.82; L. Annaeus Florus, 2.20.4). The prisoners and the standards, a fairly marginal issue for Phraates, were turned into one of the

mainstays of Augustus' propaganda in Rome (Meyer; Ziegler, pp. 47-51; Schäfer; Eck; Wiesehöfer; Cristofoli; Schlude; Overtoom, 2016; 2017). In fact, at the end of his life, Augustus had to admit that the Parthians were not overcome in war (*RGDA* 32). Undoubtedly, "Augustus had a salutary respect for the Parthian military power" (Sherwin-White, p. 340). Historians often speak of a pact made in 20 BCE between Parthia and Rome (Ziegler, pp. 47-48), but only a late source (Orosius, 6.21.29) and the poet Propertius (4.6.79) mention a treaty (*foedus*) (cf. Wheeler, p. 290).

Queen Musa . Later in the reign of Phraates IV, a significant political role was played in Parthia by Musa (Josephus, *AJ* 18.39-43), the concubine and later wife of Phraates, called Thea ("Goddess") Musa after his death (Karras-Klapproth, pp. 95-96; Schottky, 1991, p. 61; Gaslain; Bigwood; Huber and Hartmann, pp. 492-95; Strugnell). Musa was a slave given to Phraates by Emperor Augustus (Josephus, *AJ* 18.40; Ziegler, p.150). She probably arrived in Parthia around 23 BCE, when Augustus entered a preliminary agreement with Phraates IV (cf. Dio Cassius, 53.33.1-2). Parthia's offensive policy with respect to Rome in the last decade of Phraates IV and the reign of Phraataces (see PHRAATES V) (Luther, 2010; Olbrycht, 2013, pp. 20, 26-27; 2018), when Musa played a role of singular importance, implies that she acted in the interests of the Arsacid Empire, which contradicts an image of her as a Roman agent (Debevoise, p.143; Strugnell, p. 295).

At first, Phraates IV treated Musa as a concubine, but after she had borne a son, named Phraates or Phraataces (Karras-Klapproth, pp. 145-47), the king made her his lawful wife (Josephus, *AJ* 18.41-42). The Avroman II parchment, dating to 22/21 BCE (assuming it was dated in the Seleucid Era: Debevoise, pp. 139-40; Thommen, pp. 472-76), names four queen-consorts of Phraates IV: Olennieire, Kleopatra, Baseirta, and Bistheibanapos (Avroman II B 2; Minns, p. 30; Thommen, p. 473. On the wives of Phraates, see Olbrycht, 1998, p. 143; Huber and Hartmann, pp. 486-87). Only Kleopatra had a Greek name. The queens are not mentioned in sources and are unidentifiable (Unvala, pp. 131-33; Mayrhofer, p. 211). Most probably, they were princesses from diverse principalities in the borderlands of Parthia. Musa is not recorded in this document—apparently, she did not rise in the hierarchy until the birth of Phraataces shortly after 20 BCE.

Sons of Phraates IV in Rome . One of the most spectacular events in the history of Roman-Parthian relations was Phraates IV's voluntary dispatch of four of his sons into the care of Augustus (Debevoise, pp. 143-44; Ziegler, pp. 51-52;

Dąbrowa, 1987; Nedergaard; Bigwood, p. 41; Luther, 2010, p. 106; Wheeler, p. 289, n. 5; Olbrycht, 2013; 2018). Phraates sent his sons (about 10 BCE) to Titius, the governor of Syria, who forwarded them to Rome (Strabo, 16.1.28; 6.4.2; *RGDA* 32.2; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.1; Livy, *Per.* 141; Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.12; Velleius Paterculus, 2.94; Josephus, *AJ* 18.42; Eutropius, 7.5; Rufus Festus, 19. See *PIR* ^{2} 6 [1998] P no. 395). The older two, Vonones and Phraates the Younger, arrived in Italy with their wives and four sons. The younger two, Seraspadanes and Rhodaspes, did not play a part in the political developments and died in Rome (*CIL* VI 1799; *ILS* 842; cf. Ricci, pp. 567-69). Much later, Vonones and Phraates were candidates to the throne of Parthia supported by Augustus and Tiberius (Olbrycht, 2013; 2018).

The motives for Phraates' decision must be recognized as connected chiefly with Parthian domestic politics and not relations with Rome (*RGDA* 32; Strabo, 16.1.28; Justin, *Epit.*, 42.5.11-12; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.1. Pro-Roman bias is visible in Velleius Paterculus, 2.94.4; Suetonius, *Aug.* 21.3; Strabo, 6.4.2; see Olbrycht, 2018). It was Musa who persuaded Phraates IV to send his legitimate children (Josephus, *AJ* 18.40-42) away to Rome, clearing the way for her son Phraataces to ascend the throne. In legal terms, the princes were certainly not hostages, but the emperor's guests of honor (Braund, pp. 12-13). Strabo (16.1.28) stresses the endurance of the custom of the Arsacid prerogative to the throne of Parthia. We know of this right from other sources as well (Josephus, *AJ* 18.44; Ammianus Marcellinus, 23.6.6; see Olbrycht, 2016a, pp. 101-3). Strabo's text suggests that when he sent his sons to Rome, Phraates was facing the threat of rebellion. He wanted to prevent his sons being used as hostages or pretenders in any prospective domestic fighting in Parthia itself. Phraates was familiar with this ploy, having murdered dozens of his family members.

The indication of Phraataces as heir to the throne seems to have incited some of the Parthian clans, which hitherto had supported the succession of Vonones, Phraates' eldest son, to rise in rebellion. In the event, the rival to Phraates IV active in Parthia around 11-9 BCE was one Mithradates (IV) (Josephus, *AJ* 16.253; see Olbrycht, 2013, pp. 21-25; 2018). Vonones and Phraates the Younger had reached the age of maturity by 10 BCE, and the former, who in all likelihood had been envisaged as heir to the throne, must have had enough time to build up a coalition of clans in his support. The Sūrēn and Kārin (q.v.) clans, which later eagerly aided Vonones I and the other Phraatids after Phraataces was exiled to Roman Syria (ca. 4 CE, see PHRAATES V) appear to have been in opposition to Phraates IV's new

dynastic policy that preferred Phraataces.

Phraates IV versus Tigranes IV and Erato . The last decade of Phraates IV's reign is full of mysterious events in Parthia on which the sources throw only sporadic light. This applies to a series of political transformations in Armenia, which historians have assessed variously (Anderson, pp. 254-65, 273-77; Chaumont, 1976, pp. 73-84; Schottky, 1990, pp. 224-27; 1991, pp. 69-70). The same applies to Media Atropatene (Grosso; Pani). In Armenia, the Roman protégé Tigranes III (d. ca. 10-7 BCE) was followed by his son Tigranes IV (Dio Cassius, 55.9.4, 55.10.20, 55.10a.5; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.3-4) and daughter Erato (Dio Cassius, 55.10a.5n; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.4.2), without Roman consent (Pani, pp. 36-44; Gaslain, pp. 110-11). The Parthians were involved in the succession issue (*RGDA* 27.2; Velleius Paterculus, 2.100.1; Dio Cassius, 55.10.18). About 6 BCE, Augustus intended to send Tiberius to Armenia (Dio Cassius, 55.10.20; 55.10.18; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.3.2). The latter refused to carry out the Armenian mission (Anderson, p. 273; Eck, pp. 153-56). Then, by order of Augustus, a certain Artavasdes (III) was dispatched to Armenia but was expelled with heavy Roman losses (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.4.1; Pani, pp. 36-44). Some time after the catastrophe, already under Phraates V, Artavasdes III fell ill and died, presumably in Roman territory (Dio Cassius, 55.10.20-21; Pani, pp. 42-43; Herz, pp. 120, 123, n. 169). Usually, Artavasdes III is believed to have been son of Artavasdes II, king of Armenia (r. ca. 55-34 BCE), and brother of Tigranes III and Artaxias II. The sources say that Artavasdes II had more than one son (Dio Cassius, 51.16.2; 49.40.3; cf. Josephus, *AJ* 15.104). However, it is possible that Artavasdes III originated from Atropatene. Generally, Armenia remained an ally of Phraates IV, and the links between the Parthians and Armenia became close. Sources stress the similarity of customs, culture, and the existence of marital links and close political relations between both countries from Mithradates II (r. 122-87 BCE), especially under Phraates IV and his successors (Tacitus, Ann. 13.34, 2.56.1-2; Strabo, 11.14.6; see Garsoïan; Schmitt and Bailey). A number of coins minted by Phraates IV were found in Armenia, including drachms and bronzes (Mousheghian et al., 2000, p. 14) that document the economic and political impact of Parthia.

From the Euphrates to Bactria . The Parthian Empire under Phraates IV stretched from Dura Europos (q.v.) in what is present-day Syria to Alexandria in Arachosia (q.v.): this extension is given by Isidorus of Charax (q.v.) in his *Stathmoi Parthikoi*, written roughly under Phraates IV (*BNJ* 781 F2). Parthia's largest metropolis, Seleucia on the

Tigris (see CTESIPHON), embracing a "Babylonian" and a Greek district, supported Tiridates' rebellion, which suggests that its inhabitants were not favorably disposed to Phraates IV (Olbrycht, 2017b). An important power base for Phraates IV was the city of Susa, embracing both Asian and Greek communities (Olbrycht, 2017a). Under Phraates IV, a whole series of Iranian personages, such as Phraates, Tiridates, and Zamaspes occupied some high-ranking administrative offices in the city and satrapy (Le Rider, pp. 280-87). In a poem engraved on a stone (dated 9/8 BCE or 1/2 CE, i.e., under Phraates IV or Phraates V), Ariston, son of Goras, praises Zamaspes for having supplied Susa with water from the river Gondeisos (Canali de Rossi, no. 214). Zamaspes is described as the *stratiarchos* ("commander") of Susa and satrap. A (second) dedication to Zamaspes contains the name "the city of Phraates" (Canali de Rossi, no. 213). Indeed, Susa's coins from the reign of Phraates IV, minted in 31-27 BCE, carry a double nomenclature: "Phraateans at Susa," (Le Rider, nos. 207-215, pp. 408-17; see Olbrycht, 2017a) implying that the residents of "Phraata" made up a part of the metropolis called Susa. Apparently, the name Seleucia was removed from an official Arsacid usage at the time, which seemed to prefer "Phraata" or "Phraateans at Susa" (probably for former Seleucia on the Eulaios) or Susa (for the whole metropolis; see SUSA iv. The Hellenistic and Parthian Periods).

In the Parthian empire, there were significant Jewish communities in Hyrcania, Media, Adiabene (qq.v.), and, most importantly, in Babylonia (Neusner, pp. 10-38). Phraates IV had close relations with the Babylonian Jews and some dealing with Herod, king of Judaea, in connection with the return of Hyrcanus II, former high priest of Judaea (76 to 40 BCE). When the Parthians occupied Palestine (40-39 BCE), Hyrcanus was taken to captivity in Babylonia where he enjoyed the status of leader of the Babylonian Jews. In 36 BCE, Hyrcanus was allowed by Phraates IV to return to Jerusalem at the invitation of Herod; six years later, Herod had him executed (Josephus, *BJ* 1.433, 486; *AJ* 15.11-20; cf. Neusner, pp. 34-36). Later, Pheroras, Herod's brother, was accused of planning to flee to Parthia (Josephus, *BJ* 1.486-487). Shortly before 6 BCE, Zamaris, a Jew from Babylonia, crossed the Euphrates with 500 horsemen and about 100 kinsmen (*syngeneis*), and was settled by Herod at Batanea (Josephus, *AJ* 17.23-27; Neusner, pp. 41-44). Zamaris presumably supported the pretender Mithradates IV against Phraates IV.

The mints of Marv in Margiana and Nisa (q.v.) in Khorasan were active under Phraates IV. Margianian issues were found at Marv (Loginov and

Nikitin, p. 47, nos. 40-41, 43-45). During the reign of Phraates IV, Bactria received a number of coins struck in Margiana (Gorin). Rulers of western Bactria, who were dependent on Parthia, issued imitations of Parthian coins, including coins of Phraates IV, and countermarked them. One of them was a certain Sapadbizes (Rtveladze, 1993/4, pp. 92-93; 2000; 2010; Gorin). He, and some other rulers, may be identified as Sacaraucae or Sakan princes (Olbrycht, 1998, pp. 110-14).

An important testimonial for the reign of Phraates IV is the ostraca from the Old Nisa archive (Weber, pp. 556-61). In the reign of Phraates IV, the Nisan archive was in its last phase of development. The archive's final demise ensued directly after 12 BCE. This coincided with the rebellion of Mithradates IV. In the 1st century BCE, Old Nisa was a center dedicated to the cult of the Sinatrucid Parthian monarchs.

Achievements and failures . Phraates IV's reign came to an end in a *coup d'état* carried out by his son Phraataces and his consort Musa (Josephus, *AJ* 18.39-42) in 3/2 BCE. Phraates IV was one of the most distinguished Arsacid rulers, a first-rate military commander, and a successful diplomat, as seen in his relations with Rome. The force behind the rapid rise to power of Phraates IV was the Sūrēn clan, which wanted to restore its former strength and influence in Parthia. The reign of Phraates IV was disturbed several times by struggles against rivals and aristocratic clans. Driven out of western Parthia around 32-31 BCE, Phraates IV sought the assistance of nomadic princes, and it was their support that saved him. In this way, his situation was similar to that of his great-grandfather Sinatruces, who won the throne of Parthia thanks to the Sacaraucae (Olbrycht, 1997). Likewise, Orodes II, father of Phraates IV, gained the throne thanks to the Sūrēn clan of Sakastān. Notwithstanding the domestic strife, the Parthian Empire remained a power to be respected and reckoned with even by the Romans.

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